

ABSTRACT

This dissertation probes different psychological and biological patterns in O'Neill's major play *Long Day's Journey into Night*. O'Neill's creative efforts coincided with development in modern psychology and psychological interpretations. Freud and Jung in particular made valuable contributions in revolutionising probing into human consciousness and even unconsciousness. O'Neill responded to these developments and changes in the field of psychology and psychoanalysis. His plays provide amazing opportunities for studying human consciousness and even submerged unconsciousness. Several works and articles have been written to bring out the presence rather over presence of psychological leitmotiv in all O'Neill's works. As O'Neill's plays are predominantly subjective and autobiographical, the critics and writers have tried to spotlight this factor in his plays, analysing characters and themes in the light of what transpired in O'Neill's personal life and how much his plays bear resemblance with his personal life that includes his family. In the psychological sphere this study departs from traditional approaches in interpreting O'Neill's dramatic works. Instead of concentrating on the autobiographical perspectives, it highlights the role of pain and sufferings in creativity in the light of what Freud and post Freudian psychoanalysts have said on this point. Then instead of remaining confined to mere psychological analysis, the study highlights psychopathological modalities of the characters which pertains to the studying of essentially self destructive disordered, deviant human behaviour. The role of culture has also been analysed to corroborate the view that the very culture produces such psychopathological disorders that undermine the personal and familial stability. In biological arena, the study brings out the over presence of such biological factors as death, disease, desire to procreate and the repressive wish to abort it with the purpose to show that in the biological sphere too O'Neill's world is marred by decay and decline as in the psychological sphere. It also looks upon existence as well as the relation between past and present in biological terms. Spotlighting biological concerns marks real development in interpreting O'Neill as it is the least focused point in works on O'Neill. The study also works out the response of the readers to the predominantly bleak picture of human life and nature and also contrasts it with the response to classical tragedy. The inclusion of culture, biological concerns and reader response are definite attempts at extending the scope of the study, leaving at the same time room for further extensive study on these points. The pattern of discussion here in the study moves from psychoanalysis of the character in chapter III to psychoanalysis of characters as independent imaginative creations in chapter IV, culture in chapter V, death and disease in chapter VI and reader response in chapter VII. The main thrust of all these points included in the study is to accentuate the point that O'Neill's vision is terribly and deplorably dark and pessimistic without the characteristic tragic transcendence of classical tragedy. It can not also be referred to as a general pattern of world is also marked by regression both in the psychological and biological spheres. The effects on the readers is reciprocal, that is retrogressive and pessimistic. Preoccupation with certain dark aspects both in human psychology and biology have at the same time imparted a restrictive approach to O'Neill's work.

Comparative method has been used in the study which includes application of psychological and philosophical theories to interpret the work as well as for studying the affect of O'Neill's tragedy on the readers.