

ABSTRACT

Eugene O'Neill dedicated his life to dramatizing the hero, the matriarch and the archetypal journey according to his interpretation of them in the light of the philosophy of the absurd. His work intensified and clarified the link between the female archetype and the absurd as he advanced through three main periods of writing. These periods correspond to his Weltanschauung, which centred around absurdism and archetypal woman.

The period 1913-1917 shows his early experiments and struggle with the implications of accepting the philosophy of the absurd as a way of life which is natural and inevitable. The middle period illustrates his controlled and more definite vision in his identification of the absurd with matriarchal figures. The final period 1929-1943 dramatizes his resignation to the inevitable link between the unconscious patterns of the journey of the hero and conscious-life which reflects the absurdity of hopeful man caught up in a web of hopeless events.

The intensity of the struggle, which led him through facing the problem of absurdity to his final resignation to the problem, inspired O'Neill's work with a richness of imagery, precision in structure and provoking conclusions which question modern man's ability to deal with the world he has created.