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THE SYNERGY BETWEEN THE CONSCIOUS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS  
"Strange Interlude" by Eugene O'Neill

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present article is to demonstrate acute psychoanalytical dispositions in Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*. A two tier strategy of delving is involved to delineate that apart from the dramas, it was also the dramatist who was subconsciously self- psychoanalyzing in an attempt to link his conscious and subconscious mind. The first tier includes the characterization, the plot structure, themes and motifs of the drama. The second tier consists of the authors personal background, his idiosyncratic psyche, and his motivation that went through in compiling the dramas. A concurrent juxtaposing is made within the article to prove the impact of psychoanalysis on the dramatist and his dramas.

**Keywords:** Eugene O'Neill, Subconscious, Psychoanalysis, Oedipus complex, Tragedy.

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INTRODUCTION

The scope of the current article is to prove the immense impact of psychoanalysis in O'Neill's Pulitzer chef-d'oeuvre *Strange Interlude*. O'Neill desired to reveal the importance of a woman, both in the context of the family and society, who, according to him was the soul of any love bond. Therefore, in *Strange Interlude*, he decided to sketch the character of a woman who has lost her ideals and needed to recognize her place in life. Through the characterization of the protagonist Nina Leeds, O'Neill had portrayed the femme fatale in vibrant flavor, only during her youthful stage. During the rest of the stages, Nina symbolizes a woman of forty, who has completed her part in life and is allowed to rot in life. During the 25 years between being 20 and 45, Nina has enjoyed all the feminine roles that she could play. She was once an innocent girl, then she fell in love and got married but failed. She was a prostitute, then a good wife as well as a captivated woman, a mother and a widow. As the play advances, Nina ascends in her ability, she takes on the attribute of archetypal myth. She battles toward self-realization, despite of the ethical tradition and practice of her Puritan past and in spite of the oddness of the world around her. In order to exhibit the duality within the character's psyche, extensive use of theatrical tools like masks, asides, and soliloquies are employed by the author.

*Strange Interlude* was one of O'Neill's greatest plays of all times. The author's personal life, his predispositions and family background are of immense importance to elucidate that the psychological depression had been set within O'Neill since his childhood age. A dramatist par excellence, while practicing his art, was greatly inspired and influenced by the Greek tragedies and myths, Shakespeare's tragedies and the contemporary psychoanalytic theories of the founding father of modern 'psychoanalysis', Sigmund Freud and his close associate Carl Gustav Jung. When he was trying to give a literary touch to his painful personal experiences of his characters, he freely drew upon the 'the Id', 'the Ego' or the 'the Superego' of Freud and the 'Personal Unconscious' of Jung which O'Neill felt was the puppet master who controls the actions and reactions of man and not Fate as the Greek tragedians had portrayed in their plays.

O'Neill was born on October 16, 1888, in New York City. Eugene O'Neill occupies a unique place in the history of American literature by virtue of his monumental contribution to American drama. Being a tragic artist, he was interested in unwinding the bare interior psyche of the human mind. Depicting the raw emotions bereft any cosmetic endeavors were of utmost importance to the dramatist. Freudian formulations of Oedipus Complex, Electra Complex, Impact of repression and Jungian concepts of the Personal Unconscious, Anima animus conflict, the archetypes can be evidently found in the plays like *Desire Under the Elms*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *Strange Interlude*.

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL FORMULATIONS OF S. FREUD

From time immemorial, there has been a close association between literature and philosophy. Literature has regularly been enriched by philosophers and several literary masterworks have become philosophical treatises. The figure of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) looms large in Twentieth century literature. The influence of Freud is noticeable in all genres of all literatures of the twentieth century all over the world. Accepted by many and questioned by a few, It is indeed outstanding that a man who was principally a psychiatrist and psychologist has impacted literature to such a great extent that Freud has almost become synonymous with modernism in World literature.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory "rested on three bases", the unconscious, the libido theory, and resistance as the basis of therapy." (Fine. 35) In his study of the human psyche, Freud divided the human consciousness into three layers, the conscious, the unconscious and the preconscious and explained:

the unconscious system may therefore be compared to a large ante-room, in which various mental excitations are crowding upon one another, like individual's human beings. Adjoining this is the second, smaller apartment, a sort of reception room, in which consciousness resides. But on the threshold between the two there stands a personage with the office of the door-keeper, who examines the various mental excitations, censors them, and denies them admittance to the reception-room when he disapproves of them... You will see at once that it does not make much difference whether the door-keeper turns any one impulse back on the threshold, or drives it out again once it has entered the reception-room; that is merely a matter of the degree of his vigilance and promptness in recognition. Now this metaphor may be employed to widen our terminology. The excitations in the unconscious, in the ante-chamber, are visible to consciousness, which is of course in the other room, so to begin with they remain unconscious. When they have pressed forward to the threshold and been turned back by the door-keeper, they are incapable of becoming conscious, we call them repressed, but even those excitations which are allowed over the threshold do not necessarily become conscious; they can only become so if they succeed in attracting the eye of the consciousness. This second chamber may be suitably called the preconscious system... Being repressed, when applied to a simple impulse, it means being unable to pass out of the unconscious system. (305-306)

Freud developed the theory that adult human behavior is the product of certain important childhood experiences which lie suppressed in the unconscious mind. Usually, sex is at the epicenter of such experiences. Such experiences are always the consequence of childhood sexual urges. In many cases, the abuse of children by adults marks an undying impression in their unconscious. Apart from this factor is the 'father fixation' or 'mother fixation' of children, making young girls and boys to view at their fathers and mothers as objects of sex. Deriving phrases from the ancient Greek Play Oedipus Rex, where the protagonist mistakenly kills his father and marries his own mother and begets children, Freud termed this sexual attraction for one's mother, early in life as 'Oedipus Complex'. Again deriving another phrase from Greek literature, he named the father-fixation as 'Electra complex'. According to him, the main purpose of psychoanalysis to bring out such repressed thoughts and memories from the unconscious psyche to cure the individual of his neurotic problems.

According to Freud, man's conduct is essentially conditioned by these repressed sexual impulses which lie in the repository of the unconscious mind. Hence repressed instincts, sexual or otherwise, are at the origin of all human behavior, operating as the chief motivating power. He named it 'the libido' and associated all human motivation to it. The next important aspect of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, are the three facets of human personality. He called them 'the Id', 'the Ego' and 'the super Ego'. Referring to each one of these important attribute, he said that "the ego's fundamental task is to reconcile the instinctual, biologically given demands of the Id. The Id is the reservoir of the instinctual impulses, the ego is that part of the personality that deals with reality, and the Superego is the unconscious conscience, the heir of the parents." (Fine. 56) Another significant theory of Freud, which has firm relevance to the literary tenets, is his interpretation of dreams. He argued that dream is only the assertion of repressed instincts, sexual and otherwise, and is only an effort at "a surrogate wish fulfillment." (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 251) When the unconscious desire is very strong but cannot be articulated because of "internalized prohibitions and repressions which demand the wish to take on a symbolic form if it is to be acknowledged at all." (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 251)

All these theories have influenced dramatists, writers and critics of the twentieth century to a significant extent in their observation and portrayal of human nature. Mainly, the stream of conscious fiction is the candid beneficiary of Freud's theory of the unconscious mind.

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL FORMULATIONS OF C.G. JUNG**

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was an associate of Freud's during his psychoanalytical experiments, but later parted away with him. Jung's vital impact on literature is his theories of 'the Personal Unconscious' and 'the Collective Unconscious'. "The personal unconscious consists of those associated webs of ideas and emotions that Jung named complexes, which have been repressed from consciousness because it found them too painful to acknowledge, and also of those perceptions of reality which have never forced their way into consciousness. Each individual's personal unconscious is thus to some extent explicable in terms of his own life history." (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 295) According to Jung, the collective unconscious, like the personal unconscious, fashions a part of the individual's personality. He states, "we mean by collective unconscious, a certain psychic disposition shaped by forces of heredity" (183) and argues that this collective unconscious is the outcome of the experiences of mankind as a whole which rise above the barriers of time, race and religion, creating a substratum in the consciousness of an individual.

Archetypes establish the structure of the collective unconscious, which are psychic in nature. They are also inherited and congenital personal temperament which impersonates basic human behavior and conditions. Thus, a mother-child association is administered by the mother archetype. Father-child, by the father archetype. Birth, death, power and failure are governed by archetypes. The devotional and mystic experiences are also controlled by archetypes. The most pivotal of all is the Self, which is the archetype of the Centre of the psychic person that characterizes his/her entirety or completeness. The Centre is fashioned by the consensus of Anima-Animus of conscious and unconscious, which is attained through the individuation process. "The anima archetype appears in men and is his primordial image of a woman. It represents the man's biological expectation of woman, but also in a symbol of man's feminine possibilities, his contra sexual tendencies. The animus archetype is the analogous of the masculine that occurs in women." (Jungian

archetypes Wikipedia 163) The Anima- Animus concept is also an important aspect of Jungian psychoanalysis. Archetypal figures Great mother, symbolises the entirety of a mother archetype, similarly 'Dark Mother' symbolises evil, and wicked attribute in various manifestations. These concepts of the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious also motivated contemporary literature to a large extent.

Since the two tier of investigation includes the author himself, it is essential to briefly surmise the background of O'Neill.

#### **PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF THE AUTHOR**

The dramatist had a very turbulent background. Since his father, James O'Neill was very famous in the theatre industry as a renowned Shakespearean actor, Eugene frequently travelled with his father to many places and stayed in hotel rooms, but, somewhere he disliked such an evasive way of life. He possessed great love for his mother, Ella Quinlan O'Neill. O'Neill was emotionally hurt when sent away from his mother in a boarding school. His unattained desire of being with his mother created a sense of vacuity and nothingness within him. As he grew up, he witnessed his object of perfection (mother) being addicted to drugs, which shattered his world. Furthermore, O'Neill was also admitted in a sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis where he perceived his wish to become a playwright. He underwent varied unhappy experiences early in life and tried his luck in several professions rather unsuccessfully, which made him form a tragic vision of life. O'Neill had walked the aisle three times in his lifetime, but was never satisfied with his nuptial life because he always searched for a surrogate mother in his wives. It is also a fact that O'Neill possessed great urge for his mother.

He always wanted to be separated from the obligations of life, which made his relationship estranged with his children, but when the time came for reconciliation, O'Neill's daughter Oona O'Neill went against his father's wish and married Charlie Chaplin, a man as old as her father. This act of Oona compelled O'Neill to disown his daughter. His son, Eugene Jr was an eminent scholar, but eventually he too succumbed to his family legacy of depression and committed suicide for various reasons. Apparently the alternate name of tragedy turned out to be O'Neill. The current abstract about the dramatist's life history demonstrate the fact that tragedy had always been an integral part of O'Neill's life, a similar pain and depression is seen in his plays when viewed from a psychological angle. The turbulent chords which struck O'Neill throughout his life, can be traced in his dramas. It was only through his dramas that he found the meaning of his life. In an attempt to find serenity between destiny and free will, O'Neill had always fought the former under the pretext of his dramas. It becomes imperative to highlight the innate barrenness within the author as a result of the experience he faced throughout his life. This barrenness and desolation draw the likeness between his own character and his characterizations of dramas that was subconsciously portrayed by the author. His love for the sea was explicit. He wanted to drift in the sea, so that he could escape the obligations and responsibilities of the land. The intense desire for his mother is symbolic of every female protagonist of O'Neill's dramas, whether it is the Mannon's urge for the 'Great Mother', Marie Brantôme in *Mourning Becomes Electra* or the manifestation of the 'Dark mother' in the character or Nina Leeds in *Strange Interlude* or the presence of the deceased mother in the manifestation of the mammoth elm trees in *Desire Under the Elms*. The author had even visualized his mother to the Virgin Mother Mary in his autobiographical classic *Long Day's journey into Night*.

#### **BRIEF ANALYSATION OF THE DRAMA**(in line with above factors)

The protagonist character of the play, is Nina Leeds, who is the daughter of Professor Leeds. The rest of the cast include Edmund Darrell -a doctor from the hospital & eventually Nina's lover & father of her son, Sam Evans -friend of Darrell's and in due course Nina's husband, Gordon Evans (Jr. Gordon) -Nina & Darrell's son, Professor Leeds -Nina's father, Charles Marsden – A friend of Mr. Leeds and Nina, Madeline Arnold - Gordon's fiancé, Mrs. Evans -Sam's mother.

Gordon Shaw (Nina's deceased lover) can be termed as the archetype 'Great father' because his death during the World War was the primary reason for the entire trajectory to take place in Nina's life. The guilt and pain of not consummating her love with Gordon Shaw left her emotions in a defenseless state. In order to make up for the mistake of not making love with Gordon, she enters into uninhabited sexual

encounters with the wounded soldiers of the war. Such an act can be regarded as a result of mental imbalance, but, when seen in psychological angle, Nina's subconscious mind is eager for the satiation of her sexual desires with the ones of the same kind as her deceased lover. The significance of the following lines where Nina Leeds addresses her father, echo Jungian analysis, like a subconscious layer or a ghost. Jungian analysis in short can be termed as a realignment of conscious and unconscious aspects of the personality with an ensuing creation of new values and purpose to bring relief to the psychological suffering's. It is also called as analytical psychology in contradiction to Freud's term of psychoanalysis.

NINA. (again with the strange intensity) I must pay! It's my plain duty! Gordon is dead! What use is my life to me or anyone? But I must make it of use—by giving it! (fiercely) I must learn to give myself, do you hear—give and give until I can make that gift of myself for a man's happiness without scruple, without fear, without joy except in his joy! When I've accomplished this I'll have found myself, I'll know how to start in living my own life again! (appealing to them with a desperate impatience) Don't you see? In the name of the commonest decency and honor, I owe it to Gordon! (Strange Interlude 439)

She indulges in an act of psychoanalyzing to make up for her mistake of not making love with Gordon. The thought processes of all the important characters imitate a kind of pattern that disorganizes their normal thinking and keeps it limited. In *Strange Interlude*, it is evident that all the protagonist figures have varied zones of reflection that variates around a particular character or state of mind. The main characters indulge themselves in a kind of longing that satiates their two prime purposes; one – to get what they want, and two - to appear reasonable in their want of their desires, regardless of how much unfair they are. The use of masks and asides significantly shows the difference between Nina's inner and outer character. She craves for sexual satisfaction, from within but outwardly she justifies her intended act of promiscuity. The duality of the masks is evident in the character of Nina. After great deliberation, she married Sam Evans, who considered her deceased lover as his role model.

From an intense analyzation of the drama, the Oedipus complex is seen in the character of Charles Marsden, a father like figure to Nina but possesses desires for her. He visualizes Nina as a symbol of sex and reminisce his mother whenever he sees her. Marsden is initially found imagining on sexuality and teenage sexual experience with overweight, short legged, thick ankle, and knotty Italian girl. His imagination and thoughts divulge his Oedipal neurosis and distressing remembrances of the deceased mother along with his oppressing, self-condemnatory thoughts. He terms his sexual associations as treachery to his mother who is sorrowfully remembered. He reminisces his lecherous feelings now and again, which reminds him of his previous sexual encounters. His self-disgusting imaginations progresses to raise up in his mind and self-imaginings. Theurge for his mother within Marsden's psyche leads to the juxtaposition of the two female characters; Nina and Charles mother. Marsden's previous inequities do not permit him to confront his love for Nina. The thoughts which are collected in his psychic reservoir are subconsciously actively to make his conscious, painful. The dialogue process that occurs within Marsden's mind displays the bareness in the innate human nature. *Strange Interlude* is a theory of masks and within the masked attributes lies deep thoughts and agendas.

Furthermore, it is Nina's association with her father, Prof. Leeds that emphasizes the Freudian psychoanalytical concept more than any other. An Electra Complex persists between the two characters, as witnessed by the dispute between them, which lead Prof. Leeds to oppose to her union with Gordon Shaw. Further, in the play, it is also seen that Nina's son Jr, Gordon (Nina's son) suffers from an unusual Oedipal hatred, as a result of which he hates his original father Ned Darrell. Though Jr. Gordon is unaware of the original fact about his father, he subconsciously senses a great deal of connection between his mother and Ned.

Beyond the cranky machinery of the plot, and the explicit psychological influence, the central characters are portrayed through simple dialogues and announced thoughts. Charlie's Marsden for instance, who is seen both, during the beginning and during the consummation of the play, addresses Nina fondly and

yearningly as "Nina, Cara Nina". This usual impromptu pet name suggests the comparison of her character to Anna Karenina. At the same time, it also assists his self-consciousness to be cognizant of his own afflicted character. The subconscious mind of Charles Marsden had instigated him to use such connotation for Nina, almost in a reflex action. But most of all, the thoughts of Nina Leeds, frequently highlights the Conscious Psychology to the level of natural reality.

The character of Sam Evans is characterized as the truthful and unobtrusive pragmatist. The corresponding opposite personage is of the doctor, Edmund Darrell, who embraces an entirely contrary manner of leading life, then that of Sam Evans. He epitomizes as the one, who represents the symbol of the subconscious. Sam Evans appears to be innocent and boyishly look externally, but possesses active, innate thoughts, which does not compliment to his outward look. He is bold in his thoughts but nerd outwardly. Both the characters are very astutely arrayed in the drama. The psychic attributes of these characters are portrayed in *Strange Interlude*, in the form of an objective view and are applied in the soliloquies to depict the intensity of the human subconscious.

In Fact, through the elucidation of the neurotic woman, O'Neill calls for a change in the neurotic society. Part of the demonic attitude of Nina of being a prostitute, derives from the untamable id's longings and her retreating from her responsibility. Egoist makes her detached from others, which assuredly does not play a positive role in the augmentation of her personality. This detachment ultimately leads to her father's death due to grief and pain. The superego can be considered as the only inducement of morality in the play. Nina's attitude of forbearance towards others that includes her care and concern for her friends in the form of her supervision, partly challenges and borders the id's catastrophic longings to some magnitude, but it is not too strong enough to change the course of the tragedy. Nina's care for husband and friends and her pregnancy resonates the sense of calmness and tranquility within her, but the Thanatos emanating from Nina and the attitude of self-destruction including self-denunciation, abhorrence and punishment towards the society, eventually distorts the beautiful world. Compared to the strong Thanatos, the Eros seems to be weak. Nina is unable to accept the death of Gordon and eventually her husband's, Sam's failure at work.

It is also noteworthy that Nina Leeds possesses the glorious athletic physical structure of O'Neill once vanished love Beatrice Ashe, combined with his wife Agnes's appearance, which was strikingly astonishing than just being pretty. Such a portrayal of his female character came from the dramatist's conscious mind. It is also evident that Nina's wavering spirit, and her probing of her struggle for the meaning of her life, emanated from O'Neill. An attractive and intellectual girl from a socially exclusive family (as Nina) whose relationship for O'Neill traversed both his great loves, Beatrice and Agnes.

#### **EUGENICS IN THE PLAY**

"Looking at the way in which eugenics permeates the script, offers new ways of thinking about the play in terms both of its reception and its dramatic innovations" (Wolff 143). Nina primarily rails against "The Modern Science God", but she is credulous about the eugenic apprehension that a healthy child will deliver her all the happiness in her life, which is why she resorts to the eugenic resolution in the case of Sam's ancestral problems. Despite of all the wicked complications created by the female protagonists of the play, it appears that the dramatist possesses a soft corner for Nina. This soft heartedness for Nina, by the dramatist can be viewed as the reason for valuing his own circumstances that went on during the compilation of *Strange Interlude*. The self-psychoanalysis rendered by the dramatist in this play can be compared to his situation; he could connect with Nina emotionally and mentally, both consciously and subconsciously.

Eugenics permeate the play to effectuate the nuance of the characters. "The study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or a human population, especially by such means as discouraging reproduction by persons having genetic defects or presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits (negative eugenics) or encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have inheritable desirable traits (positive eugenics)" (Dictionary.com eugenics) After Nina's union with Sam Evan's, she conceives of him, but later is made coherent of Sam's neurotic background by her mother in law. As a result, Nina's contingency plan to be a mother of a healthy child, finds place by making love with her lover doctor Ned Darrell. She keeps

her husband in the dark about the reality of her child. Here, Positive eugenics manifest the negative side of Nina. Her outward reasoning of such an act was to give her neurotic husband a healthy child as a good wife, but the actual covert reasoning was to satisfy her sexual desires through her successful doctor lover Ned Darrell and also to be a mother of a healthy child, unlike her husband. These thoughts are evident in the internal thought processes of Nina Leeds. Thus the author has made an effort to delve into the clandestine sheets of the human brain through masks and asides to bring out the dualism of the masks.

Having conceived the child, makes her feel proud and complete. She was happy about the importance and significance that she discovers during the motherhood. The conscience of Nina, to some extent feels, that it has met the true and inerrant self in the form of the baby, which was within her. Nina truly believes that the baby was not only a part of her body, but as someone, who can vouch for the genuineness of her character. The archetype, 'God, the Mother' can be made typical of this situation.

NINA. I feel my child live . . . moving in my life . . . my life moving in my child . . . breathing in the tide I dream and breathe my dream back into the tide . . . God is a Mother (Strange Interlude 478)

After marrying Sam, she next plays the role of a cunning, disloyal woman. After being aware of the fact, that neurotic problems persisted throughout the lineage of Sam's family, which Sam had also inherited, Nina becomes alert. Here, Nina is seen, as playing the role of the 'Dark Mother', who terminates her pregnancy, which she bore out of her husband Evans. Her motherly instincts vanish when she realizes the psychotic background of her husband. So she plans to deliver a healthy baby through her lover Darrell to take the place of the one, which was aborted by Nina herself due to the insanity that runs within the family of her husband Sam.

#### LIBIDO

NINA. (more and more strangely triumphant). My three men! ... I feel their desires converge in me! ... to form one complete beautiful male desire which I absorb ... and am whole ... they dissolve in me; their life is my life ... I am pregnant with the three! ... husband! ... lover! ... father! ... and the fourth man! ... little man! ... little Gordon! ... he is mine, too! ... that makes it perfect! ... (With an extravagant suppressed exultance.) Why, I should be the proudest woman on earth! ... I should be the happiest woman in the world! (Strange Interlude 502)

The urge to possess all the men involved in her life, puts the character of Nina, in line with Freud's terminology of libido. The prime factor that was embedded within Nina's subconscious was acquiring all four men connected to her. 'Acquiring' in her terms means continuous biological satisfaction, which she yearned for. In a way, it can be pointed out that sex was the driving force behind Nina's idiosyncratic attitude towards herself and towards the society. As the baby sleeps in the next room, the husband, the lover and the fatherly Charlie Marsden are gathered together. Nina is desirous to have all three men, including her son for herself. When she goes to bed, her subconscious mind feels that the eyes of all three men were following her on her bed. Nina cannot imagine her life without possessing all the men for herself. The existence of the men in Nina's life is self-designated through her subconscious mind.

She designates her son's name as Gordon, in remembrance of her former fiancé, Gordon Shaw, who represents the 'Great Father'. Here the duality of the masks is evident because the outer mask of Nina is different from what she wants within her. Her main aim was to conceive a baby through Darrell, by doing so, she has satiated her physical urge and subsequently made arrangements to get a normal child by cohabiting with Darrell, who does not have the prospects of possessing the neurotic background like Sam. She again tells that it was a duty of a wife to give her husband a normal child.

We can see that Nina's appearance was 'split', as long as she was in the full floret of her womanhood. There was a conscious feeling of enormous mental stress on her face. Her expression was mask like. The old lovers, Nina and Darrell were knitted together as their emotional relationship was factual. On the other hand, Nina was also in the relationship of a wife with her legal husband, who no longer passionately loved each other but were intensely connected to each other. It was also evident that Nina and Darrell have been always unable to be together, despite both of them had a keen knowledge of their pain. The factor that kept them apart was

nothing but the realization of their relationship by young Gordon, who was growing up and who considered Darrell as an element of unusual Oedipal hatred.

There was an instance when Darrell reciprocates in an ambiguous state about the credibility of Gordon as his own son. He also retaliates that Nina was actually not in real love with him, she had just utilized him as the proxy of her deceased lover Gordon. The crux of the matter being, that Nina had always seen Darrell as a sweet substitute of her deceased lover Gordon. Darrell tells her that whenever Nina saw him, she would visualize her lover within her mind. Such a visualization was the primary reason of her infatuation towards him. He moves one step forward of accusing Nina "that I was only a body to you" (*Strange Interlude* 524) and that Gordon Jr was in reality Gordon's son. Darrell realize her of the fact that her mind and body was subconsciously suffused with the presence of Gordon when having sexual relationship with him. He complains that her subconscious has always placed Gordon in his place. Hence, this leads to the exulted declaration of Darrell that Jr, Gordon was actually the son of Gordon.

At last, when Jr, Gordon grows up, he leaves with his girlfriend Madelaine, whom Nina severely disliked as she viewed her as a dangerous potential threat to come in between herself and her son. Alas, Nina is left alone in solitude, and is afflicted with profound pain and anguish. She is left in the same situation, where she was left alone after the death of Gordon Shaw. Nina, longing to die and reborn, but eventually discovers the course to happiness and peace with Marsden. Charles Marsden is seen looking at Nina when she is asleep while the scene is off.

#### LIAISON OF CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS PSYCHE

The author's active, conscious and subconscious psyche can be seen at work in the drama. *Strange interlude* was written during the period when O'Neill was about to split from his second wife Agnes Boulton. If we compare and contrast the character of Sam Evans with the author, we see few parallelisms between the both. Both Sam and O'Neill were sent to boarding school to keep some secrets of the family away from them. Supposedly, O'Neill was sent to the boarding school to save him from learning the abortion of his mother's child. Sam Evans Was sent to boarding school to keep the secrecy of the family's neurotic problem away from him. Secondly, Nina is put in a situation where she is coerced to abort the baby she loves just like how O'Neill's mother was devastated by her abortion. It is also a fact that during the separation from Agnes, O'Neill has written to her about the magnitude of emptiness and hollowness, he was suffering from while being away from her. He portrayed the same emptiness in the character of Nina. The author's agony due to his split with his wife is evident in the situation of Nina's and Sam's crumbling marriage in the drama. The agonized situations of the collapsing marriage of Sam and Nina in act 4 and 5 are evident. Sam was on the verge of getting demented during his split with his wife. The similar feeling was with the author who told in conversation with Agnes that he would lose his sense if separated from her love. O'Neill had written Agnes that, without her "I have a poignant pain of emptiness inside as if I'd lost the vital spiritual organ without which the rest of the machine is mere whirring of wheels and a futile noise" (qtd Alexander 112)

Every act can be considered as an expression of some psychological calamity which the author was trying to cope up with. He was trying to exert his experience of pain and guilt of his disarrayed life into his dramas. The author's subconscious of pain and guilt was penned down in his dramas as an act of self-psychoanalyzing. It can be realized that the agility of interior monologue excavates deep psychopathological depression within an individual's psychic temper and attitude. The dexterity of interior monologue unearths deep psychopathological depression within the psychic disposition of the characters. It also connects all the fundamental characters together as far as the subject matter of thought process is involved.

Sexuality in *Strange interlude* can be examined as other of the important cause for compelling anomalous attitude within the characters. Sexuality as an organic endeavor contains diversified features ranging from contentment to affliction, beatitude to conjugal bliss, but it can be observed that *Strange Interlude* had portrayed sexuality as a psychological environment, including psychic behavior and attitude towards sexual drive or interest such as male sexual restraint/ wastefulness, fornication and neurasthenia. According to Freud, libido is the primal factor responsible for the development of human's attitude towards

himself and towards his society. It can be said that *Strange Interlude* reasonably exemplifies Freud's much debated theory. It cannot be negated that the factor of libido had a firm patch on the author himself.

Furthermore, we see that there is a synthesis between the conscious and the subconscious of both the author and his characterizations within the drama, ultimately leading to an attempt of psychoanalysis of both the characters and the author. After all the horrendous and moral degeneracy in the play, the beauty lies in the subconscious purgation of both the author and his character, which is found in the dialogue process within the drama itself.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

It can be concluded that the author did not just blatantly incorporate the theories of psychoanalysis into his dramas, rather he could emotionally and mentally connect with them. His dramas were a medium where O'Neill could pen the torrid experiences of his life in an attempt to relive his painful thoughts that were jolting his subconscious. Moreover, the effective juxtaposition of the internal feelings with the peripheral, brings out the crudeness of the human character at every instance in the drama to prove that the impact of psychoanalysis in *Strange Interlude*. Since the purpose of psychoanalysis is to establish psychic tranquility by linking the conscious and the unconscious, the author's subconscious mind had consciously made an attempt for the same through his dramaturgy. The concept of the Oedipus Complex, the Electra Complex, the archetypes and the working of the subconscious mind of both the author and the characters are portrayed in the drama to conclude a lasting impact of psychoanalysis in *Strange Interlude*.

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