

APPENDIX

The Defense of Psychoanalysis in Literature
Long Day's Journey Into Night
 and
A View From The Bridge
 Albert Rothenberg and Eugene D. Shapiro

I

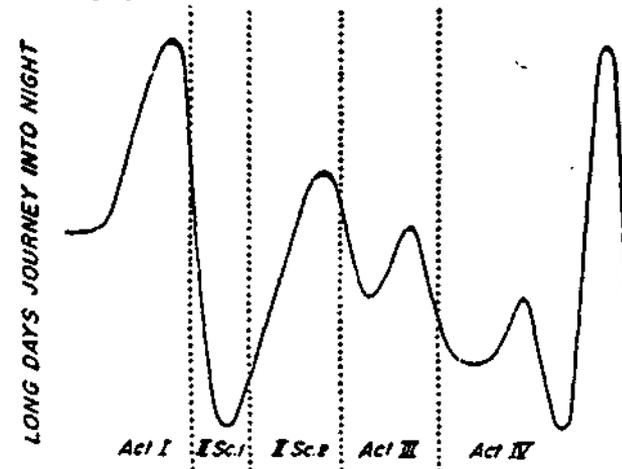
Psychoanalysis and literary criticism were made for each other, if ever two endeavors were.* A psychoanalytic approach to literary criticism merges two intuitive and analytic pathway to the human heart. But this type of criticism had often proved banal and repetitious, reducing literary themes to the ubiquitous Oedipus complex and ignoring form, flux or language. Despite some notable exceptions, there have been serious sins. Psychoanalytic criticism has often ignored the aesthetic integrity of literary work, focusing exclusively on limited elements of play and theme. Or, it has aimed at extraneous and scientifically use justified analyses of the personality of the author in relation to his work.

There is really no reason to challenge the validity of psychoanalysis or to look for some special theoretical flaw accounting for the unsatisfactory showing with respect to literature. Current clinical practice of psychoanalysis involves a type of formed analysis of patients' behavior that lends itself directly to literary criticism. Practicing psychoanalysts routinely analyze formed properties of patient's behavior called psychological defense. Curiously, no one has ever applied such an analysis directly of literature, despite the fact that literature contains the everyday

defenses — even when they are stylized, condensed or designed to make an aesthetic statement — as though they were defenses in living people?

A major difference between a play and everyday life is that characters in a play have no direct effect on our lives. Consequently, our irritation with their defensiveness does not overwhelm us but engages us and stimulates us. We expect a work of art to throw us off balance, and we court the experience of successive stimulation and relaxation again and again. Our reactions to defenses and our experience of tension reduction play a large role in our aesthetic response to the drama.

The following curve illustrates the patterns of tension and tension reduction in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. It is derived from a graph of the numerical distribution of all types of defenses throughout the course of the play.



The play starts with a high level of defensiveness among the characters and a high level tension in the very first act. There are some rather sharp peaks of increased defensiveness at several points throughout the remainder of the play but the overall level

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O' Neill and Otto Rank : Doubles,
" Death Instincts," and the Trauma of Birth

Stephen Watt

" You were born afraid."

Mary Tyrone to Edmund

"But he's dead now [Major Melody].
And I ain't tried a bit. I'm fresh
as a man new born."

Con Melody

"She loves me. I'm not afraid ! . . .
She is warmly around me ! She is my
Skin ! She is my armor ! Now I am
born — I — the I ! — one and indivisible."

Dion anthony

I

In one extremely defensive interior monologue in Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* (1928), Charles Marsden contemplates the widespread influence of Sigmund Freud's thought on the American intelligentsia. In doing so, Marsden also predicts what interpretive tools many readers of O'Neill's plays will employ when digging through character's psychological strata : "O Oedipus, O my king! The world is adopting you" (I, 34).¹ Blithely dismissing the Freudian emphases on dream interpretation and "sex" as constitutive of an "easy cure-all," Marsden also anticipates O'Neill's own frustration with the unrelenting stream of Freudian, especially Oedipal, readings of his plays.² The literary critical "world," insofar as O'Neill is concerned, has indeed adopted "Herr Freud," as Marsden refers to him, and King Oedipus as well. Even in studies only remotely psychoanalytic, Freud and oedipus often appear as "givens," figures

Part of a Long Story



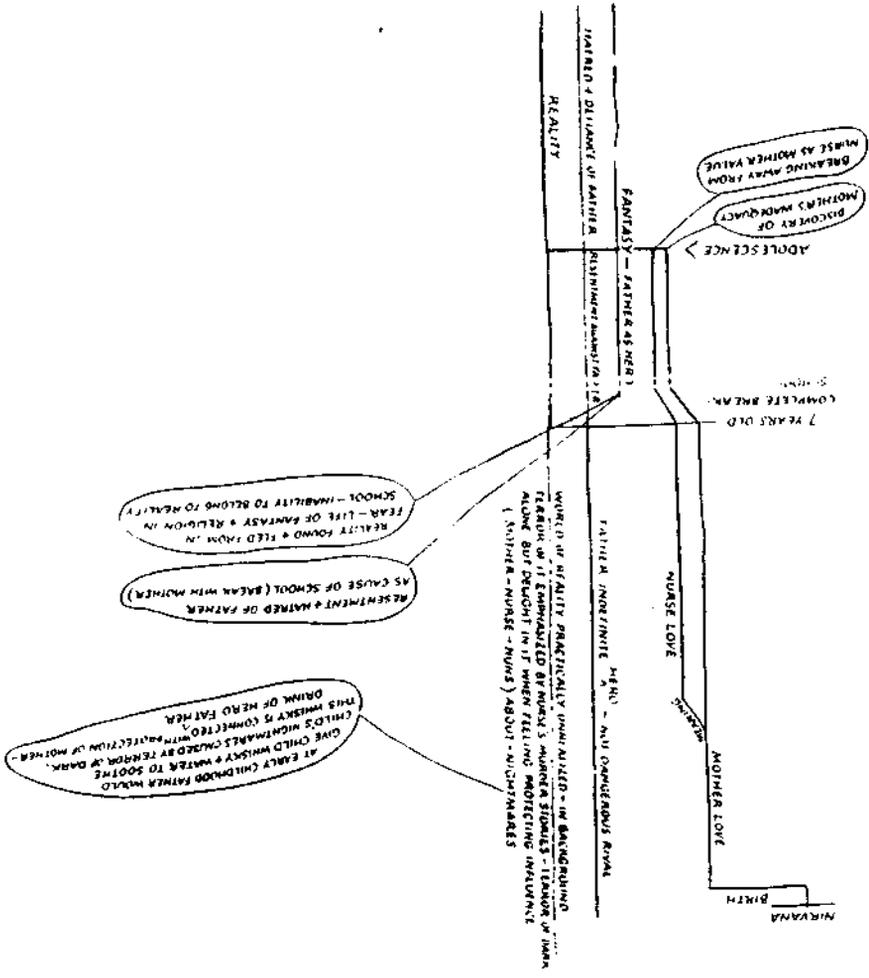
Agnes Boulton

Contents

Turn Back the Universe and Give Me Yesterday	7
Death at Dawn	49
Flight into Snow	93
The Past Comes Back to Francis' Flats	123
Walking with the Little Clowns	221
A Red Cape and Some Holy Images	305

Doubleday & Company, Inc.
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What Agnes shaw



O' Neill's Diagram — his own effort to understand the force behind
O' Neill : Son and Playwright by Louis Sheaffer. London. 1969)