

Eugene O'Neill's Protest about White Supremacy in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates Eugene O'Neill's protest against racism and white supremacy found in his play, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. O'Neill expressed his protest in relation to white supremacy as a reflection of some part of his life. Therefore, M.H. Abrams' (1971) expressive approach is applied. To answer the research questions, the primary data of this research, i.e., excerpts from *All God's Chillun Got Wings* script and Eugene O'Neill biography related to white supremacy were collected and analyzed. Dictionaries, newspapers, journals, and articles related to the play and Eugene O'Neill were used as secondary data to support the analysis. The analysis reveals that O'Neill criticizes the different treatments because of skin colour and how to fix it. The study suggests that the different treatments related to the racial differences did not only affect the oppressed but also the oppressor. The solution Eugene O'Neill presented to remedy the situation is to see each other in the same standing regardless of the difference in racial genetics.

Keywords: *Eugene O'Neill; racial miscegenation; racial segregation; racism; white supremacy.*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, race is used to justify differing treatments towards certain groups of people instead of biological differences caused by long term adaptation in ancestral genes.

It became a way to inflict physical inferiority, used as a hereditary privilege to solidify a higher social standing, and often times as a means to oppress a group of people with a certain racial background.

A highlight of this treatment is the racial segregation happening in United States of America which lasted until the end of the 19th century.

White Supremacy is one variation inside of beliefs related in racial difference flourished in America post slavery era. It is a belief that white people are inherently superior than those of colored racial groups, especially black people.

This belief, which flourished and was popular in the 19th century at the peak of racial discrimination, garners a lot of conflicts. Famous American writers have included white supremacy as a core topic or a supplementary theme for their works. One of them was Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, an American playwright and a Nobel laureate in Literature.

Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (AGCGW) tells the story of unhappy marriage between Jim Harris and Ella Downey, a married couple of different racial background living in America at the peak of White Supremacy indoctrination.

It is an inspiring story of what it means to have a life in 19th century America as a black man who wants to marry a white woman. Not only does it show one side of two polar opposite groups, this play also gives a clear picture of how it feels to be a white woman growing up in society that hails their whiteness as a priceless treasure and identity.

These are the reasons why in this research we attempt explore the message Eugene O'Neill left inside AGCGW. The play shows how devastating ideals in ruining a person life handed-down. And out of it all, O'Neill describe the uselessness of a merit stemmed by societal belief when one cannot accept the idea of human as only a human, regardless of their racial difference.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have been carried out about O'Neill's works, especially AGCGW. For example, Nufiarni (2015) examines the relationship between American racial segregation and racial discrimination in shaping the societal racism depicted in *All God Chillun Got Wings*. She focuses more on how racism and white supremacy depicted in AGCGW reflects 20th century American racial discrimination towards black people. She argued that white supremacy is an idea handed down as a means to oppress the other party and to justify actions that otherwise can be classified as racial discrimination.

Another research by Gagnon (2003) investigates Eugene O'Neill's vision on racial differences as a series of complex, emotionally and psychologically, developed black characters. O'Neill's perspective infuses deeper psychological aspect into his black characters. It places them as fate-driven primitives at the mercy of their previous histories mostly as a slave brought by Europe colonizer to do domestic works as well as to make fortune to fuel European war. The acceptance that his black characters possess came from long histories of racial discrimination that it ingrained not only to the white race as superior, but also black people as the inferior breed thus must bow down to the superior race.

Gagnon (2003) describes how O'Neill's major black characters are usually tragic, but otherwise, view their race as inferior and accepts the doctrine of white supremacy. These black characters do reflect O'Neill's quest to understand and examine the nature of a common human experience, a view that is ultimately consistent with his entire works.

Another study by Tuck (1988) compares two works about black people, AGCGW (O'Neill, 1924) and *Light in August* (Faulkner, 1932). She argued that O'Neill's AGCGW had a great influence on Faulkner's *Light in August*. As black characters, Tuck (1988) argued, "Jim Harris and Joe Christmas are unusual characters because, though black, they are portrayed as human beings, sensitive and baffled men who struggle to understand the prejudiced world in which they live" (para. 3).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As written in Gelbs *Journal and interview of Eugene O'Neill*, O'Neill's works mostly depict a certain part of his life and written in his certain degree of pessimism. The expressive approach is an appropriate frame to get the right perspective towards the work, and the essential elements to be explored and analyzed in order to reach the objective of the study.

We treat the work as a drama. As explained by Millett and Bentley (1935):

A clue to the essential elements of drama is furnished by the first clause of the most famous of all definitions of tragedy, Aristotle's "Tragedy is an imitation of an action (p. 3).

According to Millett and Bentley (1935), drama is a representation of an action. In other words, drama is not an actual life experience but rather a representation of life experience. It is an imitation of someone life experiences or ideas that is manifested in the form of a play. That a drama work represents the author's life, AGCGW is an expression of its author, who is Eugene O'Neill.

In order to get the elements to be analyzed, we refer to Abrams (1971), who argued that

A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulsive of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (p. 27).

According to those statements, the core of an artwork is the author's mind, ideas, and experiences. From the idea, the elements to be found and analyzed in the study are the author's way of

thinking, life experiences and ideas. And because of this, Author biography is a necessity in order to gain an understanding towards his experiences.

The final analysis is done by connecting the elements found from the external sources to the events and characters in the literary work.

The final analysis reveals what idea on white supremacy that Eugene O'Neill wants to convey through his work is based on his view that is influenced by his life experience.

METHODS

The data in this research are the script of AGCGW and Eugene O'Neill biography collected by doing library research. Because it is a library research, all of the data is collected with qualitative method. The main data used are the play script as it contains Eugene O'Neill idea and depiction in a written form that is AGCGW.

The secondary data used to support the arguments are books written by critics and historian as well as the journal and biography of Eugene O'Neill as tools to correlate the script with Eugene O'Neill life and experience. The writer also uses Eugene O'Neill's other plays that delve into similar idea to support the analysis as supporting pillar to further explain Eugene O'Neill attitude.

The data are all in written form as no record about the play in stage can be found. The data sources are the script, books, e-books, and internet.

Griffith (2010) explains that

as descriptive term, fiction is misleading, for although fiction does often include made-up or imaginary elements, it has potential for being 'true': true to the nature of reality and true to the human experience (p. 41).

With this statement as a basis, the main data that is AGCGW written script is analyzed and correlated with Eugene O'Neill biography to find the connection between Eugene O'Neill experience and its influence in shaping the play and the characters to state his ideas as every author works has their opinion and standing regarding an idea that is white supremacy.

By taking note about the relation between what is depicted in AGCGW and O'Neill life through his biography and printed letters, it can reveal Eugene O'Neill attitude toward the idea that is White Supremacy, his resentment and his solution.

All characters in AGCGW can be described as dramatic embodiment that is human. It is an expressionist play occurred in a setting where racial heritage is all what matters. Jim Harris and Ella Downey are born from two different races. One is born in black race; one is born in white race. It is their struggle of being born in two different races where racial heritage plays a huge role in someone life and privilege is what makes the play worth to be noted for.

Characterization is developed with greater attention to detail, and there is a willingness on the part of O'Neill to temporize the inevitable while groping toward some new formulation of human development measured against the background of symbolic forces. However, O'Neill has not abandoned expressionism for social realism.

At first glance, it seems that the theme for AGCGW theme revolves around racial segregation, racial discrimination, and the overall point of miscegenation in America post Jim Crow law. But reading further to O'Neill biography and view, the interior view had been the same like his other works, *The Hairy Ape* that deals with the corruption of selfhood and destruction of vitality associated with a warped community. Taking this theme sounds more familiar for Eugene O'Neill to insert his tidbit of life experience and it shows more than just a critic to racial discrimination.

And by taking this theme, it is easier to relate the play to Eugene O'Neill as a person in term of view, message and relevance. Ultimately, the implicit theme of violation of personal selfhood is what leads the story into conclusion, not because of the background of race crossed love that had gone wrong and solidify the danger of miscegenation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jim Harris as the black man

Jim Harris, born in an African-American descend, has a darker complexion than Ella. He is a man oppressed by the belief of White Supremacy since his childhood to the length that he began to despise his blackness and doubting his worthiness because of it.

O'Neill shows that Jim is bothered by his apparent blackness since the beginning of the play. His vision about black and white is settled. He dreams of becoming white and fallen deeply in love with a white girl, Ella Downey. He tried to imitate white people from their appearance, their concern about study, and even going as far as drinking chalk to make his complexion as white as that of white people that he regards higher than he is.

JOE--(with disgusted resentment) You mean tell me dat nigger's graduatin'?

SHORTY--Ask him. (Jim Harris comes in. He is dressed in black, stiff white collar, etc.--a quiet-mannered Negro boy with a queerly-baffled, sensitive face.)

JIM--(pleasantly) Hello, fellows. (They grunt in reply, looking over him scornfully.)

JOE--(staring resentfully) Is you graduatin' tonight?

JIM--Yes.

JOE--(spitting disgustedly) Fo' Gawd's sake! You is gittin' high-falutin'!

JIM--(smiling deprecatingly) This is my second try. I didn't pass last year.

JOE--What de hell does it git you, huh? Whatever is you gwine do wid it now you gits it? Live lazy on yo' ol' woman?

JIM--(assertively) I'm going to study and become a lawyer.

JOE--(with a snort) Fo' Chris' sake, nigger! (O'Neill, 1924, p. 9)

Even when he is being scorned from imitating white man, it is ingrained within himself that black is lower than white and thus, in order to achieve a

better life, he need to copy what white man do. He is graduates from his ideas that drinking a chalk will makes you white but that just it. He still is regarding his blackness as low and white as better.

It is a sad viewpoint that O'Neill introduce early in this play. Not only the white will resent black, but the black will resent white in their mighty standpoint. The doctrine is ingrained deeply that even the black man did not think that it was good to pursue study, simply because they are convinced that study and intelligence relates to white and it is hopeless for them to pursue.

Jim Harris outline of character is a black man that in bothered by his apparent blackness. He is influenced by the doctrine so much he doubts his own ability, his own worthiness that he develops an inferiority complex towards white people. He regards everything good as white and everything bad as white. And being born in the black side, he automatically regards himself as bad, as lower than white and thus, undeserving of Ella.

Contrary to Ella changes throughout the story, Jim did not undergoes many changes since his first appearance. True, he is less optimistic than what he appears in the first act but that just it. After Ella's apparent disapproval towards him, he is being reminded about this blackness by everyone. It is as it is illustrate in the excerpt below:

JOE--(stands for a while glaring at Jim, his fierce little eyes peering out of his black face. Then he spits on his hands aggressively and strides up to the oblivious Jim. He stands in front of him, gradually working himself into a fury at the other's seeming indifference to his words.) Listen to me, nigger: I got a heap to whisper in yo' ear! Who is you, anyhow? Who does you think you is? Don't yo' old man and mine work on de docks togidder befo' yo' old man gits his own truckin' business? Yo' ol' man swallows his nickels, my ol' man buys him beer wid dem and swallows dat--dat's the on'y diffrence. Don't you 'n me drag up togidder?

JIM--(dully) I'm your friend, Joe.

JOE--No, you isn't! I ain't no fren o' yourn! I don't even know who you is! What's all dis schoolin' you doin'? What's all dis dressin' up and graduatin' an' sayin' you gwine study be a lawyer? What's all dis fakin' an' pretendin' and swellin' out grand an' talkin' soft and perlite? What's all dis denyin' you's a nigger--an' wid de white boys listenin' to you say it! Is you aimin' to buy white wid yo' ol' man's dough like Mickey say? What is you? (in a rage at the other's silence) You don't talk? Den I takes it out o' yo' hide! (He grabs Jim by the throat with one hand and draws the other fist back.) Tell me befo' I wrecks yo' face in! Is you a nigger or isn't you? (shaking him) Is you a nigger, Nigger? Nigger, is you a nigger?

JIM--(looking into his eyes--quietly) Yes. I'm a nigger. We're both niggers. (They look at each other for a moment. Joe's rage vanishes. He slumps onto a box beside Jim's. He offers him a cigarette. Jim takes it. Joe scratches a match and lights both their cigarettes.)

JOE--(after a puff, with full satisfaction) Man, why didn't you 'splain dat in de fust place?

JIM--We're both niggers. (The same hand-organ man of Scene One comes to the corner. He plays the chorus of "Bonbon Buddie The Chocolate Drop." They both stare straight ahead listening. Then the organ man goes away. A silence. Joe gets to his feet.) (O'Neill, 1924, p.14)

He is comforted by his heritage, painfully reminded that he is lesser than Ella and it is useless to hope for her. And throughout the play, first by Joe, second by Ella, third by everyone else he is being reminded unconsciously that he is of lesser breed and that he is less worthy than that of white.

Later, when he found Ella after she is dumped by Mickey and offered a job to be a prostitute by Shorty, he still stubbornly convincing himself that he wants Ella to be his bride. That she is the best girl in this world. But looking back to it, more than it is a love, it is his desire to be accepted as a white

that drives him to pursue Ella, to be accepted by the white girl he is enamored that he is worthy is what drives him this far. It is to verify that he is, in his blackness is not worthless.

In the event of his proposal to Ella, he confessed to her that what makes him fail the test is not his lack of intelligence. It is his developed inferior complex that makes him unable to answer anything.

JIM--It's all in my head--all fine and correct to a T. Then when I'm called on--I stand up--all the white faces looking at me--and I can feel their eyes--I hear my own voice sounding funny, trembling--and all of a sudden it's all gone in my head--there's nothing remembered--and I hear myself stuttering--and give up--sit down--They don't laugh, hardly ever. They're kind. They're good people. They're considerate, damn them! But I feel branded!" (O'Neill, 1924, p. 18)

It is as close as O'Neill description about the complex developed by black people in regards of living in a warped community that destroy the sense of self. They began to doubt their worthiness, and if left too long, will cripple their ability to achieve their goals.

Deluded by the belief so much, he regards Ella Downey every action as right and him as the guilty one, as the one who makes the mistake. It is shown repeatedly in the second scene when he, instead of defending for himself, letting Ella degrades him further. He became submissive to Ella demands and very protective to her.

He even drove everyone else who wants to help him. His sister, Hattie for example, repeatedly advise him to believe in himself yet after hearing Ella clarification, he submit to Ella's demand that he is the worthless one, that he is the stupid one, that he is the one who needs Ella instead of the other way around.

Jim marriage is not the happy one. True, he is deluded that if love is white then everything is right. It is perhaps Eugene O'Neill way to portray his own marriage that slowly, always crumbling to the ground. His familial relationship was never the best. He is divorced two times; the last is not met with divorce but a steadily estranged relationship.

He disowns all of his children and his parents and brother died out of suicide.

If there are people who disagree about the prospect of 'love can conquer all', it is Eugene O'Neill. Nearly all of his plays contain his pessimism and ended up in the same pattern of delusion and distress that ruin the happy ending into a tragedy.

He wrote Jim marriage with so much hope as they set sail to France, for a new beginning at first. But after two years living in France, they came back with Ella developing a mania that makes her degrading Jim lower in a full dialogue.

ELLA--Yes, we both graduated from the same High School, didn't we? That was dead easy for me. Why I hardly even looked at a book. But Jim says it was awfully hard for him. He failed one year, remember? (She turns and smiles at Jim--a tolerant, superior smile but one full of genuine love. Hattie is outraged, but Jim smiles.)

JIM--Yes, it was hard for me, Honey.

ELLA--And the law school examinations Jim hardly ever could pass at all. Could you? (She laughs lovingly.) (O'Neill, 1924, p. 28)

He accepted Ella Judgment without question. Instead of denying the accusation, it fuels his inferiority complex and his concept that he is black and therefore, worthless. Though the accusation is stressing him and hindering his progress and study, he did not voice it. In the end, he slowly falling down with Ella because he still cannot let go his deeply ingrained belief that white is everything good, that everything Ella says is nothing but truth instead of seeing himself in a new light like his sister. It is as illustrated in the last scene,

JIM--(suddenly throws himself on his knees and raises his shining eyes, his transfigured face) Forgive me, God--and make me worthy! Now I see Your Light again! Now I hear Your Voice! (He begins to weep in an ecstasy of religious humility.) Forgive me, God, for blaspheming You! Let this fire of burning suffering purify me of selfishness and make me worthy of the

child You send me for the woman You take away!

ELLA--(jumping to her feet--excitedly) Don't cry, Jim! You mustn't cry! I've got only a little time left and I want to play. Don't be old Uncle Jim now. Be my little boy, Jim. Pretend you're Painty Face and I'm Jim Crow. Come and play!

JIM--(still deeply exalted) Honey, Honey, I'll play right up to the gates of Heaven with you! (She tugs at one of his hands, laughingly trying to pull him up from his knees as the curtain falls) (O'Neill, 1924, p. 40)

Jim role and characteristic is clear. He is O'Neill representative of what damage could warped society do to a person sense of selfhood. Ingrained by an idea that everyone with inherent colored skin is less than white people, Jim loses his sense of self-worth, and thus his sense of self as a human being.

He idolizes the white and began to imitate everything white men do. And when he still failed to become a white man, he doubts his worthiness, convinced that he is less worthy and that he is inherently stupid. He began to be very submissive to his white skinned wife and put her in the same height as an angel, as everything that is right and everything that is pure.

In this sense, the loss of an idea that every mankind is the same human, that human, regardless of difference in color are the same, destroy the believer. It is crushingly so that Jim is the Subject, the referred inferior being that he believes he is so. That he is undeserving and thus, left miserable and succumbed into a manic delusion of beautiful past.

Ella Downey as a White Woman

Ella Downey, one of the two leading protagonist in the story is Jim Harris wife and respectively, a white woman. Due to her whiter complexion that often have red spots throughout her face; she is being called "Painty Face" by her friends. She hates to be called Painty Face because it differentiates her with her friends as she has yet being influenced by the doctrine that white people

is superior above colored races. It can be seen in the dialogue,

JIM--(protectingly) You mustn't never be scared when I'm hanging round, Painty Face.

ELLA--Don't call me that, Jim--please!

JIM--(contritely) I didn't mean nuffin'. I didn't know you'd mind.

ELLA--I do--more'n anything.

JIM--You oughtn't to mind. Dey's jealous, dat's what.

ELLA--Jealous? Of what?

JIM--(pointing to her face) Of dat. Red 'n' white. It's purty.

ELLA--I hate it!

JIM--It's purty. Yes, it's--it's purty. It's--outa sight! (O'Neill, 1924, p. 5)

It is seen below that Ella hates to be referred as painty face, to be referred not as her but as what can be seen in her complexion. Children that she is, hates the fact that her face is so white that red can be seen so easily. It is also seen that she did not mind to befriend Jim Harris, a black boy that is always referred as Jim Crow (An archetypal figure of black race in America), and did not mind to have the same position, same ground with them. She even goes so far as to agree to be black instead of white, instead of being called painty face.

ELLA--I hate it. I wish I was black like you.

JIM--(sort of shrinking) No you don't. Dey'd call you Crow, den--or Chocolate--or Smoke.

ELLA--I wouldn't mind.

JIM--(somerly) Dey'd call you nigger sometimes, too.

ELLA--I wouldn't mind.

JIM--(humbly) You wouldn't mind?

ELLA--No, I wouldn't mind. (an awkward pause)

JIM--(suddenly) You know what, Ella? Since I been tuckin' yo' books to school and back, I been drinkin' lots o' chalk 'n'

water tree times a day. Dat Tom, de barber, he tole me dat make me white, if I drink enough. (pleadingly) Does I look whiter?

ELLA--(comfortingly) Yes--maybe--a little bit--

JIM--(trying a careless tone) Reckon dat Tom's a liar, an' de joke's on me! Dat chalk only makes me feel kinder sick inside.

ELLA--(wonderingly) Why do you want to be white?

JIM--Because--just because--I lak dat better.

ELLA--I wouldn't. I like black. Let's you and me swap. I'd like to be black. (clapping her hands) Gee, that'd be fun, if we only could!

JIM--(hesitatingly) Yes--maybe--

ELLA--Then they'd call me Crow, and you'd be Painty Face! (O'Neill, 1924, p. 6)

While Jim, longing to be a white and going as far as drinking chalks and water, Ella has yet to taste the doctrine that makes Jim so eager to change his appearance. This is O'Neill way of telling that racism and racial discrimination is not written in individual gene.

It is the society that shapes those children who knows nothing about the idea of black and white that influence their way of thinking. This may reflect to Eugene O'Neill life as a child. He wants to prove that even when his parents are alcoholic and drug addict, he is not inherently alcoholic. It is circumstances and life choices that draw him to alcohol and later, suffers from alcoholism like his father. But as children, he is not yet to recognize what is alcoholism as he draws his solace in books when he was sent to St Aloysius Academy for Boys in Bronx.

Moreover, he elaborates in the second act that it is indeed societal influences, the ability of children to learn from their surroundings are what makes them adapt the same attitude, the same belief, and the same behavior to their parents, to their race in this play case. It is illustrated that,

ELLA--(shortly, turning away) Hello. (then to Mickey) Come on, Mick. Walk down with me. I got to hurry.

JIM--(blurts out) Wait--just a second. (painfully) Ella, do you hate--colored people?

MICKEY--Aw, shut up!

JIM--Please answer.

ELLA--(forcing a laugh) Say! What is this--another exam?

JIM--(doggedly) Please answer.

ELLA--(irritably) Of course I don't! Haven't I been brought up alongside--Why, some of my oldest--the girls I've been to public school the longest with--

JIM--Do you hate me, Ella?

ELLA--(confusedly and more irritably) Say, is he drunk? Why should I? I don't hate anyone.

JIM--Then why haven't you ever hardly spoken to me--for years?

ELLA--(resentfully) What would I speak about? You and me've got nothing in common any more.

JIM--(desperately) Maybe not any more--but--right on this corner--do you remember once--?

ELLA--I don't remember nothing! (angrily) Say! What's got into you to be butting into my business all of a sudden like this? Because you finally managed to graduate, has it gone to your head? (O'Neill, 1924, p. 11-12)

As Ella grows older, she begins to adapt, and with O'Neill dramatization, we can catch a glimpse of his disapproval over the doctrine that is white supremacy. At this stage, even when Ella did not outwardly say it, her disapproving glance towards Jim is clear indication that yes, she thinks of Jim not as highly as she was during their childhood days.

Eugene O'Neill illustrates Ella differently than the Ella in the first act, a soft hearted, kind child who idolizes her savior that is Jim Harris. This Ella now looks at Jim disapprovingly. Arrogance as the

superior race illustrated with gestures rather than outward sentences. She even goes far as denying the fact that once upon a time in her childhood days, she loves Jim Harris as Jim, not yet realize that he is a black boys who was so enamored with her he drink chalks to make his complexion whiter.

She thinks of Jim now on a lower ground. He is a black man so she will not associate with him because she is white woman. And her retort, "Because you finally managed to graduate, has it gone to your head?" (O'Neill, 1924, p. 12) Implies that she think of Jim intelligence as lower than she is as, lower than every white people.

Her opinion about black and white becomes clearer to see when latters, she was dumped by Mickey. In this despaired stage then she is helped by Jim who, despite everything, still wants to marry her. Things to be noted is that when refers to Jim kindness, almost as if it is a sarcasm implied by O'Neill, she refers it as white. She draws the line that everything good is white and everything bad is black as what the doctrine of white supremacy entails.

ELLA--Of course. (affectionately) Don't I know how fine you've been to me! You've been the only one in the world who's stood by me--the only understanding person--and all after the rotten way I used to treat you.

JIM--But before that--way back so high--you treated me good. (He smiles.)

ELLA--You've been white to me, Jim. (She takes his hand.)

JIM--White--to you!

ELLA--Yes.

JIM--All love is white. I've always loved you. (this with the deepest humility) (18-19)

It is as seen below that both Ella and Jim has been distorted in their definition of kindness, in their definition of love. Ella refers Jim kindness white, that he is white to her while Jim refers to his love, all love is white.

But O'Neill writes in this play that this doctrine, this train of thought will not end up well in advance. As Ella now prejudiced that all white is good and all black is evil, she begins to be gripped

by fear as she agrees to marry Jim, severing her relationship to her family.

Her fear morph into a depression and depression advanced into a mania. The fear that gnaws in her heart after the marriage flourishing in France, where they spent their honeymoon in. in the land where whiteness and blackness of your skin means nothing made her realize how different it was the situation compared to America.

She grows lonely in France. It stems from how different France is in term of prejudice and societal laws and standard that she began to feel different from everyone else. She feels exiled and lonely, that no one will understand her. It is this loneliness that turn to depression and at a later date, mania.

Similar to Ella, Eugene O'Neill also suffered from depression since early date. It is mayhap his portrait, his way of telling his reader what depression can turn someone into. His drama always contain some sort of pessimism that stems out from his depression and AGCGW were no different.

This change in personality can be detected early after their return to France. Jim said that Ella grew lonely in France.

JIM--Oh, it's nothing serious. Nerves. She needs a rest.

HATTIE--Wasn't living in France restful?

JIM--Yes, but--too lonely--especially for her.

HATTIE--(resentfully) Why? Didn't the people there want to associate--?

JIM--(quickly) Oh, no indeedy, they didn't think anything of that. (after a pause) But--she did. For the first year it was all right. Ella liked everything a lot. She went out with French folks and got so she could talk it a little--and I learned it--a little. We were having a right nice time. I never thought then we'd ever want to come back here.

HATTIE--(frowning) But--what happened to change you?

JIM--(after a pause--haltingly) Well--you see--the first year--she and I were living around--like friends--like a brother and

sister--like you and I might. (O'Neill, 1924, p. 25)

While it is clear that Ella suffers from early stage of depression caught by her fear, it can be seen that Ella never loves Jim. She agreed to marry him out of his kindness. She married him because that's the only option she has, married to a black man that loves her.

In the latter date, her sickness worsen to the point of she is having a delusion that her skin turn black. And viewing that black as evil, she feels that she turns to be lesser than she was, a white woman. She begins to resent Jim who married her at first, throwing derogative terms to Jim and his family, even out rightly claims that Jim lack of intellect is what anchors her.

She took a comfort of Jim failed exams as a means to justify her position, that she is still more than what Jim is, that she still won against black when Hattie, Jim sister tells her about her accomplishments. It is always mentioned that she will say "Poor Jim" when Jim failed. This can be translated into a double meaning that O'Neill plays in his writing. Jim views it as Ella consoling him, that she is everything good in this world and that she comfort his worthless black self means that he needs to treasure it.

But from other perspective, it can also means that the phrase is what Ella use in order to justify herself, that she is still better than Jim, that her whiteness did not fails yet, and that she , as a white woman still triumph and gain a higher ground than a black people.

And her mania worsened as she began to hear voices, began to be afraid of tribal mask in the living room, that she began to resort into violence and bringing knife to murder Jim if he succeed his bar exam. And after hearing that he fails, she confesses to him that she will murder him, pushing Jim into a depression.

ELLA--(writhing out of her chair like some fierce animal, the knife held behind her--with fear and hatred) You didn't--you didn't--you didn't pass, did you?

JIM--(looking at her wildly) Pass? Pass? (He begins to chuckle and laugh between sentences and phrases, rich, Negro

laughter, but heart-breaking in its mocking grief.) Good Lord, child, how come you can ever imagine such a crazy idea? Pass? Me? Jim Crow Harris? Nigger Jim Harris--become a full-fledged Member of the Bar! Why the mere notion of it is enough to kill you with laughing! It'd be against all natural laws, all human right and justice. It'd be miraculous, there'd be earthquakes and catastrophes, the seven Plagues'd come again and locusts'd devour all the money in the banks, the second Flood'd come roaring and Noah'd fall overboard, the sun'd drop out of the sky like a ripe fig, and the Devil'd perform miracles, and God'd be tipped head first right out of the Judgment seat! (He laughs, maudlinly uproarious.)

ELLA--(her face beginning to relax, to light up) Then you--you didn't pass?

JIM--(spent--giggling and gasping idiotically) Well, I should say not! I should certainly say not!

ELLA--(With a cry of joy, pushes all the law books crashing to the floor--then with childish happiness she grabs Jim by both hands and dances up and down.) Oh, Jim, I knew it! I knew you couldn't! Oh, I'm so glad, Jim! I'm so happy! You're still my old Jim--and I'm so glad! (He looks at her dazedly, a fierce rage slowly gathering on his face. She dances away from him. His eyes follow her. His hands clench. She stands in front of the mask--triumphantly) There! What did I tell you? I told you I'd give you the laugh! (She begins to laugh with wild unrestraint, grabs the mask from its place, sets it in the middle of the table and plunging the knife down through it pins it to the table.) There! Who's got the laugh now?

JIM--(his eyes bulging--hoarsely) You devil! You white devil woman! (in a terrible roar, raising his fists above her head) You devil!

ELLA--(looking up at him with a bewildered cry of terror) Jim! (Her appeal recalls him to himself. He lets his arms slowly drop to his sides, bowing his head. Ella points tremblingly to the mask.) It's all right, Jim! It's dead. The devil's dead. See! It couldn't live--unless you passed. If you'd passed it would have lived in you. Then I'd have had to kill you, Jim, don't you see?--or it would have killed me. But now I've killed it. (She pats his hand.) So you needn't ever be afraid any more, Jim. (O'Neill, 1924, p. 37-38)

This excerpt from the play, albeit a little bit long, captures the tragedy O'Neill wants to convey perfectly. It describes his idea about what ends he thought it will be when one-sided love, distorted belief, and tragedy met together. His pessimism about love conquers all is illustrated here deeply as it may reflect the life of his parents' love life and his own marriage.

Ella Downey is Eugene O'Neill's representation in the white people side, with all details entailed on how destructive, how pointless and misleading racial superiority is. He underlines the fact that on the other land, out of America, it was not mattered if one skin is black or white. Blackness of the skin did not mean lower intelligence and whiteness of skin did not mean a better person.

It is that Ella did not want to lose the inherent superior standing she gained by being white, by being the superior one in that warped community is what destroyed her. Eugene O'Neill depicts the destruction not only in the side of the victim, not only from the side of the inferior one but it also wrought destruction to self in the aggressor too.

The delusion of power is what corrupted Ella's sense of self that she fails to see Jim's love as a love from a man to a woman, but as a worship of inferior standing human to superior standing human. It is the standing that she is white that destroyed both in the end.

Eugene O'Neill's Protest

One theme implicit in the play is sounded here is the violation of personal selfhood. In one sense we may consider Jim Harris's union with Ella

Downey is a failed attempt to recognize the obvious. This marriage of symbolic opposites results in madness and regression to a childhood past rather than a popular theme of 'love can conquer all'.

Jim destroys his innate, positive vitality by attempting to define himself through Ella's eyes, which are those of a corrupt society. He defines himself as unworthy because of his apparent blackness. Ella took the role as the misguided agent of Jim's recognition, the agent in which both then plunge into madness because of an unrealized concept of the oneness of a mankind.

Together Jim and Ella succeed only in destroying one another. Although at the play very end, a fragile bond of love appears to remain intact, warped as they may, the fact that both crumbled into madness was an enough highlight.

An inability to accept foreign concept, an inability to realize human is only human regardless of different gender and race, the role of warped society in destroying oneself, and the concept of adapt and change is the core point of Eugene O'Neill message and solution.

By realizing that in the end, human is only human, Ella and Jim can accept one another. By not seeing their different appearances like when they are still children, they can see one another as human, as a unique being and accept one another as their own self instead a societal idea of race classification, of white and black people. And if only they can change their view, to adapt and see like the France do while in France, perhaps they will find their happiness unhindered by their superiority and inferiority complex caused by white supremacy.

Taking another look, the play's structure and the background direction is unique to say at least. Song and sound effects are invested with thematic meaning. Rooms and objects increase and diminish in size, and the whole stage is separated into geometric divisions. The implied meanings of children playing marbles, the divided street, the song playing has more symbolic meaning to the message than the dialogue could.

The community is separate firmly by the color, but as a children that did not have an awareness of discrimination, that their sense of self is still developing, they did not go by societal rule

and mingle while playing marble, where each piece has different color and still united as a whole.

O'Neill himself would later write: "In All God's Chillun Got Wings, all save the seven leading characters [Jim, his mother, his sister Hattie, Ella, Shorty, Joe and Mickey] should be masked; for all the secondary figures are part and parcel of the Expressionist background of the play, a world at first indifferent, then cruelly hostile, against which the tragedy of Jim Harris is outlined."

When the curtain goes up on the second act, the stage is dominated by a clash of colors and shapes. The description that stated that the furniture's are all outlandishly shaped expensive but garner otherwise, cheap concept of reaction. A stating if not anything else, that imitation was always cheap but appear outlandish, tasteless expensive.

The mask inside the living room is Jim's wedding present from his sister Hattie, a proud Black woman and serve as a role of a convenient evil to blame for Ella. As a totemic link between Jim, his tribal roots, and the old collective unity between the tribe and nature, the mask ought to exert a dynamic influence in the apartment, or so his mother thinks. But the force symbolized by the mask, has been diverted by its context.

"In this room ... the mask acquires an arbitrary accentuation. It dominates by a diabolical quality that contrast imposes upon it" (O'Neill, 1924, p. 112). And in the other means, the tribal mask serve as a convenient scapegoat to Ella, and the means to further her degradation and madness.

The contradictions symbolized by the mask are representative of Jim and Ella's relationship at this juncture in the play. They have returned to America, Jim tells Hattie, "to come back and face it," hoping that "by being brave we'd free ourselves, and gain confidence and be really free inside" (O'Neill, 1924, p. 116). For in France they found it impossible to face themselves.

Their first year together they spent living "like a brother and a sister." Now they have no alternative but to face themselves, and the pressure proves overwhelming. Ella genuinely loves Jim, but she still cannot accept him without making him over in her image. And Jim continues to allow Ella

to define the terms of his existence, although his motives now are somewhat purified, even selfless: "To hell with me!... I'm all she's got in the world! I got to prove I can be all to her! I've got to prove worthy! I've got to prove she can be proud of me! I've got to prove I'm the whitest of the white!" (O'Neill, 1924, pp. 124-125).

Subconsciously Ella does everything in her power to undermine Jim's chances of passing the "Bar" in order to maintain her own self-image of superiority. But in her more rational moments she keeps pushing Jim to pass.

These opposing motives constitute an inner conflict that eventually pushes her toward madness. And as the play conclude, her inability to let go of her own warped pride as white stake her downfall. In a similar way, Jim inability to let go of his warped love towards white is what drove him to succumb into madness together with his wife.

CONCLUSION

Eugene O'Neill's standpoint about destruction of sense of self in the play AGCGW is clear. He provides two side examples in both sides for us to see: he writes about Ella Downey, a proud white woman who marries a black man and spirals into madness because of her inherent belief. And he writes about Jim Harris, a black man who marries a white woman and is still left unhappy because he cannot accept himself as what he is.

From Ella's side, it is explained how destructive warped community belief is in one's life. It shapes her belief and her view so that she is convinced that she is better than his husband and that she is not the one who needs him but the other way around. Her changes of attitude is written in detailed scenes from when she does not know what is it to be white until she becomes deluded, driven by manic attacks and develops her mania because she married a black man.

Ella illustrated Eugene O'Neill's idea about what it takes to be a white woman in a society that passes down the belief of white supremacy. It should be a way for white people to oppress black people and gain more but ultimately, it is what

drives them into destruction. From Ella, O'Neill shows the result of white supremacy, which is one ends in a dramatic and tragic result of being faithful to belief of white supremacy.

On the other side, from Jim Harris, it is exposed that there are crippling disadvantages of being a black man in a society that oppress black man simply because they are born with black skin. The oppression goes long way not only to one appearance, but to one's intelligence and one's life.

It is a really sad depiction of O'Neill's idea about the two people, oppressed by racial discrimination in different ways, yet still trying to find a life together. The oppression of their belief, of societal conditioning is what drives them into their ruin. In addition to this matter, there are no such things as a concept of love that can conquers all.

The problem stems by the loss of sense of self inside the warped community. It divides people into two different sides, one superior and one inferior. And as it run its course, both of the main protagonist was destroyed by their own ideals and belief. It led them into a ruin no matter how much opportunity to be 'happy' arises; the problem stems inside their mind and thus, need to be discarded by their own.

While subtle, Eugene O'Neill pointed their flaw, their mistake and a message, a concept that to escape the warped community and to lose the restrain of societal judgment, they need to lose their pride and belief. Ella need to see Jim as a human, a genuinely male human that loves her so dearly instead of black man and all of what it entails. Similarly, Jim need to throw away his sense of unworthiness, the defining factor of his life that he is a black man that desperately want to be a white man to a human that tried his best. He need to lose the concept and idea of white and black, to accept himself as he is, as human before he can attain happiness that he yearn.

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