

An Actress and the Director: *A Moon for the Misbegotten* as a Play for Acting

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The heroine of Eugene O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1957), Josie Hogan, serves as an *actress* who plays an ideal woman for her beloved. Her grossness and masculine strength place her in a peculiar position in the patriarchal world to which she belongs. O'Neill presents Josie as "all woman," who constantly transforms herself from a slut, a virgin, and an earthy mother, and finally to a savior who brings Jamie to his peaceful end. She thus embellishes the end of Jim's life with her willingness to play any parts for which he longs. This composure and spirit of self-sacrifice would separate herself from O'Neill's other neurotic heroines such as Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1955), Nina in *Strange Interlude* (1928), Abbie in *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), Nora in *A Touch of the Poet* (1935), Sara in *More Stately Mansions* (1938) and Olivia in *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1831): Yet, on the other hand, her sacrifice requires vast endurance, which makes her the most tragic heroine in O'Neill's canon. Being ashamed of herself, she has been struggling to create her own drama by transforming herself into a more desirable woman. Yet Jim's desire to create an ideal woman in his drama has silenced her own voice in that process. This struggling process, paradoxically, has given her the greatest trait as an *actress*, that is, as the messenger who embodies Jim's *drama*.

The audience, actually, sees more the process of creating Jim's drama than its plot. In other words, the audience does not only listen to Jim's past narrative but sees how Josie reacts to it. Under her composure, the audience would observe her own drama while listening to his story: She supports her father in his farmland, and also serves as a substitute wife, an obedient daughter and a joyous comrade. Furthermore, she behaves coquettishly and flirtingly to make her acceptable to the male-dominated world. In fact, she is the only woman in this small community, and this lack of female companionship forces her to adapt a male point of view. Hence her large physique, a trait for which she feels ashamed, causes her to think of nothing but to play a "slut," making up for the masculine grossness of her size. Jim, himself as an actor, sees through her *acting*, yet her passion for *acting* alone saves her from the confined state of womanhood, although temporarily.

Ann C. Hall argues that Josie, as "an active participant in the female gender" (50), willingly plays Jim's ideal woman. Yet Josie has not created the role for herself. Jim constructs this play as his own creation, that is, as its *playwright* and *director*. Josie, on the other hand, functions fundamentally as an *actress* under Jim's guidance. In this sense, this work also operates as a play for staging itself, and Josie serves as its main actress, who struggles to embody the director's idealized image on the stage, suppressing her own desire for creation. Josie, in fact, conceals so much generosity in her massive body that she serves almost as "a female Christ."¹ Jim, "forgiven" by Josie, can go forth to his undisturbed death. Josie, on the contrary, is

destined to confine herself in this rocky farm ever after. The play's end suggests that the transitory romance will serve as the sole comfort for Josie for the rest of her life. Unlike her brothers, she cannot escape from this farmland, nor can she seek for the change and adventures in this stony farmland. One can readily detect that, as Torrey lucidly points out, "her physical need and evident capacity for love" would not allow her such a retirement (116).

Just like Cabbot in *Desire Under the Elms*, Josie, surrounded by the rocks at the end of the play, bravely confronts her solitude. In a sense, the moon-night romance with Jim has awakened her to the reality—now she no longer has to offer herself as a desirable sex object to the male-oriented world. Nevertheless, Josie, at the end of the play, is still bound to her past. Jim, as the *director* of Josie's performance, still controls her even after his death. Jim, as well as O'Neill, gives Josie radiance as a tragic heroine by transforming her from "a slut" to "a female Christ." She thus liberates herself from the other heroines' doom, which confines them solely to the roles of lovers and wives. Yet her *virginity* and substitute *motherhood* would invariably have turned her into a strained figure. She is, in fact, trapped within Jim's direction because Jim sees his own *mother* in Josie's *performance*. That is, Josie does not exist as herself but as a part of Jim's *dramatic* narrative.

This paper aims to define Josie as an *actress* under Jim's *direction*. She has sacrificed her passion for life to meet his requirement, which results in diminishing her desire for self-fulfillment. In this light, this play still remains as a dedication to O'Neill's dead brother, Jamie.² Josie has attempted to create her own drama, reshaping the reality that she cannot accept. Nevertheless, Jim's creative power surpasses Josie's, and she is forced to admit her defeat. In fact, she is destined to be defeated because she has been struggling to construct her *drama* from the other's (a man's) point of view, not from her own. As Kishi points out, in O'Neill's works, only men (not women) can be (become) poets/writers: The women, however significant roles they play in their narratives, basically offer themselves as the objects of male creativity (67-68). Fleche furthers this point by referring to Mary in *Long Day's Journey into Night* as "a product of male narrative" (27) and "the text to be played out, the object of the language's desire" (33). Josie basically functions in the same way as Mary does: Jim turns her into his "product" by giving her the *performance* of his ideal woman. That is, she has tried to capture herself mirrored in Jim's gaze. This paper, then, aims to categorize Josie as an *actress* who has abandoned her hope to be a *playwright* or a *director*: She instead attempts to present the best *performance* for her *director*, yet in that process, O'Neill (or Jim) elicits her dignity as a tragic protagonist, even though unintentionally.

(1) Josie as a "Slut"

As O'Neill himself comments, the role of Josie requires tremendous complexity:³ In fact, she is too full of contradictions to be likely to exist in reality. Yet, as long as she stays the absolute ideal to her man, she cannot breathe as a real woman. In the light of its casting, any director can hardly find an actress with that grossness of body and such a great deal of "feminine" quality. Not to mention her physical proportion, Josie's characterization itself also causes a good deal of complexity. Firstly, how can a woman who labors as a farmhand also function as a "slut"? Her "scandal" would sound unpersuasive not only to Jim and Hogan but also to the audience. One would readily doubt that Josie could even convince herself that she has been

able to dupe her father and the men around her. Nevertheless, if we categorized this play essentially as a play for dramatizing process, it would be convincing enough. In fact, Josie is not the only *performer* in this play: Hogan's affection toward his daughter also leads him to *act* a shrewish father. In summary, this play basically functions as a play, which seeks for the significance of *acting* itself.

The 1999 Broadway production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, directed by Daniel Sullivan, received rave reviews: One of them thus comments on the significance of *acting* in this play: "To watch Ms. Jones, Mr. Bryne and Roy Dotrice, who complete the triangle of principal performers, react to one another is to realize the degree to which O'Neill's last completed play is about how everyone is an actor, a deceiver by necessity" (Brantley, n. p.). To further Brantley's point, Josie wants to "deceive" not only the others but also herself by performing a promiscuous woman. Being "an ugly cow of a woman," she cannot see herself as desirable to men's eyes. She would rather choose to appear scandalous and lustful than to stay undesired. Her inferiority complex makes her feel the need to transform herself into another being. That is, she does not value herself on her own: She consciously locates herself within male gaze.⁴ Owing to this lack of self-evaluation, she insists that it would be "disgrace" to Jim's "vanity" to be "caught with the likes of [her]" (905).

Paradoxically, however, Jim's aim as a *director* is essentially to make Josie feel *unattractive*, just as Jose Quintero directed Colleen Dewhurst's Josie to be "on [her] knees, scrubbing the porch for the first ten minutes" (qtd. in Viola 226) in the 1973-4 production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Dewhurst, who won the 1974 Tony Award for Best Actress for this role (Viola 224), came to see herself (Josie) as "a woman that no man could truly love or be attracted to" (qtd. in Viola 226) after these ten minutes. Just as Quintero did to Dewhurst, Jim intends to force Josie to be seen as undesirable to men. In other words, Jim directs her to devalue herself, thus recognizing the need to remold herself into his ideal woman—into totally another being through her man's *direction*.

Josie's physical appearance, the basis of her inferiority complex, in fact contains every paradox, which strengthens her illusory quality:

Josie is twenty-eight. She is so oversize for a woman that she is almost freak—five feet eleven in her stockings and weighs around one hundred and eighty. Her sloping shoulders are broad, her chest deep with large, firm breasts, her waist wide but slender by contrast with her hips and thighs. She had long smooth arms, immensely strong, although no muscles show. The same is true of her legs.

She is more powerful than any but an exceptionally strong man, able to do the manual labor of two ordinary men. But there is no mannish quality about her. She is all woman. (857)

Utilizing her almost freakish physical proportion, she engages herself in manual labor. Yet the audience would never see her less muscular body as unfeminine. These contradictory elements would make her presence improbable and even unnatural. This unnaturalness itself, however, stresses O'Neill's intention to include all the elements of women into this one heroine.

In the 1999 Broadway revival of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, Cheryl Jones received rave reviews for her stunning characterization of Josie.⁵ Jones, however, pictures Josie rather as a tomboyish figure than "all woman": The actress's vivacity and spirit turn Josie into the more audacious than the script suggests.⁶ Brantley, for instance, views Jones' Josie as "the self-proclaimed strumpet of the countryside" with "the air

of a roguish Rabelaisian giant, tough-tongued and intimidatingly large of gesture" but "uncertain girlishness behind the bravado" (n. p.). As Brantley suggests, Jones competently describes Josie's virginal quality with her sensitivity. Jones' poise and vivacious gestures, however, would lessen Josie's inferiority complex and strong self-consciousness, which O'Neill (and Jim) tries so intensely to incorporate into the stage. In Jones' portrayal, Josie seems to proudly accept her own sexuality. It seems improbable that such a vigorous woman feels urged to perform a "slut" merely to be accepted by her man. Brantley reviews Jones' expression of Josie's sexuality; "hapless, yet stirringly sexual attempt to play the vamp, hiking her skirt above her knees" (n. p.). Jones, as in Brantley's depiction, underlines her sex appeal in many places, yet rather immaturely and awkwardly. Therefore, the audience can readily see through her *act*. Jones would convince the audience that her efforts to lure the men never originate from her inferiority complex, but rather from her mischievousness and animation.

Josie's admiration for Broadway dancers, in addition, signifies another point. For Josie, Jim's acting profession symbolizes "Broadway," the world of theatre. She does not long for, then, not a small delicate bodily structure of a dancer, but the stage itself. The following conversation between the two would articulate this point:

TYRONE (*stares at her again*): Why all the interest lately in the ladies of the profession, Josie?

JOSIE: Oh, I've been considering joining their union. It's easier living than farming, I'm sure. (*then resentfully*) You think I'd starve at it, don't you, because your fancy is for dainty dolls of women? But other men like—

TYRONE (*with sudden revulsion*): For God's sake, cut out that kind of talk, Josie! It sounds like hell. (877-878)

As enunciated in the conversation, Josie's longing for Broadway is constructed fundamentally on her imagination. In any places of this play, never does Jim himself refer to "dainty little dolls" of Broadway: Josie's mind's eye alone makes her picture them as "dainty" and "little." Significantly, the smallness of the dancers' bodies signifies Josie's yearning for the unreachable, and thus she describes them as her opposite. Jim's acting profession would appear to her as a passage into another world—the world much less confining than this rocky farmland. To be accepted by a Broadway actor means to her a chance to escape from the present. In summary, "Broadway" theatre formalizes Josie's ideal world, where she can transform herself into another being—the only place where she can overcome her inferiority complex, even though momentarily.

(2) Josie as a Pure "Virgin"

Josie would impress the audience as "O'Neill's most powerful and sympathetic creation of a woman" (Berlin 93). Berlin attributes the heroine's strength to her capability of masquerading as *every woman*, from "an earth woman" to "the virgin playing the whore, lover and mother, feisty Irish daughter and Virgin Mary" (93).⁷ Josie embodies O'Neill's ideal figure of a woman precisely because he has created her both as a virgin and a mother while Mary Tyrone is "neither of them" (Barlow 173). That is, O'Neill requires his women to stay as mystic and "unreal" as possible. More significantly, he expects his heroines to be "self-

silencing" (Barlow 173). According to Ann. C. Hall, O'Neill entertained quite "unrealistic" ideal for a woman, and he expected her to "deny her own character, desires, and talents in order to support his" (20).⁸ In short, O'Neill (and Berlin) sees the heroine's most elevated trait mainly in her passivity and self-sacrifice.

In O'Neill's works, female characters seldom play active parts. O'Neill names *Strange Interlude* as his "woman play" (qtd. In Gelb and Gelb, 1987: 589). The heroine, Nina, is destined to lead a spectacular life, but all of her experiences are constructed basically on her relationship with her men. She tries to liberate herself in a sexual way, yet her dead lover constantly binds her to the past. In *Anna Christie*, the heroine reveals her past life as a prostitute to her lover, and persuades him to accept her as she is. Yet here, her man also rules the heroine's life, and if he refuses to accept her, she must go back to her past life. In *Now I ask you*, O'Neill cruelly ridicules the "feminist" heroine, Lucy. Lucy exposes her shallowness in the process of awakening to her womanhood, and only *marriage* makes her an acceptable woman to the society. All in all, in O'Neill's canon, women must "silence" their own hope, dream and ambition to keep up their appearances in the patriarchal social system.

Josie illuminates the stage with her poise and dignity, yet she is leading merely a supporting part in Jim's confessional *drama*. In fact, she would never expect to see herself as the "mother" of her beloved while she remains a "virgin" if it were not for supporting Jim's *drama*. When she says, "I feel her in the moonlight, her soul wrapped in it like a silver mantle, and I know she understands and forgives me, too, and her blessing lies on me" (933), she speaks not for herself but verbalizes the words Jim needs to hear. She finds comforts solely in her *performance*, that is, in her ability to "mother" Jim much more competently than Mary.

Nonetheless, Josie cannot locate herself solely within Jim's theatrical world. After the *director* leaves the stage, she can no longer create another *drama*, nor can she *direct* her own life. Only the endless labor in this pebbly farm is awaiting her. Josie, subsequently, recognizes the transitory nature of their romance:

Oh, Jim, Jim, maybe my love could still save you, if you could want it enough! (*She shakes her head.*) No. That can never be. (*Her eyes leave his face to stare up at the sky. She looks weary and stricken and sad. She forces a defensive, self-derisive smile.*) God forgive me, it's a fine end to all my scheming, to sit here with the dead hugged to my breast, and the silly mug of the moon grinning down, enjoying the joke! (934)

Even though she plays "Virgin Mary," she is in fact a bewildered woman, cradling a drunken middle-aged man. At the end of her *act* in Jim's *theatre*, she thus begins to mock herself out of sheer desperation.

Furthermore, even if Jim had not faced the deathbed, the romance between the two could not have been matured: Jim cannot make love to a woman without seeing her as a prostitute. His spiritual love is all dedicated to his mother. Therefore, if he wants to love Josie in a spiritual sense, he cannot complete sexual union with her, and thus she must love Jim as a "virgin mother." Mary has failed the part because her dope addiction conjured up a whore-like image in her son's mind. Yet Josie can successfully play the part because of her *motherly* compassion. That is, their romance can end beautifully owing to its *transitory* and theatrical nature.

Barlow argues that O'Neill cannot present the heroine compellingly if he "asks us to believe both that Josie gets great satisfaction from that 'masquerade' and that the only roles she can even imagine" are

“wife, prostitute, mother,” which merely reflect “male desire” (174). Barlow’s point rings true when we reflect that Josie’s desire to play a “slut” originates from her ashamed feelings toward her grotesque size. Later she confesses her virginity mainly because that is a role Jim prescribes for her as a *director*. She thus constantly changes her roles according to Jim’s need, and in that way, she can remain an ideal woman both for Jim and O’Neill. Yet she must subdue her own desire to meet her man’s requirement, and there she finds merely a feeling of abandonment and compromise.

(3) Josie as an Ideal “Mother”

Josie *performs* a mother quite differently from Mary Tyrone, Jim’s own mother, being “real and healthy and clean and fine and warm and strong and kind” (915). Mary often drifts around her illusory world, and her dope addiction and excessive nervousness betray Jim’s ideal image of an earthy mother. Her soul resides only in her past blissful girlhood, and her refusal to grow into maturity also hinders her sons’ approach. Jim thus needs to create an ideal mother in his *dramatic* world, and finds Josie as the most fitting for the role.⁹

Josie hence embroiders the last *act* of Jim’s life. Doris Falk clarifies the point when she argues that “The love affair in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is derived from *Long Day’s Journey*, which defines Jamie’s love, hatred, and guilt toward his mother and the desperate longing for her which drives him to Josie in *Moon*” (30). As indicated here, Jim is trying to amend his past relationship with his mother by deriving Josie’s affection. In this sense, O’Neill presents Jim as his alter ego. Adding to this, if Josie exists as another idealized image of Mary Tyrone in Jim’s drama, she also embodies O’Neill’s “alter ego” (Floyd 381).¹⁰

O’Neill names Jim’s mother as “Mary” in an ironical sense: She repeatedly refers to herself in the past as a faithful girl with a dream of becoming “a nun.” She, then, desperately wants to regain her lost faith. Nevertheless, while she says, “If I could only find the faith I lost, so I could pray again!” she curses herself, stating that “Blessed Virgin” cannot be fooled by “a lying dope fiend reciting words” (779). These sarcastic words would further her from the “blessed Virgin” Mary.¹¹ Mary is absorbed so thoroughly into herself that she cannot *silence* herself as Josie does. Jim thus tends to see a “mother” much more closely in the prostitute, “Fat Violet,” than Mary in *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. Josie, subsequently, offers herself to Jim as a “virgin” with the warm heart of the “prostitute,” “Fat Violet.”

On the other hand, Josie and Mary could have shared the similar traits if Mary had not faced such calamities: Mary literally abandoned every of her dream and ambition (becoming a concert pianist or a nun) upon her encounter with James Tyrone, and “All [she] wanted was to be his wife” (778). Adding to this, “bursting with health and high spirits and the love of loving” (801), she embodied the youth, passion and energy just like Josie does in the present. Yet the life in hotel rooms and the death of her second son have completely destructed her youthful, passionate spirit. Jim probably clings to the image of his mother in those delightful days. Feeling responsible for her mother’s downfall, he needs to recreate his mother in bliss and thus amend his guilt. Therefore, for Jim, the romance with Josie marks the way to correct his past and brilliantly *dramatize* his life.

Yet while Mary could not cultivate genuine communication with her own mother, Josie admired her mother for her devotion and self-sacrifice toward her family. For Mary, the sisters in the convent treated

her much more affectionately than her own mother. Mary's mother treated her cruelly out of jealousy because her husband dedicated all the love only toward his daughter. That is, Mary could not see her mother as the role model when she created her own family. On the other hand, Josie's mother was the embodiment of self-sacrifice, as Josie thus pictures her to Hogan; "She was the one could put you in your place when you'd come home drunk and want to tear down the house for the fun of it" (865). The relationship between Hogan and his wife has been passed down as it was to that between him and his daughter. Apparently, Josie does not leave the stony land solely for her father. She also gives helping hands to her brothers who try to escape from the farm for the gold in the west. Her performance as a "slut" never lessens her capacity of "mothering" with her total self-sacrifice, which she probably has learned from her own mother.

Josie, without her mother as the role model now, cannot seek for self-assurance among her male comrades. The constant male gaze around them makes both women self-conscious and agitated. Though apparently it works on Mary much more negatively, Josie also accepts the role of Jim's mother with strain or difficulty. Josie, unlike Jim, full of vigorous spirit for life and can readily connect her physical passion with her spiritual love. Even though she plays a "slut," her faith in love would never allow her to despise the physical union with her man. To enunciate this point, when she reveals her virginity to Jim, she urges him to accept her in a sexual sense:

Then I'll confess the truth to you. I've been a crazy fool. I am a virgin. (*She begins to sob with a strange forlorn shame and humiliation.*) And now you'll never—and I want you to—now more than ever, after what's happened—(*Suddenly she kisses him with fierce passion.*) But you will! I'll make you! To hell with your honorable scruples! I know you want me! I couldn't believe that until tonight—but now I know. It's in your kisses! (*She kisses him again—with passionate tenderness.*) (924-925)

As expressed in this line, Josie has expected Jim to accept her as a partner in the real life. Jim, however, cannot respond to her faithful passion, and treats her desire as a "whore's." He thus negates her physical presence and requires her to remain a mythic. He cannot distinguish the objects of affection from those of lust, and thus he seeks the ideal of a woman in a mother figure with "virginal" quality. Of course, he attempts to see in her a "whore" quite intentionally: By comparing his passion for her to the mere physical, he denies the *body* in her, and thus clarifies her "virginity."

Realizing that her passion never meets the *director's* mood, Josie is now approaching him in a less sexual way. In the following scene, for instance, she is searching for a suitable way of *acting* and Jim is trying to give her the hint of her performance as the *director*:

Whore? Who said you were a whore? But I warned you, didn't I, if you kept on—Why did you have to act like one, asking me to come to bed? That wasn't what I came here for (emphasis added). And you promised tonight would be different. Why the hell did you promise that, if all you wanted was what all the others want, if that's all love means to you? (926)

Here Jim underlines that his love for Josie should be totally separated from physical thirst. In this way, he insists that their romance should last only temporarily owing to its absolute divineness, and that her characterization of their romance is proceeding in a totally wrong way. That is, he requires her to abandon every human passion for this sacred *love*. This line therefore operates as his *direction* toward an *actress*, trying

desperately to meet his need.

Josie quickly responds to Jim's direction, yet in her *performance* she unconsciously exposes her inner distress:

JOSIE (*Watches him for a second, fighting the love that, in spite of her, responds to his appeal—then she springs up and runs to him—with fierce, possessive, maternal tenderness*): Come here to me, you great fool, and stop your silly blather. There's nothing to hate you for. There's nothing to forgive. Sure, I was only trying to give you happiness, because I love you. I'm sorry I was so stupid and didn't see—But I see now, and you'll find I have all the love you need. (*She gives him a hug and kisses him. There is passion in her kiss but it is a tender, protective maternal passion, which he responds to with an instant grateful yielding.*) (926-927)

The process of transforming herself from a lover to a “mother” demands her enormous sacrifice. As she says, “It's easy enough, too, for I have all kinds of love for you—and maybe this is the greatest of all—because it costs so much” (927), she must diminish her own existence to accept the role.

Following Jim's romance in the moonlight, the audience would see that Jim regards all women except his mother as “whores.” Yet, on the other hand, Jim in *Long Day's Journey into Night* displays compassion toward “Fat Violet,” and the warm-hearted prostitute, in return, gives him the affection that his own mother lacks. He seeks “a little heart-to-heart talk concerning the infinite sorrow of life” (816) for brothels. That is, he sees prostitutes essentially as motherly figures, not as the objects of physical lust. Paradoxically, his biological mother cannot “mother” him, and her dope addiction conjures up a whore-like image in his mind. As far as his attitude toward “Fat Violet” concerned, Jim cannot quite separate a mother from a prostitute in his inner world.

It is also possible to say that, however, Jim deliberately mixtures a prostitute with a mother on his *stage*. According to Judith E. Barlow, O'Neill portrays his prostitutes quite sympathetically because “to him the distinction between virgin and whore is less important than the division between those women who ‘mother’ men and those women who do not” (171). As thus pointed out, O'Neill sees his women's greatest trait in their capacity to “mother” the men. Regardless of their profession, if women offer men motherly affection, they can acquire the peace of mind. On the other hand, the heroines who refuse to become “mothers,” like Mary, are severely punished for their lack of self-sacrifice. If O'Neill sees “prostitutes” sympathetically, it is largely because, as Hall lucidly categorizes, they “fulfill men's sexual desires” and “whores,” on the other hand, “threaten the patriarchal system by their female desire” (23). O'Neill himself viewed prostitutes as “children of fate,” and “girls of arrested emotional development, capable of a dogged and childlike loyalty to anyone who was kind to them” (Gelb and Gelb, 1987: 126). As indicated here, O'Neill portrays his “prostitutes” positively owing to their inability to control their fate and total selflessness, which articulates Josie's total devotion to Jim. Likewise, the playwright most vehemently praises the “mothers” who are willing to diminish their own voice for their sons. Josie, in summary, functions as the very embodiment of O'Neill's ideal of a woman, who fulfills every *virtue* of a “virgin,” a “mother” and a “prostitute.”

(4) Conclusion

Josie has sacrificed her hope, passion for life and even her identity for Jim's *masquerade*. As in Heath's discussion, in a *masquerade* the woman both *exists and does not exist*. That is, a *masquerade* is the process of becoming "the woman that she is not," which marks "the fundamental alienation of her being" (54). Hall argues that O'Neill creates his heroines based on stereotypical roles, and in this way, the men acquire "a sense of personal power, identity, and autonomy" (25), all of which his women lose in the process. Based on Hall's argument, Josie has bestowed Jim with the identity as Mary's son, but instead, she has diminished her reason for being. Yet paradoxically, her willingness to *silence* her own voice on Jim's stage provides her with the dignity as a tragic heroine, and thus has transformed this play into "Josie's" play, contrary to O'Neill's intention to offer this work as "Jamie's" play.

Josie, unlike Jim, never longs for "death." Her passion and spiritual energy demand *love* in the real life. Yet Jim receives her solely for her *performance* as an *actress*. Because her *acting* is convincing enough, the audience would see it as the expression of her undisguised self. Nonetheless, even if her *performance* brings Jim to the peaceful end, can Josie see that as her personal victory and continue living her life with a sense of self-respect? Jim never accepts her but as a gifted *performer*. In this light, she still suffers from the inferiority complex just as she played the role of a "slut," being ashamed of her *unfeminine* physical proportion. O'Neill (and Jim) might have "passed beyond mourning and tragedy" (Black 469) by conceiving his confessional *drama*, but Josie has never reached the point of "confessing" her inner distress.

O'Neill, in the earlier version of this play in 1941-42, conveys Jim's lust for Josie with more undisguised description (Floyd 373.)¹² In the final version, however, he underscores Josie's willingness to sacrifice her own need for Jim by thus weakening the lovers' physical side. O'Neill himself comments on Josie in the final script that she firstly longs for the marriage with Jim, then finds it impossible, and finally seeks for a temporary, spiritual romance. When she finally perceives that Jim does not really long for her physical side, she accepts him as his "mother" for the first time (Floyd 373). For Jim the *director*, the love scene beautifully completes his *drama*, but for Josie, it marks nothing but the process of humiliation, affliction and self-abandonment.

Josie, paradoxically, creates *her own drama* on Jim's stage by abandoning her own passion for creation. Sievers praises her trait as a protagonist: Her "struggle and her yearning for fulfillment are decent and deserving, and at the end she achieves some insight, some *Anagnorosis* or objective awareness of herself and her two men" (132). Her passion for life and capacity of love would bring her too much burden, and she will have to lead a life of *mourning* for her lover who has never existed but in her imagination. Now she has reached the point of objectively facing herself, and no longer wants to play a role of a "slut." Compared to Jim who has gone forth to the world of death and illusion, Josie illuminates the stage with more strength for her calmness and acceptance of reality. For this inner struggle alone, Josie should be praised as a tragic heroine both on and off *stage*.

Notes

- 1 A "female Christ" is the expression which O'Neill himself used to describe Christine Ell, the female cook whom he knew in his Greenwich Village days in the later 1910s. She had Josie's "paradoxical traits"—"strange virginal quality" and "a delicacy of spirit in her hulking body" (Gelb and Gelb, 2000: 625-626). For the information on Christine Ell as Josie's model, see also Bogard, p. 451. Christine had also been a prostitute in her past, and reportedly, also inspired O'Neill to create Anna Christie, and Cybel in *The Great God Brown* (King 15). On the other hand, Costello defines Josie as "Virgin," that is, "the intermediary between Christ and man" (506).
- 2 Arthur and Barbara Gelb places *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, written as the dedication to O'Neill's brother Jamie, as the sequel to *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1987, 7-8). Floyd also displays a similar insight for the location of this play in O'Neill's dramatic career (371).
- 3 O'Neill himself had difficulty finding a suitable actress fit for the role. In an interview conducted in 1946, he thus showed the concern about finding an actress who meets the criteria: "I've at last found the required hefty, 6-foot high actress for the lead I don't have to worry about it" (qtd. in Nathan 162). As showed here, Josie's physical proportion marked as much importance as her inner warmth for the playwright at that time.
- 4 O'Neill, as a matter of fact, seems to place much importance on his female characters' physical appearance: Joel Pfister discusses that O'Neill basically pictures his female protagonists as "the surveyed," presenting Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night* and Christine in *Mourning Becomes Electra* as its representatives (202). Pfister's argument well illustrates Josie's over-concern for her physical grossness.
- 5 For the reviews on Jones' performance of Josie, I am citing here Brantley's review. For the other reviews on her performance, see also Feldberg, Hulbert, O'Toole, Pressley, Ridley, Taitte, Winer, the one in *The Times of India*. All those reviews except Ridley's rave Jones' acting as illuminating.
- 6 Jones approaches the role quite differently from Dewhurst, who was greatly applauded by her performance of Josie in the 1973-4 Broadway production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. While Dewhurst underlined the "emotional intensity" of the heroine, Jones approaches the role with "a slower, Southern manner" (O'Haire, n. p.), which seems to embody Josie earthly quality more minutely. Jose Quintero, who directed the 1973-4 production, comments on the role of Josie's as "one of the most difficult roles O'Neill has written," and defines her inner nature as "strong and large as nature, bearing as deeply as she could with the rough talk of a lying harlot, the virginal seed of a miracle" (Quintero 193). He praises Dewhurst as the only one who can fit the demand (Quintero 186), and concluded that he would never direct this play again "because it was impossible for him to see it without thinking of his actors" (Gussow E3). For the details of Quintero's direction and Dewhurst's performance, see also McDough.
- 7 Frederic Carpenter gives a similar insight into Josie's attribute as a heroine to all the "contradictions of her character" as "almost too great to be borne" (162). John Simon also calls her "the woman Eugene would have wanted for himself but invented for James," who is "recognizably a figment too good to be true" (n. p.). Travis Bogard discusses that Josie symbolizes "what is eternal in woman," which she conjures up to give Jim the forgiveness he wants (455). Manheim sees her in a similar way, and it is not surprising to see that both scholars call her "all woman" (197). All these arguments would prove that Josie is O'Neill's (and Jim's) "ideal" image of a woman in every way.
- 8 Arthur and Barbara Gelb record that O'Neill's idealized figure of a woman, just as portrayed in Josie, totally lacked reality, and in his real life, the playwright tended to control his women's freedom both sexually and spiritually. He, above anything else, demanded "a woman who could understand and appreciate him and devote herself entirely to

his artistic aim" (1987, 369). Jane Torrey approaches O'Neill's view of women in a similar way: "His woman tended to be completely fulfilled by their relationship with men" (63).

9 Donald P. Costello's observation would articulate Josie's attribute as Jim's surrogate mother with a much more romanticized image: "She explicitly stands in for Mary Tyrone, presenting to Jamie Tyrone exactly what he needs and what his mother might have given him: understanding and forgiveness" (506).

10 Floyd presents the title of the early draft of this play, "The Moon Bore Twins," as the reason why O'Neill sees Josie as his "alter ego." She discusses that O'Neill places himself as the position of "the good listener of this sordid tale" of Jamie. O'Neill himself, just as Jim in this play does, attempted to amend and recreate his real life" (381). Black sees Josie with a similar point of view, stating that O'Neill created her as "an objective witness to his (i.e. Jamie's) own last act of mourning" (469).

11 Suzanne Burr views that O'Neill named Jamie's mother "Mary" because the "blessed Virgin" symbolizes "a reflection of the strength, love, and courage Mary herself has lost" and thus "the part of herself she has silenced" (46). Based on this argument, it is possible to state that Josie, just as Virgin does, embodies Mary's past dream and hope.

12 Floyd reports that, in the earlier draft, Jim and Josie present a splendid "love scene" in a physically bolder way. In this earlier draft, Jim never shows a sense of disgust toward his own sexual desire, and displays his lust for Josie more unashamedly (373). It alludes that O'Neill finally molded this dramatic work into a more fable-like story by eliminating the *human* side of the couple.

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