JIM'S AND ELLA'S MISERIES IN RELATION WITH RACISM IN AMERICAN SOCIETY BEFORE THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN EUGENE O' NEILL'S ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS

A SARJANA SAstra THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements to Obtain the Sarjana Sastra Degree in English Letters

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Jose Christie
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Biography of the Writer
Jose Christie, 1999: Jim’s and Ella’s Miseries in Relation with Racism in American Society before the Great Depression in Eugene O’Neill’s All God’s Chillun Got Wings, Yogyakarta, Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University.

ABSTRACT

What I will analyze in this thesis is the social event which serves as the background for a writer to write his play because a social event in a certain period in the past is applicable in a present social event. The social event to be analyzed in this thesis is racism, for it has existed in many different periods of time, taken many different forms, but the root remains the same: it is still racism. Another reason for choosing racism is, apart from the reasons mentioned previously, it has recently become a trend in Indonesia. It is much spoken, debated, argued, but remains unsolved. The theories used in the thesis were Puckrein’s theory of racism in American society which is supported by Cusack’s and Mazrui’s independently, Harlow’s and Miller’s theory of Great Depression, and Abram’s theories of characterization and setting which are combined to find the relationship between the theories. There are three problems to be solved using the previously mentioned theories. They are, first describing racism in American society before the Great Depression in O’Neill’s All God’s Chillun Got Wings; second describing the manifestations of racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play which are experienced as miseries by the main characters Jim and Ella and explaining how racism in the play causes the main characters’ miseries.

The method I used to collect data for the thesis was library research since the thesis deals with a play which belongs to a particular social condition in the past and it is impossible to observe directly something which happened in the past. The approach I use is Guerin’s sociological approach as it analyses a work of literature in relation to the time of its writing. This approach is used as it is thought to be helpful to point out the practice of racism in American society before the Great Depression. In analyzing the play, the first step I did was to identify who the main characters were. The next step was to indicate whether or not the main characters’ miseries as found in the play were caused by racism. The last step was to draw conclusion.

The thesis describes racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play in which people were racially segregated, each race had its own people, public place, residence, and occupation. The thesis also describes the practice of racism in the play which Jim and Ella suffered as miseries. Jim suffered miseries as he tried to become white and to elevate his social status since he thought that Ella would only like him if he was as white as she was. Ella suffered miseries as she tried to find personal security in someone else’s side but was confronted by the racially segregated view existing in her society. Jim and Ella suffered miseries as they who
came from different races were married in a society which believed in racial segregation. Racism in the play was the cause of Jim’s and Ella’s miseries in which Jim’s miseries was caused directly by racism and his effort to fight it, Ella’s miseries was caused by her effort of finding personal security without bearing in mind that she lived in a racist society, and Jim and Ella suffered miseries in their marriage life as they who came from different races were married in a racist society which cannot accept such uncommon condition as mixed marriage.
Jose Christie, 1999: Jim’s and Ella’s Miseries in Relation with Racism in American Society before the Great Depression in Eugene O’Neill’s All God’s Chillun Got Wings, Yogyakarta, Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

ABSTRAK


Tesis ini menggambarkan rasisme di masararakat Amerika sebelum Great Depression dalam karya tersebut yang di dalamnya masyarakat dipisahkan secara rasial, setiap ras memiliki masyarakat, tempat umum, tempat tinggal, dan pekerjaannya masing-masing. Tesis ini juga menggambarkan praktek rasisme dalam karya tersebut yang dialami Jim dan Ella sebagai penderitaan-penderitaan. Jim mengalami penderitaan-penderitaan ketika ia mencoba menjadi kulit putih dan menaikkan status sosialnya karena ia berfikir bahwa Ella hanya akan menyukainya jika Jim berkulit seputih Ella. Ella mengalami penderitaan-penderitaan ketika ia mencoba mencari ketentraman pribadi di sisi seseorang tetapi dihadang pandangan keterpisahan rasial yang ada di masyarakatnya. Jim dan Ella mengalami penderitaan-penderitaan ketika mereka yang berasal dari ras yang berbeda menikah dalam sebuah masyarakat yang mempercayai keterpisahan rasial. Rasisme dalam karya tersebut merupakan penyebab penderitaan-penderitaan Jim dan Ella karena penderitaan-penderitaan Jim secara langsung disebabkan oleh rasisme dan usahanya untuk melawan hal tersebut, penderitaan-penderitaan Ella disebabkan oleh usahanya untuk mendapatkan ketentraman pribadi tanpa menghiraukan bahwa ia hidup di dalam masyarakat rasis, serta Jim dan Ella mengalami penderitaan-penderitaan dalam kehidupan pernikahan mereka karena mereka yang berasal dari ras yang berbeda menikah di dalam sebuah masyarakat rasis yang tak dapat menerima keadaan yang tak lazim seperti halnya perkawinan campuran.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

As a follower of Plato’s mimetic concept, a concept which holds view that a work of art or literature is an imitation of reality, I personally think that there are many things in reality which may serve as sources for playwrights to write plays. Two among them are historical and social events. Historical events generally refer to the events which had happened some time in the past at the time a writer uses them as sources for his works. Social events generally refer to events which happen at the same time as a writer writes his play and which the writer criticizes.

Two among many examples of historical events are a war broke out between Egypt and the Roman Empire during the reign of Cleopatra which Shakespeare used to write his Anthony and Cleopatra and the Gulf War which broke out in Middle East in 1990 which Frederick Forsythe used to write his Fist of God. Two among many examples of social events are the glimmers of American upper middle class parties in the twenties which F. Scott Fitzgerald used as background for his The Great Gatsby and the Southern attitude towards slaves and slavery which Twain used as the background for his The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
What I will analyze in this thesis is the social event which serves as the background for a writer to write his play because a social event in a certain period in the past is applicable in a present social event. Although it may take different forms, the root remains the same. The social event to be analyzed in this thesis is racism, for as I have already mentioned, it has existed in many different periods of time, taken many different forms, but the root remains the same: it is still racism. Another reason for choosing racism is, apart from the reason mentioned previously, it has recently become a trend in Indonesia. It is much spoken, debated, argued, but remains unsolved.

Racism is an unreasonable belief that a race is destined to be better than the others, but what most people do not know is that it only brings injustice, hatred, and misery. People like Whitney Young and Martin Luther King were two among many men who had tried to bring some sense to stop racism.

Two among many examples of the practice of racism are that someone has a tendency to be assumed as a criminal because he has a certain skin complexion, and that someone is unable to get the job he wants badly because the employer does not like his color. From these examples, it can clearly be seen that racism is indeed an unreasonable belief. Racism makes someone judge others by their appearance, not by their deeds.
Puckrin (1989: 3) implies that racism in the United States took consequence in the practice of slavery back in 1619. With the practice of slavery still in existence, the existence of racism itself was not yet felt, although racism did exist. It existed and took form in slavery, and made the slaves suffer, yet they- the slaves- did not know that their suffering was indirectly caused by racism. The whites treated the blacks with discrimination, denying the slaves' rights as human beings, which made Abraham Lincoln declared Emancipation Proclamation in 1869 to abolish slavery. This Proclamation came out to be useless, since the whites- up til now- still associate the blacks with slaves, thus denying the fact that they are equal and that they are human beings just as they are. This denial is the primary factor which nourishes slavery. The Declaration of Independence served as an irony. On one side there was a big country which believed in human equality, but on the other side the country maintained the practice of slavery, the manifestation of racism which virtually denies human equality.

Racism, I believe, is a fortress that a group of individuals build to hide their fear towards another group of individuals which they do not yet know. It is common that people will be very cautious towards a new thing that may seem strange to them.

Racism also remains to be a big problem waiting to be solved. People may say that racism does not exist any longer, but it does: there was a racial riot in Los Angeles, California some years ago after it was broadcast that Rodney King, a black
man, was beaten by two white police officers, and the latest one was the mass sexual assault and harassment towards women of a certain ethnic group in Jakarta and several other cities in Indonesia on May 13-15, 1998. This proves that racism still exists and is so deeply rooted within ourselves that it cannot be easily stopped.

I find this phenomenon in Eugene O'Neill's play *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. The play was written in 1924, and I believe it is a reflection of racism in the American society before the Great Depression. Regarding the play, Leech (1963: 43) says that a mixed marriage between black and white brings into greater prominence the tensions, the resentments, and the reciprocal destruction, which are dangers in any marriage.

Within the play, there is a mixed marriage between Jim Harris, who is black, and Ella Downey, who is white, in a society which still believes in a racial segregation. Both Jim and Ella then suffer miseries which are caused directly and/or indirectly by racism.

**B. Problem Formulation**

Based on the reasons above, I will try to answer the following questions:

1. What did racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play look like?
2. What are the manifestations of racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play which are experienced as miseries by the main characters Jim and Ella?

3. How can racism in the play be the cause of the main characters' miseries?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem formulation, there are some objectives I want to achieve. They are:

1. To describe racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play.

2. To describe the manifestations of racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play which are experienced as miseries by the main characters Jim and Ella.

3. To explain how racism in the play causes the main characters miseries.

D. Benefit of the Study

Through Eugene O’Neill’s writing, the thesis will explore more about human suffering of socially unjust treatment as shown within the world of literature. The thesis will particularly explain to the reader about the social injustice issue which takes the form of racism and its influence towards some individuals. In a broader
sense, this thesis is hoped to be able to enrich the insight of the reader about racism contained in Eugene O’Neill’s *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*.

For the students of English Letters Department and others who enjoy reading good plays, especially the students of Sanata Dharma University, I hope the thesis will provide more information and a new insight about an issue in American Literature of the 1920’s. It is probably helpful as a reference for anyone wanting either to read or study Eugene O’Neill’s plays as well. I also hope that the thesis may generally enrich the discussion about O’Neill and his plays, particularly his *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*.

For the readers who have experienced or are experiencing the same unjust treatment from their society, the thesis can perhaps be a reflection, an object of comparison, or an object of learning. I expect that this thesis will be useful for the betterment of the human kind by knowing that racism will bring misery, injustice, and hatred which have to be stopped. Another benefit is to know that being equal does not mean that everyone should be physically the same, but it means that everyone respects each other’s rights as human beings.

**E. Definition of Term**

There are four terms in this thesis to be clarified. The first three are general, therefore the meanings are acquired from *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. 
Although general, they are capable of causing misunderstanding and broadening the scope of the thesis. Therefore, it is best to define them to avoid the inconveniences.

1. Misery

This term is defined as a state of great unhappiness and emotional distress (1995: 744). In short, it is a state of suffering and want that is the result of poverty or affliction (1995: 744). Affliction means the state of being afflicted, or great suffering.

2. Racism

This term is defined as a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (1995: 962). In short, it means racial prejudice or discrimination (1995: 962). Prejudice means an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics (1995: 919), while discrimination means the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually (1995: 332).

3. Society

This term is defined as a community, nation, or broad grouping of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests (1995: 1115).

4. Great Depression

The term “Great Depression” is intended to be a social term. Harlow and Miller (1953: 450-461) implies that Great Depression is an event which was initiated in
1920’s where prices were so high that made it difficult for every worker to save money, moreover to keep themselves out of debt.

Workers were highly paid, but the salary could not buy them anything since prices were much higher. There were many things to buy, but nothing to pay for them. People who were jobless were even more miserable. They found it hard for them to survive the days as they were having no money to buy things enabling them to do so. Everyone was trying to find a job in order to be able to support their families and themselves, and those who were already having a job were trying to find themselves a better one.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Review on Related Theories

A. 1. Racism in the American Society

To limit the scope of the thesis, what is meant by the American society is not the group of people in the whole American continent, but only in the North America, or to be more exact, in the United States of America.

Racism in the American society, as well as in other societies, is deeply rooted within the society. Regarding racism, Puckrein (1989: 3) implies that one special thing about racism in American society is that it started long before the United States was even born. It took consequence in the form of slavery when in 1619 a ship carrying 20 Africans landed in Jamestown colony to make them indentured servants-bondsmen for a period who were retired after a term of years. Furthermore, Cusack (1991: 1) states that being brought to America and sold to the highest bidder by their ships’ captains, gave the Africans no voice in these dealings. Since the buyers wanted to get the greatest value for the price they paid, it became common that black servants were indentured for life. Therefore, the blacks became slaves, and the demand for them outstripped that for white indentured servants. Having paid for the
slaves, the masters regarded them as their properties, thus made them feel justified to
do whatever they wanted to to their slaves. This justification made the masters not
give their 'properties' equal treatment, thus not respecting the rights of their
'properties' as human beings. This attitude was still practiced even after the signing
of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Supporting Puckrein, Mazrui (1989: 103-104) states that racism certainly
influences slavery and the slave trade to a great extent. Slavery was instantly the
consequence of racism and the mother of newer forms of racial degradation. Racism
helps to convince people that one of the most relevant criteria of their superiority
depends on the color of their skin, which before the coming of the Europeans in the
African continent was taken for granted.

Racism becomes the greatest irony within the body of the American society.
It is an irony because the Americans at the time of the signing of the Declaration of
Independence believed and wrote within the Declaration that everyone was created
equal, but the legalizing of the practice of slavery was a denial of the noble
statement.

A. 2. Great Depression

Great Depression was an event in 1920's where prices were so high that made
it difficult for everyone to save moreover to keep themselves out of debt (Harlow and
Harlow and Miller (1953: 450- 461) imply that people were having high salary, but that would not do them much since prices were higher. There were many things but people were unable to buy anything. As the consequence to the low buying force of the consumers, producers had to discharge many of their employees. There were strikes everywhere asking government to lower prices and the producers to retake the discharged employees. Government could do nothing as the Republicans— which was the dominating party in the government— held the view that people should do the best they could to save themselves. People did not like the policy which resulted in the loss of the party’s vote between 1920’s and 1930’s. Similar to the government’s inability, the producers could do nothing as their income was extremely low which made them had to cut their losses by discharging their employees. When this did not work, the only choice they had was to close down their factories. This resulted on the gradual decline of the strikes as the demonstrators felt that the strikes brought them nothing.

The situation got better in 1921 as contractors built office buildings and settlements, which created a huge working opportunity as the result of the few public buildings erected within the period of World War I. Once again America was saved by the boom in property business which made the stock value significantly increase and kept on rising, thus lured everyone in stock market to speculate in order to gain as many profit as possible. People involved in the stock business found themselves
extremely rich, thus made them reinvest their profit back in the stock business. This boom did not last long since the buildings erected exceeded the settlers as the consequence of the competition between the contractors in erecting public buildings. The builders then found the hard fact that only few people settled in their buildings. This event finally reached its climax on October 24, 1929 when for some unknown reasons these speculators wanted to sell their stocks which caused the price to decline rapidly. The Americans once again fell into poverty as many people lost their money in the stock business and many others were unemployed. During banking crisis, Hoover- the president at that time- asked Roosevelt to work with him on a policy to prevent a general crash. Roosevelt refused as he could not give his approval to anything when he had no responsibility. The Great Depression defeated Hoover and the Republics as they failed to fulfill the promise to abolish poverty.

None can say for sure when the Great Depression exactly ended, but the end was initiated by the rise of public’s optimism and hope due to the speech delivered by Roosevelt- the next president after Hoover- saying that they should act fast to put people to work. The speech alone was not the only thing which aroused optimism and hope, but also his courage to do what he was promising.

A. 3. Characterization

Characterization is explained by *Merriam Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature* (1995: 229) as the representation in drama of human character or
personality. Furthermore, Abrams (1981: 21) states that characterization is done in two methods, *Showing* and *Telling*. In *Showing Method*, which is used mostly in drama, the author leaves the reader to guess the motives and dispositions of the characters through their dialogue and action. A reader of a work of literature using this method is likely to be diverted in finding out the right characterization as the author only provides him clues to be personally interpreted. A reader’s perception will likely be different with another, and an author may find that what he meant in characterizing his characters is totally different to what the readers think about it from their own perception.

Unlike in *Showing Method*, in *Telling Method* a reader of a work of literature will tend to find his perception in accordance to the author’s as the author intervenes authoritatively to describe and to evaluate the motives and dispositional qualities of his characters. Thus, in using *Telling Method*, the author is likely to be able to ensure that what his readers perceive is in accordance to what he meant in characterizing his characters as he limits the reader’s perception with his characterization.

However, one method is not better than the other. The application of the method depends on the author’s preference over one method. If the author wants the readers to find out the characterization of the characters by themselves, he will provide them clues by using *Showing Method*. If he wants the readers to perceive the
exact characterization of his characters, he will provide detailed characterization on his characters by using *Showing Method*.

It is possible, however, that an author uses both methods in his work both to make the readers find out the characterization of the characters by themselves and to give the readers the exact characterization of his characters.

A. 4. Setting

Abrams (1981: 175) explains setting of a dramatic work as the general place, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. What is meant by a *general place* as mentioned previously is the mostly mentioned or indicated place in a dramatic work. In other words, a *general place* refers to a broad space existing only in a dramatic work. Knowing that there is a broad space- namely *general place*- within a dramatic work, a reader may also find a narrower place within it- a more detailed place. To make the discussion easier to be understood, this narrower space is a *particular place*- the opposite of a *general place*.

A *general place* is broader than a *particular place*. The word ‘broader’ is not meant to be literally interpreted as on stage both settings have the same dimension, which is as broad as the stage goes. It means that in a general place, the author of a work describes his main characters as a part of the ‘community’ on the stage. Thus,
the main characters may be found among other characters acting as the surrounding society within public places on stage. Among the public places are a church, a corner of the street, and a sidewalk.

Whereas in a particular place, the author of a work describes his main characters as individuals separated from their ‘community’ on stage. Thus, the main characters may be found by themselves without being distracted by other characters on stage. This enables the main characters to be understood more clearly as they are in closed place- a place where they are apart from other characters. Among the closed places are in the middle of a lonely street, in a room, and in an apartment.

To sum up, *Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (1995: 1015) defines setting as the location and time frame in which the action of a work takes place.

A. 5. Relationship Between Characterization and Setting

As there is no specific theory dealing with the relationship between characterization and setting, the only way to explain the relationship between the two is to relate the theory of characterization to the theory of setting as mentioned previously. The basis for relating both theories is the definition of setting which is found in *Merriam Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature*. The encyclopedia gives an additional information which states that the makeup and behavior of characters often depend on their environment quite as much as on their personal characteristic (1995:
1015). The relationship between characterization and setting lies in the ability of the main characters to express their feelings toward each other in general and particular place.

In a general place the main characters are hardly able, if not unable at all, to express their feelings. The underlying reason is that there are other characters beside the main characters themselves, and this makes the main characters feel insecure to express their deepest emotional feelings toward each other.

In a particular place the main characters are easily able to express their feelings. The underlying reason is that there are only a few other characters, if not no other characters at all, and this makes the main characters feel secure to express their deepest emotional feelings toward each other.

In short, the ability of the characters to express their deepest emotional feelings toward each other is influenced by the setting. In a general place, the main characters are unable to express their deepest emotional feelings toward each other as it does not give them sanctuary to do so. Whereas in a particular place, the main characters are able to express their deepest emotional feelings toward each other as it gives them sanctuary to do so.

A. 6. Criticism on the Work

Regarding the work, Leech (1963: 43) writes that its theme is an intermarriage between a black and a white, and it demonstrates the difficulty of their
achieving a true marriage. O’Neill, proceeds Leech, may imply that a black-white association in marriage brings the tensions, the resentments, the reciprocal destructions into greater prominence, that are in danger in any marriage.

A. 7. Approach

Guerin in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* classifies approaches to literature into six major categories. They are:

A. 7. a. The Traditional Approach

The traditional approach is an approach which is treating literature as literature (1979: 20). The traditional approach is divided into two sub-categories, namely:

i. The Historical-Biographical Approach

This approach sees a literary work as a reflection of its author’s life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work (1979: 25).

ii. The Moral-Philosophical Approach

This approach sees the larger function of literature is to teach morality and to observe thoroughly into philosophical issues (1979: 29).

A. 7. b. The Formalistic Approach

The formalistic approach is an approach which purpose is only to discover and to explain the form in the literary work (1979: 70)
A. 7. c. The Psychological Approach

The psychological approach is an approach which its most important limitation is its aesthetic inadequacy (1979: 121).

A. 7. d. The Mythological and Archetypal Approach

The mythological approach is an approach which highlights the motives underlying the characters' behaviour in the work of literature (1979: 155), and the archetypal approach is an approach which highlights the expression of a profound sense of togetherness- the togetherness of feeling and of action and of wholeness of living (1979: 156).

A. 7. e. The Exponential Approach

The exponential approach is an approach which purpose is to consider images and symbols into meaningful patterns (1979: 195).

After knowing all the above approaches, the one thought best to be applied is the Sociological Approach. The Sociological Approach is a study of a work of literature in its social milieu (1979: 272). This approach holds view that a work of literature reflects the social life at the time of its writing. In using this approach, one must first of all find out when a work was produced and then the social life of the time it was produced. Afterwards, one must be able to find out the reflection- not relation- of the social life at the time of producing in the work to be analyzed. One must be able to find the reflection- the similarity between what happens in the play
and in the reality- not the relation- the causal relationship which implies to what the
play can do to the reality or vice versa.

B. Theoretical Ground

The theory of racism in American society and the Great Depression are used
to answer the first question stated in the problem formulation, which is to find out
the racism in American society before the Great Depression in the play. In finding it
out, it is necessary to understand racism in the American society and the Great
Depression separately. It is because there is no specific statement which states
directly about racism in American society before the Great Depression. Therefore,
one can only understand Puckrein's theory of racism in American society and
relating it to the condition of the society before the Great Depression as described by
Harlow and Miller.

In relating the first to the second question in the problem formulation which
is racism in American society before the Great Depression to the main characters’
miseries in O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, Guerin's sociological approach is
applied. It is thought to be helpful as it holds view that a work of literature reflects
the social life at the time of its writing. Thus, after knowing the racism in American
society before the Great Depression, which was the time in which the play was
produced, its reflection is tried to be found within the play.
To answer the second question in the problem formulation, Abram's theory of characterization is elaborated to find out the method of characterization and the representation of human character as reflected in the main characters created by the author in his play. Abram's theory of setting is as well used to find out the type of setting of each act and scene employed by the author in the play.

The elaboration of the theory of the relationship between characterization and setting is meant to find out the source of the main characters' miseries as it spots the miseries out from the main characters' dialogues and actions and identifies whether they are the manifestations of racism in American society before the Great Depression or not. The theory is also used to find out the influence of racism in American society before the Great Depression to main characters' miseries. It is done since the setting in the play resembles the one in reality before the Great Depression and it influences the ability of the main characters to express what they feel and think towards each other in relation with their life with other people in their society.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

The type of work which I analyze in this thesis is a play, and its title is *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*. The play is written by Eugene O’Neill and is compiled in *Penguin Plays* along with four other plays written by the same author. *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* was written in 1923. However, it was not until the year of 1924 that it was initially produced and published. The play was initially published in Great Britain by Cape in 1925, and in 1960 in *Penguin Plays*. The first edition of the collection in which lies the play I analyze was initially published in *Penguin Plays 1966*, and it is the fourth edition which was printed in 1971.

The play is forty-three pages long and is divided into two acts. The first act is twenty-one pages long and is divided into four scenes. The setting of the act is a general one, which is on a corner of a street. The second act is twenty-two pages long and is divided into three scenes. The setting of the act is a particular one, which is in an apartment.

The play is about the relationship between two main characters, Jim Harris and Ella Downey. Jim’s love towards Ella blooms since Ella and he grows up
together in a coloured district in New York. When he grows up, Jim, who is black, wants to become a lawyer to elevate his social status. He some day asks Ella, who is white, to marry him. Ella actually is still reluctant to make a relationship with a man because she has been disappointed by a man, but then she accepts Jim’s proposal.

After their marriage, they set out to France so that no one can disturb them. In France, Ella becomes introvert which is caused by her thoughts that people will mock her for marrying a black man.

Returning to America, Jim finds out the cause why he cannot be a lawyer: Ella always makes him stay up so late that he cannot study for the exam. Ella does not want Jim to pass the exam because she is afraid that Jim will change once he becomes a lawyer.

Finally, Jim knows Ella does not want him to become a lawyer because she wants to keep Jim in menial status, and she does not want Jim to succeed. Jim thinks that Ella loves him so much that she can not stand being far from him, which makes him always amuse Ella until her time runs out. Jim’s decision to amuse Ella does not signify his love towards her but it shows that Ella’s effort to keep Jim in menial status succeeds.
B. Method of the Study

The method I used to collect data for the thesis was library research. I used the method since the thesis deals with a play which belongs to a particular social condition in the past and the information of which could only be looked for and collected in the library, as it is impossible to observe directly something which happened in the past.

The primary data were O’Neill’s *Penguin Plays*, within which the play *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* I analyzed lies. To support my analysis, I read Guerin’s *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Abram’s *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Harlow’s and Miller’s *Story of America*, and Puckrein’s *The Civil Rights Movement and The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The approach I use to analyze the play is Guerin’s sociological approach as it analyzes a work of literature in relation to the time of its writing. The sociological approach is a study of a work of literature in its social milieu. This approach holds view that a work of literature reflects the social life at the time of its writing and is used as it is thought to be helpful to point out the manifestations of racism in American society before the Great Depression. In using the approach, first we have to find out when a work was produced, then the social life of the time it was produced. Finally, one must be able to find out the reflection of the social life at the time of producing in the work to be analyzed.
In analyzing the play, the first step I did was to identify who the main characters were. This step was done with the help of Abram's theory of characterization to identify the main characters and their miseries as reflected in their dialogues and actions. The next step was to indicate whether or not the main characters' miseries as found in the play were caused by racism in American society during the Great Depression as shown by their dialogues and actions. This step was done after understanding Puckrein's theory on racism in American society and Harlow's and Miller's theory on the condition of the society during the Great Depression. The last step was to draw conclusion. This step was done by relating all the data into a general statement.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

A. Racism in American Society before the Great Depression in the Play

What I am going to discuss in this part of the chapter is not the characteristics of racism in American society related to the condition of the society before the Great Depression. What I mean by writing the subtitle is that I will discuss racism in American society which happened to happen in 1920’s, the time before the Great Depression. I avoid writing the phrase in 1920’s and make use of before the Great Depression to avoid guiding the readers to the wrong perception as 1920’s is associated with the Jazz Age and/or Roaring Twenties—the glimmers of American upper middle class parties in 1920’s, while the thesis deals with American lower middle class problems in 1920’s.

Racism in American society which happened to happen before the Great Depression was clearly shown in the daily life of the people of that time. Using Mazrui’s theory that racism helps to convince people that one of the most relevant criteria of their superiority depends on the color of their skin (1989: 103-104) as ground for racial segregation, where people were segregated due to the color of their skin as a result of racism, the United States seemed to be divided into two sections.
The sections belonged to the white Americans and the African-Americans, widely known as the whites and blacks, since the population of the first dominated the country where the population of the second were the largest of colored ethnic groups living in the country. Each section had its own people, public place, residence, and occupation. It was uncommon that a person from one ethnic group was found in the place regarded as the exclusive belonging of the other ethnic group, and the person would likely be exposed to hostility when the person did so.

There were three reasons for the segregation, where the first and the second were the result of the underlying third. The first reason was that a person found it more comfortable to live among the people sharing the same cultural background as the people would be able to understand the person better. The second was that it was safer for a person to live among the people sharing the same background as the person might face hostility when living among the people not sharing the same background. The third was that each person from one ethnic group had a racial prejudice against people coming from other ethnic groups due to the practice of racism. Racism made people at that time think that one race was better than the other, thus it was common that the whites were associated with white collar and blue collar professions which provided higher salaries than those demanding pure physical strength in which one did not have to be intelligent to do the works which were associated with black people.
Although from the description above we may see that racism was bad, it was made worse by the firing of the employees and the closing down of the factories where the employees once worked in as the result of the low buying force of the public (Harlow and Miller, 1953: 450-461). As the result, on one side there were many unemployed white employees—bearing in mind that the whites were associated with white collar and blue collar professions—and on the other side there were many blacks who still had their job as manual labors in docks and warehouses. These made the whites feel envy towards the blacks as the blacks still had their jobs whereas they—the whites who considered themselves as the superior race—were unemployed. This envy created even bigger racial prejudice as the unemployed whites who thought that being white made the job rightfully theirs tried to get rid of the blacks off the jobs the whites once despised and take the vacant place left by the blacks.

The unemployed whites believed that it would be better for every ethnic group that each group stayed in its own place. Although it might seem just, it was not since the whites tried to get the blacks off the territory and business the whites wanted. Keeping each ethnic group in its own place meant keep the blacks off the place the whites wanted. The whites and the blacks might co-exist in one place, but they remained segregated as the place was literally divided into two parts, each belonged exclusively to an ethnic group.
The racism in America before the Great Depression was reflected in the racism which happened in the play. It was the one which happened in the society of lower New York, at the edge of a colored district. The atmosphere of racism was literally visible as the district seemed to be divided into two separate parts. The division made the two separate parts seem to live in contrast. The contrast was shown most clearly in the stage direction:

...Four-storey tenements stretch away down the skyline of the two streets. ...in the street leading left, the faces are all white; in the street leading right, all black. ...On the sidewalk are eight children, four boys and four girls. Two of each sex are white, two black. ...From the street of the whites a high pitched, nasal tenor sings the chorus of 'Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage'. On the street of the blacks a Negro strikes up the chorus of 'I Guess I'll Have to Telegraph My Baby'...

(Act I, sc. i, p. 193)

Although the society as described in the play is divided in balance, the one in reality was not so. It did not have the same number of males and females, each ethnic group did not have the same number of males and females within it, and one ethnic group did not have strikingly the same amount of member as the other did. The balance in division happens only in the play to show contrast between two different ethnic groups, and to show co-existence as both groups are able to live together in the same place when in the meantime both groups are segregated. One place is divided into two, each belongs exclusively to an ethnic group.
The individuals of each group had occupations belonging exclusively to the group within which the individuals live, and it was uncommon for each group that a member of a group had an occupation belonging to or associated to the other group. The best example lies in the conversation between Joe- an uneducated black- and Jim- an educated black. Joe mocks Jim for being able to graduate and dreaming of becoming a lawyer:

Joe [staring resentfully]: Is you graduatin’ tonight?
Jim: Yes.
Joe [spitting disgustedly]: Fo’ Gawd’s sake! You is gittin’ high falutin’!

Jim [assertively]: I’m going to study and become a lawyer.
Joe [with a snort]: Fo’ Chris’ sake, nigger!

(Act I, sc. ii, p. 199-200)

Joe’s referring Jim as a nigger- a slang for a member of African- American ethnic group- when Joe himself is a black means that he wants to make Jim realize that he is black, and that his effort to study to fulfill his dream of becoming a lawyer is against the custom of that time in which the profession of lawyer usually belongs to the whites. It also gives an implication. It implies that white people were associated with professions demanding intellectual skill and ones demanding professional physical skill- white collar and blue collar professions, whereas black people were associated with professions demanding pure physical strength, ones in which a person did not have to be smart to do the work.
It is clear for now that from the description about the society and its individual above that the individuals living in American society as reflected in the play were boxed, were territorialised. They could not do the things they wanted to do freely because they were bound by and lived within their own boxes, their own territory.

B. The Practice of Racism in the Play which Jim and Ella Suffered as Miseries

If the first part of the chapter discusses racism in general perspective, this part of the chapter is going to discuss racism in personal perspective. It is called racism in a personal scope because I want to discuss the practice of racism— in other words, the manifestations of racism— which are suffered as miseries by Jim and Ella, whether as separate individuals or as a married couple.

B.1. The Practice of Racism in the Play which Jim Suffers as Miseries

During his childhood, Jim, a black boy, falls in love with the eight-year-old Ella, Jim’s white schoolmate, simply because she lets him take her books to and from the school. At first, Jim cannot express his feelings toward Ella freely as there are other children adjoining them in a game of marbles on one spring evening. After the game reaches its end and all the other children go home leaving Jim and Ella
alone, Jim finally manages to spill out the feelings he has toward Ella. Besides saying that he likes Ella, Jim also says that he has been trying to become white as he thinks Ella will not like him if he is black and will only like him if he is as white as she is. Jim’s effort of trying to become white makes him the object of other people’s joke on him:

Jim [*suddenly*]: You know what, Ella? Since I been tuckin’ yo’ books to school and back, I been drinkin’ lots o’ chalk ‘n’ water three 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.

(Act I, sc. i, p. 196)

It can be seen that Jim’s misery is caused by racial segregation. It makes Jim think with his childish logical mind that as a white person, Ella will only be attracted to another white person, which explains Jim’s effort of becoming white by drinking toxic substance. However, from the last line of the quotation above, he does not want Ella to know that he does it to make her attracted to him, which signifies that he is still too shy to express his feelings towards her because they are in a public place.

Nine years later, Jim finally manages to graduate from high school after he fails the examination the previous year. Jim who intends to continue his study and to become a lawyer is suddenly faced with hostility from his childhood friends- blacks and whites. Jim’s effort of trying to improve himself and his welfare is thought by
his friends as trying to buy himself white, meaning that he wants to become and to be considered as a white person by doing so. The friends then try to talk some sense to Jim, and to make him realize who he really is. They think that what Jim is doing is wrong because he is trying to do something not yet done by others and they think that Jim will only be lying to himself has he done so. These make them hate and therefore isolate Jim. The best examples of these come from what Mickey- Jim’s white friend- and Joe- Jim’s black friend- say to Jim:

Mickey: *Coons*, why don’t yuh say it right! De trouble wit’ yoh is yuh’ re gittin’ stuck up, dat’s what! Stay where yeh belong, see! Yer old man made coin at de truckin’ game and yah’ re tryin’ to buy yourslef white- graduatin’ and law, for hell’s sake! ... Don’t de gang all train wit’ Joe dere and lots of others but yuh’ re tryin’ to buy white and it won’t get yuh no place, see!  

(Act I, sc. ii, p. 210)

Jim [*dully*]: I’m your friend, Joe.  
Joe: No, you isn’t! I ain’t no fren’ o’ yours! I don’t even know who you is! What’s all dis dressin’up and graduatin’ an’ sayin’ you gwine study to 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 amin’ to buy white wid yo’ ol’ man’s dough like Mickey say? ... 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.  

(Act I, sc. ii, p. 203- 204)
Although being isolated to make him realize that what he is doing is uncommon, Jim still insists on trying to become a lawyer. Jim does this by continuously retaking the examinations, oral and written, to pass his lawyer school. His effort is clearly seen from his reluctance on quitting his school after having been attending it for five years and still has not graduated while he should be able to do so in two years’ time. Jim’s persistence is due to his assumption that becoming a lawyer would enable him to put himself on a more solid ground, and that it will put him on a higher social status. It also acts as personal symbol of achievement that not only white persons who can be lawyers in a white society, but black persons such as himself are also able to be ones. This explains his opinion that becoming a lawyer is everything to him.

The underlying factor which makes Jim unable to graduate in two years’ time thus making him retake the examinations is not his academical incompetence but his nervousness of having to have the examinations before the board of white examiners in his oral examination and along with white persons in his written examination whereas he is the only black person taking the examinations. This factor makes him feel that he is watched and prejudged by the looks in the white people’s eyes. This makes Jim unable to pass the examinations every time he takes them, and when every time he fails he feels humiliated:

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- ... They
don’t laugh, hardly ever. They’re kind. They’re good people. ... 
But I feel branded!
Ella: Poor Jim!
Jim [going on painfully]: And it’s the same thing in the written
exams. ... I learn it all, I see it, I understand it. ... On all sides
are white men starting to write. They’re so sure- even the ones I
know know nothing. But I know it all- but I can’t remember
anymore- it fades- it goes- it’s gone. ... I sit like a fool fighting
to remember a little bit here, a little bit there- not enough to
pass- ... when I know it all!
Ella [compassionately]: Jim, it isn’t worth it. You don’t need to-
Jim: I need it more than anyone ever needed anything. I need it to
live.
Ella: What’ll it prove?
Jim: Nothing at all much- but everything to me.

(Act I, sc. iii, p. 208-209)

B.2. The Practice of Racism in the Play which Ella Suffers as Miseries

During her childhood, Ella likes Jim because he always stands by her side,
protects her, and makes her feel secure. Whenever she is teased by all of her friends,
Jim always tries to comfort her by trying to make their friends stop teasing Ella. This
makes her stay close to Jim as he provides security which she needs, and her being
close to Jim is clearly shown in the stage direction of Act I scene i where it is
described that on the game of marbles she sits behind his elbow holding his marbles
in her hands. Her being close to Jim explains the action of her letting him take her
books to and from their school which makes Jim fall in love with Ella and always want to protect her.

What Ella does not know is what she thinks she regularly does to Jim is thought to be wrong and uncommon by all the other children, excluding Jim who enjoys her being close to him. It is so since her friends- like other persons in their neighborhood- think that playing together with children from different races is acceptable, whereas taking them as close friends- moreover being close to them- is absolutely unacceptable.

Ella’s being close to Jim which she thinks will provide her security turns out to be the factor that makes her uneasy and fall into an object of her friends’ mockery on her:

Joe: Look at dat Jim Crow! Land sakes, he got a gal! [He laughs. They all laugh.]

... Little Girls [pointing their fingers at Ella]: Shame! Shame! Everybody knows your name! Painty Face! Painty Face! Ella [hanging her head]: Shut up! Little White Girl: He’s been carrying her books! Colored Girl: Can’t you find nuffin’ better’n him, Ella? Look at de big feet he got! [She laughs. They all laugh. ....]

... All: Found yeh out! Found yeh out! Mickey: Mush- head! Jim Crow de Sissy! Stuck on Painty Face!

... Shorty: Sissy! Softy! [Ella suddenly begins to cry. At this they all howl.]

All: Cry- baby! Cry- baby! Look at her! Painty Face!

(Act I, sc. i, p. 194-195)
It can be seen from the quotation that Ella's effort to find security by being close to Jim is ironic. It is ironic since instead of finding security and comfort, she finds discomfort every time she is near Jim. Ella does not know that her being close to Jim which she thinks will bring her security and comfort turns out to be the source of things which brings her discomfort she tries to avoid.

Ella's being mocked by her friends when she was a little girl is not the only misery she has. Nine years later, when she is seventeen and is the girlfriend of Mickey, she finds it hard to act casually to Jim, her childhood guardian. Ella who presently finds security whenever she is near Mickey, a white womanizing boxer with a promising career, thinks that she does not need Jim anymore. Ella then treats him the way white people treated black people. She treats Jim miserably by telling him to stay with his own kind. This is not purely Ella's intention, rather it is the pressure of the racist society she lives in which has been previously discussed. The pressure bends Ella down and makes her hate colored people. Although she says she has no trouble in being with colored people, it is worth to notice that Ella can not say it comfortably without lying to herself. She thinks she finds security by Mickey's side, but she does not know that he only protects her in order to be able to manipulate her, to use her for his own benefit.

Mickey: ...Listen. See Ella Downey goin'?
Shorty: Painty Face? No, she ain't been along.
Mickey [with authority]: Can dat name, see! Want a bunch o’ five in your kissin’? ... She’s me goil, understan’?
Joe [venturing to joke]: Which one? Yo’ number ten?
Mickey [flattered]: Sure. De real K.O. one.

(Act I, sc. ii, p. 199)

Although Ella does not regard nor notice her being manipulated as her misery, we can clearly see that it brings her misery as she can not have a sincere protection from Mickey. The misery Ella suffers might not seem like it is caused by racism, but from a different perspective it is. It is so since she is influenced by the society which believes in racial segregation. Ella can only try to find protection from a fellow white person and can not find it from a person coming from a different race. Unfortunately for her, her fellow white person she thinks she finds protection in does it only to use her for his own benefit.

Not noticing that Mickey only helps her to manipulate her and wanting to be secure, Ella continues on living together with Mickey and as a result she had a child from him. Although having a child, Mickey continues on manipulating Ella and neglects her. Ella then falls deeper down into her misery as she does not have skill, job, nor ability to raise child. These bring her into poverty as the only job suitable for an unskilled person is manual labor with minimum salary. Ella’s misery of falling down into poverty is clear from her appearance and her residence:

[Ella enters. She is dressed poorly, her face is pale and hollow-eyed, her voice cold and tired.]

... 
Shorty: How yuh been?
Ella: All right. [A pause. He looks at her puzzedly.]
... Shorty: He sent me.
Ella: Why?
Shorty: To slip you this wad o' dough. *He reluctantly takes a roll of bills from his pocket and holds it out to her.*

... 
Ella: No.
Shorty: For de kid den.
Ella: The kid's dead. He took diphtheria.

... 
Shorty: You made up wit yer family?
Ella: No chance.
Shorty: Livin' alone?
Ella: In Brooklyn.
Shorty: Workin'?
Ella: In a factory

(Act I, sc. iii, p. 205-206)

Ella's misery of falling down into poverty is emphasized by the fact that she can not ask her parents for help as they have not forgiven her for choosing to live with Mickey. As she can not seek help from her parents nor depend on Mickey's support, she has to support herself and her child by working in a factory and living in a slum as the salary does not allow her to find better residence.

Although poor, Ella still has her self-dignity. It is shown when she refuses the money from Mickey that Shorty gives her, refuses to work for him as she thinks it is not an honest job and he is not a respectable person, gives all the money Shorty finally leaves her with to the Salvation Army, and says to the Army that she is not in their line yet. This means that she is not too poor to be rescued by such charity organization as the Salvation Army.
As Ella self-supports herself, she notices that she is isolated by and from her white friends since she falls into poverty. This isolation makes Ella feel insecure, the feeling she hates and has been trying to avoid. She then finds security again when she is with Jim. To keep him close by her side, she indirectly defends him when she defends herself at the time she refuses Shorty’s proposition of her working with him by saying:

Ella [Without emphasis]: You’re a dirty dog. Why doesn’t someone kill you?
Shorty: Is dat so! What’re you? They say you been travelin’ round with Jim Crow.
Ella: He’s been my only friend.
Shorty: A nigger!
Ella: The only white man in the world! Kind and white. You’re all black-black to the heart.

(Act I, sc. iii, p. 207)

Again, it can be clearly seen that in a white society it was better to be a white criminal than be an honest living white who had a black person as a friend. This meant that however not respectable a white person was in a racist white society, he was more respectable in the eyes of the society than a white person who had a black person as a friend.

Ella’s referring Jim as the only white man in the world does not mean that she is finally able to overcome the pressure from her racist society. She does it only to obtain Jim’s sympathy and make him think that finally she is attracted to him. Ella’s effort is made easy as Jim still loves her which blinds him from thinking the
possibility that she might not like him and is only close to him to find personal security.

Ella’s accepting Jim’s proposal to marry him in the end of Act I scene iii does not mean that she loves him. Ella does so since she does not have another choice. She is alone, isolated from and by her white friends, poor, and in need of personal security. The only person whom Ella thinks can provide her personal security is Jim, a black person who falls in love with her and wants to marry her. Needing personal security more than affection, Ella then decides to trade her dignity for personal security by marrying Jim.

B.3. The Practice of Racism in the Play which Both Jim and Ella Suffer as Miseries

Jim and Ella suffer miseries as soon as they are married. Their miseries start right after they are out of the church where they hold their wedding ceremony. If they were previously isolated by their friends for being close to one another, after they are out of the church they are rejected not only by their friends who have already isolated them but also by the society they live in. This rejection is very clear that it makes Jim nervous and Ella loose her confidence and courage as they walk down the church stairs. Apart from loosing her confidence and courage, the realization that she has made a wrong decision paralyzed Ella that makes Jim need
to pull her hand while at the same time have to comfort her to be strong by saying continuous meaningless remarks to her to be able to take her away from the church.

Jim's opinion which he says to Ella after she accepts his proposal to marry her that they should go abroad after their marriage shows the rejection from their society towards a married couple coming from different races. The hostility of the rejection is best shown on the stage direction in the beginning of Act I scene iv:

[As the music dies down there is a pause of waiting stillness. This is broken by one startling, metallic clang of the church bell. ... They hurry to form into two racial lines on each side of the gate, rigid and unyielding, staring across at each other with bitter hostile eyes. The halves of the big church door swing open and Jim and Ella step out from the darkness within into the sunlight. The doors slam behind them like wooden lips of an idol that has spat them out. ...]

(Act I, sc. iv, p. 211-212)

Although the rejection is bitter and hostile, the bitterness and hostility are not addressed to Jim and Ella as a mixed married couple. They are addressed to the couple to represent one race's hatred toward the other. The blacks address their hatred to Ella, and the whites to Jim. Jim and Ella become the object of each race's hatred since it is the result of the racism in their society, that the primary determinant of human traits and capacity is race. Racism makes the white people feel bitter thus look down on Ella for marrying Jim, somebody from the inferior race, and the black people on Jim for trying to be a member of the superior race by marrying Ella, somebody coming from the superior race. The black people think that
Jim is being selfish as they think he has forgotten the fact that the superior white race is the race which makes them suffer the way they are at that time.

Predicting that their marriage will cause such hatred from their society, Jim decides that he and Ella ought to go abroad to avoid it. Thinking that in a foreign land they can find happiness, Jim and Ella go to France after their wedding ceremony.

Two years later, the setting is moved into a flat of the better sort in the Negro district near the corner of the street I where most of the events in Act I take place, more specifically the residence of the Harris, the family where Jim belongs to. In their waiting for Jim and Ella to come, Mrs. Harris warns Hattie not to cause a trouble when the couple arrives. The couple finally arrives and Hattie soon meets Jim who looks much older, graver, and worrier. Asking about Jim’s and Ella’s life in France which she thinks is restful, Hattie is surprised to know that it is too lonely for Ella. It turns out later that Jim’s decision to live with Ella in France brings them both into other miseries.

The miseries Jim and Ella have when they are in France as they are told to Hattie are not constantly felt by the couple as Ella enjoys the first year of their stay in France by going out with the French. When she is happy, Jim is sad to notice that their relationship is like that of siblings, as he is left alone by Ella every time she goes out with her friends. After a year, Ella does not want to go out anymore and
choose to live in the house, which makes Jim happy as he thinks their relationship will finally be like that of husband and wife. However, as time passes by the couple falls into a deeper misery as Ella becomes more introvert, which forces Jim to move them to the country. Instead of getting any better, Ella grows more introvert. This makes Jim think that Ella thinks that he is not man enough:

Jim: ... She got to avoiding the French folks the same way as if they were Americans and I couldn’t get it out of her mind. She lived in the house and got paler and paler, and more and more nervous and scary, ... I got to feeling blue. Got to sneering at myself that I wasn’t any better than a quitter because I sneaked away right after getting married, didn’t face nothing, gave up trying to become a Member of the Bar- and I got to suspecting Ella must feel that way about me too- that I wasn’t a real man!

(Act I, sc. i, p. 218)

Although what Jim thought seems right, the reality speaks differently as Ella’s reason for being more and more introvert is that she is ashamed of being acknowledged as a white American woman who is married to a black American man. Unaware that the French does not give much attention to their mixed marriage, Ella continues on thinking that the French look down on her because she has a black person as her husband. Apparently Ella still is carried away by the fear of being rejected by her society when she is in America to France. This makes Ella draw herself away from the French society as she thinks that a mixed married couple like Jim and herself will be isolated by them.
As stated previously that Ella had a wrong reason for marrying Jim, she feels ashamed of herself and this explains her being introvert as discussed above. Apart from her feeling ashamed of herself, Ella's being introvert has another reason which will explain the next misery Jim has to undergo in his marriage life with Ella.

Another reason of Ella's being introvert is to attract Jim's attention as she can no longer feel secure nor comfortable for fearing that the society gives her more pressure than it does to Jim for marrying someone coming from a different race. Ella then tries to once again find security and comfort in Jim's side by being introvert. By being introvert, Ella indirectly forces Jim to stay home and accompany her. Jim does so as he loves Ella and is worried about her health. Jim's decision to accompany Ella brings him to his next misery as he has to spend more of his time on her than on his study. This means that he is not able to study for the examinations to be accepted as a Member of the Bar. Jim can not do so as every night he studies for the examinations, Ella suddenly falls sick and makes him have to stay up all night to take care of her. Sleepy for staying up late to take care of Ella, Jim can not study nor do his examinations, thus he fails every time he takes them.

Apart from Ella's wanting to be comforted by Jim by becoming introvert, Ella has another intention which brings Jim into another misery. Ella's being sick every time Jim studies for his lawyer school examinations turns out to be her way of keeping Jim in menial status. Ella wants Jim to always do everything she asks him to
do, like a slave obeying his owner. Ella can not accept the fact that someday Jim
will graduate and be able to be a lawyer, as she thinks Jim will be free to do
whatever he wants to do and no longer be useful to provide security and comfort for
Ella:

Jim [dully]: I’ve got to sit down, Honey. I’m tired. I haven’t had
much chance for sleep in so long...
Ella [sits down on the floor beside him and holds his hand. Her
face is gradually regaining an expression that is happy,
childlike, and pretty]: I know, Jim! That was my fault. ... I kept
thinking if he sleeps good then he’ll be sure to study good and
then he’ll pass and the devil’ll win!

Ella: ... When you were away taking the examinations and I was
alone with the nurse, I closed my eyes and pretended to be
asleep, but I was praying with all my might: O God, don’t let
Jim pass!
Jim [with a sob]: Don’t, Honey, don’t! ... You’re hurting me!
Ella [jumping to her feet- excitedly]: Don’t cry, Jim! ... I’ve got
only a little time left and I want to play...
Jim [still deeply exalted]: Honey, Honey! I’ll play right up to the
gates of heaven with you!

(Act II, sc. iii, p. 233-235)

Although finally realizes that he is being used and becomes furious as well as
sad for that, Jim still can not leave Ella for making him suffer the misery of being
kept in menial status. Jim’s decision that he will do whatever Ella wants him to do
can not be seen as the sign of his affection, but the sign that Ella’s effort to keep Jim
in menial status merely to serve her every demand succeeds.

The miseries of the couple serve as an irony since the mixed marriage Jim
thinks would be a prove that love overcomes racial difference turns out to be a
marriage in which the black husband becomes the slave of the white wife. The marriage justifies racism, that white people were superior and the black inferior, and the white people liked to keep the black people under their feet as their slaves just like what their ancestors once did hundreds of years ago.

C. Racism in the Play as the Cause of the Main Characters’ Miseries

C.1. Racism in the Play as the Cause of Jim’s Miseries

Jim falls into his misery at the point where he falls in love with the eight-year-old Ella, his white schoolmate, simply because she lets him take her books to and from the school. The misery starts as he has been trying to become white as he thinks Ella will not like him if he is black and will only like him if he is as white as she is. Jim’s effort of trying to become white makes him the object of other people’s joke on him as someone from his neighborhood tells him to drink chalk and water if he wanted to be white. It can be seen that Jim’s misery is caused by racial segregation. It makes Jim think with his childish logical mind that as a white person, Ella will only be attracted to another white person, which explains Jim’s effort of becoming white by drinking toxic substance.
Nine years later, Jim finally manages to graduate from high school after he fails the examination the previous year and intends to continue his study and became a lawyer. He is suddenly faced with hostility from his childhood friends—blacks and whites—which is his next misery. Due to racism, Jim’s white friends think that he was a threat against their superiority has he become a lawyer and his black friends think that he will only be lying to himself has he tried to become and to be considered as a white person by becoming one. The friends then try to make him realize who he really is. They think that what Jim is doing is wrong as he does something which is uncommon for the society at that time. These make them hate and therefore isolate Jim.

Although being isolated, Jim still insinuates on trying to become a lawyer by continuously retaking the examinations to pass his lawyer school. His persistence is due to his assumption that becoming a lawyer will give evidence to the white society that not only white persons who can be lawyers in a white society, but black persons such as himself are also able to be ones. This explains his opinion that becoming a lawyer is everything to him.

The factor which makes Jim unable to graduate in two years’ time thus making him retake the examinations is his nervousness of having to have the examinations before the board of white examiners in his oral examination and along with white persons in his written examination whereas he is the only black person
taking the examinations. This factor is caused by racial segregation since as the only
black person he feels unsafe when being with white people thus makes him feel that
he is watched and prejudged by the looks in the white people's eyes. This makes Jim
unable to pass the examinations every time he takes them.

The miseries Jim feels are caused by racism, aided by his persistence to
fight it. Jim wants to fight the common behavior and attitude existing in a racist
society which put everyone in their personal boxes and predestined everyone. Within
his struggle against racism, he falls into his own miseries. Therefore it can be said
that his miseries are indirectly caused by racism. It is indirect since it causes Jim
miseries as he tries to fight it.

However, in one side it can also be said that Jim's miseries are directly
caused by racism since it makes him think that racism is bad and has to be fought.
The reason for also saying that racism directly caused Jim his miseries is if racism
does not exist, Jim will not try to fight it and will not have his miseries.

C 2. Racism in the Play as the Cause of Ella's Miseries

Ella's fall into her misery is marked by her being close to Jim as he always
stands by her side, protects her, and makes her feel secure whenever she is teased
by all of her friends. Ella then wants to keep Jim close to her by letting him take her books to and from their school.

Ella's misery starts as her being close to Jim which she thinks will provide her security turns out to be the factor that makes her uneasy and fall into an object of her friends' mockery on her. Ella's effort to find security by being close to Jim is ironic. It is ironic since instead of finding security and comfort, she finds discomfort every time she is near Jim. The discomfort is caused by Ella's friends as they think what she does is wrong and uncommon. Racism makes her friends think that playing together with children from different races is acceptable, whereas taking them as close friends is absolutely unacceptable.

Ella's being mocked by her friends was not the only misery she had. Nine years later, she finds security whenever she is near Mickey, a white womanizing boxer with a promising career. Thinking that she does not need Jim anymore, Ella then treats him miserably by telling him to stay with his own kind. This is not purely Ella's intention, rather it is the pressure of the racist society she lives in. The pressure bends Ella down and makes her hate colored people. Although she says she has no trouble in being with colored people, it is worth to notice that she can not say it comfortably without lying to herself. She thinks she finds security by Mickey's side, but she does not know that he only protects her in order to be able to use her for his own benefit.
Although Ella does not regard nor notice her being manipulated as her misery, we can clearly see that it brings her misery as she can not have a sincere protection from Mickey. The misery Ella suffers is caused by racism since she is influenced by the society which believes in racial segregation. Ella can only try to find protection from a fellow white person and can not find it from a person coming from a different race. Unfortunately for her, her fellow white person she thinks she finds protection in does it only to use her for his own benefit.

Not noticing this and wanting to be secure, Ella continues on living together with Mickey and as a result she had a child from him. Ella then falls deeper down into her misery as she does not have skill, job, nor ability to raise child. These bring her into poverty as the only job suitable for an unskilled person is manual labor.

Ella’s misery of falling down into poverty is emphasized by the fact that she can not ask her parents for help as they have not forgiven her for choosing to live with Mickey. As she can not seek help from her parents nor depend on Mickey’s support, she has to support herself and her child by working in a factory and living in a slum as the salary does not allow her to find better residence.

As Ella self-supports herself, she notices that she is isolated by and from her white friends since she falls into poverty. This isolation makes Ella feel insecure, the feeling she hates and has been trying to avoid. She then finds security again when she is with Jim. However, she falls into another misery as Shorty— an unrespectable
white person mocks Ella for having a black person as a friend. It shows that however not respectable a white person was in a racist white society, he was more respectable in the eyes of the society than a white person who had a black person as a friend.

Ella's accepting Jim's proposal to marry him brings her deeper into misery as she decides to trade her dignity for personal security by doing so. Ella does so since she does not have another choice. She is alone, isolated from and by her white friends, poor, and in need of personal security. The only person whom Ella thinks can provide her personal security is Jim, a black person who falls in love with her and wants to marry her. Needing personal security more than she needs affection, Ella then decides to marry Jim.

Ella's feeling that she has traded her self dignity for security by marrying a black person came from the assumption existing in a racist society that the whites were superior and the blacks inferior. Thus when a white person married a black person, the white person was considered as a disgrace by the white society she lived in.
C.3. Racism in the Play as the Cause of Jim’s and Ella’s Miseries

Jim and Ella suffer miseries as soon as they are married. Their miseries start right after they are out of the church as they are rejected not only by their friends who have already isolated them but also by the society they live in. It is very clear that it makes Jim nervous and Ella lose her confidence and courage as they walk down the church stairs. Apart from losing her confidence and courage, Ella realizes that she has made a wrong decision by marrying Jim, a black person.

Jim’s opinion that he and Ella should go abroad after their marriage shows the hostile rejection from their society towards a married couple coming from different races. However, the bitterness and hostility are not addressed to Jim and Ella as a mixed married couple, but to represent one race’s hatred toward the other. The blacks address their hatred to Ella, and the whites to Jim. Jim and Ella fall into their first misery as a married couple as they become the object of each race’s hatred. It is so since it is the result of the racism in their society. Racism makes the white people feel bitter thus look down on Ella for marrying Jim, somebody from the inferior race, and the black people on Jim for trying to be a member of the superior race by marrying Ella, somebody from the superior race. The blacks think that Jim was being selfish as they think he has forgotten the fact that the superior white race is the race which makes them suffer the way they are at that time.
Two years later, the setting is moved into the residence of the Harris, the family where Jim belongs to. The Harris are waiting for Jim and Ella to come and the couple finally arrives. Asking about Jim’s and Ella’s life in France which she thinks is restful, Hattie is surprised to know that it is too lonely for Ella. It turns out later that Jim’s decision to live with Ella in France brings them both into other miseries.

The miseries Jim and Ella have when they are in France are not constantly felt by the couple as Ella enjoys the first year of their stay in France. When she is happy, Jim is sad to notice that their relationship is like that of siblings, as he is left alone every time Ella goes out with her French friends. After a year, Ella does not want to go out anymore and choose to live in the house, which makes Jim happy as he thinks their relationship will finally be like that of husband and wife. However, as time passes by the couple falls into a deeper misery as Ella becomes more introvert, which forces Jim to move them to the country. Instead of getting any better, Ella grows more introvert. Ella’s reason for being more and more introvert is she is ashamed of being acknowledged as a white American woman who is married to a black American man. Unaware that the French does not give much attention to their mixed marriage, Ella continues on thinking that the French look down on her because she has a black person as her husband. Apparently Ella still is carried away by the fear of being rejected by her society when she was in America to France. This
makes Ella draw herself away from the French society as she thinks that a mixed married couple like Jim and herself will be isolated by them.

Apart from her feeling ashamed of herself for having a wrong reason for marrying Jim, Ella's being introvert has another reason which will explain the next misery Jim has to undergo in his marriage life with Ella.

Another reason of Ella's being introvert is to attract Jim's attention as she can no longer feel secure nor comfortable for fearing that the society gives her more pressure than it does to Jim for marrying someone coming from a different race. By being introvert, Ella indirectly forces Jim to stay home and accompany her. Jim's decision to accompany Ella brings him to his next misery as he has to spend more of his time on her than on his study.

Another reason for Ella's becoming introvert which brings Jim into another misery is she wants to keep Jim in menial status, to always do everything she asks him to do like a slave obeying his owner. Ella can not accept the fact that someday Jim will graduate and be able to be a lawyer, as she thinks Jim would be free to do whatever he wants to and no longer be useful to provide security and comfort for Ella.

Jim's decision that he will do whatever Ella wants him to do although he finally realizes that he is being used is not the sign of his affection, but the sign that
Ella's effort to keep Jim in menial status merely to serve her every demand succeeds.

The miseries of the couple serve as an irony since the mixed marriage Jim thinks will be a prove that love overcomes racial difference turns out to be a marriage in which the black husband becomes the slave of the white wife. The marriage justifies racism, that white people were superior and the black inferior, and the white people liked to keep the black people under their feet as their slaves just like what their ancestors once did hundreds of years ago.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Racism is a belief which makes people think that one race is better than another, thus one race which is considered to be superior has better job than the inferior. Racism also segregates people according to their race, thus a person coming from one race can hardly be found in the place belonging to another race.

The racism in America before the Great Depression is reflected in the racism which happens in the play. It is the one which happens in the society of lower New York, at the edge of a colored district. The atmosphere of racism is literally visible as the district seems to be divided into two separate parts which make the two separate parts seem to live in contrast. Although the society described in the play is divided in balance, the one in reality was not so. The balance in division happens only in the play to show contrast between two different ethnic groups, and to show co-existence as both groups are able to live together in the same place when in the meantime both groups were segregated.

In the play the individuals of each group have occupation belonging exclusively to the group within which the individuals live, and it was uncommon for
each group that a member of a group has an occupation belonging to or associated to the other group.

It is clear for now that the individuals living in the American society as reflected in the play were boxed, were territorialised. They could not do the things they wanted to do freely because they were bound by and lived within their own boxes, their own territory.

The boundary which each individual in a racist society felt is reflected in the miseries of the main characters Jim and Ella. Jim’s first individual misery starts as he tries to become white to make Ella attracted to him. Being black, Jim thinks Ella will not like him if he is black and will only like him if he is as white as she is, which makes him drink chalk and water to be white. It can be seen that Jim’s misery is caused by racial segregation. It makes Jim think with his childish logical mind that as a white person, Ella will only be attracted to another white person, which explains Jim’s effort of becoming white by drinking toxic substance.

Nine years later, Jim who intends to continue his study and to become a lawyer faces another misery as he is suddenly faced with hostility from his childhood friends- blacks and whites- as they think he wants to become and to be considered as a white person by doing so. They think that what Jim is doing is wrong and this makes them hate and therefore isolate Jim, which brings him deeper into his misery.
Another misery Jim has is the fact that he always fails in his examinations due to his nervousness of having to have them before the board of white examiners and along with white persons whereas he is the only black person taking the examinations. This factor makes Jim feel that he is watched and prejudged by the looks in the white people’s eyes. This makes Jim unable to pass the examinations every time he takes them, and when every time he fails he feels humiliated.

Ella’s first individual misery starts as she tries to find security by Jim’s side. Being white, Ella is mocked even greater by her friends for being close to Jim, a black boy, as her friends—like other persons in their neighborhood—think that playing together with children from different races is acceptable, whereas taking them as close friends—moreover being close to them—is absolutely unacceptable.

Ella’s effort is ironic since instead of finding security and comfort, she finds discomfort every time she is near Jim. Ella does not know that her being close to Jim turns out to be the source of things which brings her discomfort she tries to avoid.

Nine years later, Ella who presently finds security whenever she is near Mickey, a white womanizing boxer with a promising career, falls into another misery as Mickey only protects her in order to be able to manipulate her, to use her for his own benefit. This misery might not seem like it is caused by racism, but it is since she is influenced by the society which believes in racial segregation. This makes Ella
try to find protection only from a fellow white person and not from a person coming from a different race.

Ella then falls deeper down into her misery when she continues on living together with Mickey and as a result she had a child from him. As she does not have skill, job, nor ability to raise child, Ella falls into poverty as the only job suitable for an unskilled person is manual labor with minimum salary. Her fall into poverty makes her white friends isolate Ella, which makes her feel insecure.

Ella's accepting Jim's proposal to marry him in the end of Act I scene iii does not mean that she loves him. It means that Ella decides to trade her dignity for personal security by marrying Jim as she needs it more than she needs affection.

Jim's and Ella's first misery as a married couple starts right after they are out of the church where they hold their wedding ceremony. Jim and Ella suffer misery as they are rejected by the society they live in. They become the object of each race's hatred since it is the result of the racism in their society. Racism makes the white people feel bitter thus look down on Ella for marrying Jim, somebody from the inferior race, and the black people on Jim for trying to be a member of the superior race by marrying Ella, somebody coming from the superior race.

Other miseries Jim and Ella have when they are in France as they are told to Hattie inside the residence of the Harris, the family where Jim belongs to, two years after their marriage are not constantly felt as Ella enjoys the first year of their stay in
France. The first misery Jim has in his married life with Ella is the feeling that their relationship is like that of siblings, as he is left alone by Ella every time she goes out with her friends.

After a year, Ella chooses to live in the house and grows more introvert as she is ashamed of being acknowledged as a white American woman who is married to a black American man. This misery Ella feels is due to her being carried away by the fear of being rejected by the society, which makes Ella draw herself away from the French society.

The next misery Jim has in his marriage life with Ella is that he is not able to study for the examinations to be accepted as a Member of the Bar, and this is related to another reason for Ella’s being introvert. By being introvert, Ella indirectly forces Jim to stay home and accompany her. Thus, every night Jim studies for the examinations, Ella suddenly falls sick and makes him have to stay up all night to take care of her. This makes Jim unable to study nor do his examinations, thus he fails every time he takes them.

Another intention for Ella’s being introvert which brings Jim into another misery is to keep Jim in menial status as she can not accept the fact that someday Jim will be able to fulfill his dream and no longer do whatever she wants him to do. Although finally realizes that he is being used, Jim still can not leave Ella for making
him suffer the misery of being kept in menial status. This signifies that Ella's effort to keep Jim in menial status succeeds.

Racism in the play is the cause of the miseries that the main characters Jim and Ella suffer. The miseries Jim individually feels are caused by racism, aided by his persistence to fight it. Jim wants to fight the common behavior and attitude existing in a racist society which put everyone in their personal boxes and predestined everyone. Within his struggle against racism, he falls into his own miseries. These are shown in his effort of attracting Ella by drinking toxic substance, of becoming a lawyer by retaking the examinations which makes his friends isolate him, and of marrying Ella to prove that love can overcome all racial difference. Therefore it can be said that his miseries are indirectly caused by racism. It is indirect since it causes Jim miseries as he tries to fight it.

However, in one side it can also be said that Jim's miseries are directly caused by racism since it makes him think that racism is bad and has to be fought. The reason for also saying that racism directly causes Jim his miseries is if racism does not exist, Jim will not try to fight it and will not have his miseries.

Ella's individual miseries are caused by her effort to find someone who can give her personal security without bearing in mind the fact that she lives in a racist society where people are racially segregated. They are shown in her being mocked by her friends for being close to Jim, being manipulated by Mickey and bearing his
child, fall into poverty which makes her white friends isolate her, and trading her self dignity for security to marry Jim.

Ella’s feeling that she has traded her self dignity comes from the assumption existing in a racist society that the whites were superior and the blacks inferior. Thus when a white person married a black person, the white person was considered as a disgrace by the white society the person lived in.

Jim and Ella suffer the miseries in their marriage life as they who come from different races are married in a racist society which cannot accept such uncommon condition as mixed marriage. The pressure of the society is so massive that it gradually influences the couple’s life. This is shown in Jim’s and Ella’s being rejected by the society as soon as they are married, Ella’s growing more and more introvert, Jim’s failing in his examinations as he has to tend Ella for her being introvert, and Ella’s effort to obtain personal security by being introvert to keep Jim in menial status.

The miseries of the couple serve as an irony since the mixed marriage Jim thinks will be a prove that love overcomes racial difference turns out to be a marriage in which the black husband becomes the slave of the white wife. The marriage justifies racism, that white people were superior and the black inferior, and the white people liked to keep the black people under their feet as their slaves just like what their ancestors once did hundreds of years ago.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

Summary of the Play

Jim's love towards Ella blooms since Ella and he grows up together in a coloured district in New York. Jim falls in love with Ella as she always let him take her books to and from their school. Jim then tries to be white to attract Ella’s attention, but instead of getting her attention Jim is mocked by his friends- black and white.

When he grows up, Jim, who is black, wants to become a lawyer after finally is able to graduate from the school after retaking the examinations several times. He does so in order to elevate his social status. He some day asks Ella, who is white, to marry him. Ella actually is still reluctant to make a relationship with a man because she has been disappointed by a man, but then she accepts Jim’s proposal.

After their marriage, they set out to France so that no one can disturb them. In France, Ella becomes introvert which is caused by her thoughts that people will mock her for marrying a black man.

Returning to America, Jim finds out the cause why he cannot be a lawyer: Ella always makes him stay up so late that he cannot study for the exam. Ella does not want Jim to pass the exam because she is afraid that Jim will change once he becomes a lawyer.
Finally, Jim knows Ella does not want him to become a lawyer because she wants to keep Jim in menial status, and she does not want Jim to succeed. Jim thinks that Ella loves him so much that she can not stand being far from him, which makes him always amuse Ella until her time runs out. Jim’s decision to amuse Ella does not signify his love towards her but it shows that Ella’s effort to keep Jim in menial status succeeds.

**Biography of the Writer**


Eugene Gladstone O’Neill was born in October 16, 1888 in New York, New York and died in November 27, 1953 in Boston, Massachusetts. O’Neill was one of the greatest American playwrights and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1936.

O’Neill attended Princeton University for one year (1906-1907), and then shipped to the sea, lived in a negligent existence on the waterfronts of Buenos Aires, Liverpool, and New York City, drowned himself in alcohol, and attempted suicide. While recovering from tuberculosis at a sanitarium in Wallingford, Connecticut, he began to write plays.
His first full-length play, *Beyond the Horizon*, was produced on Broadway in 1920. O'Neill's capacity for and commitment to work were staggering. In 1923 he wrote *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, one of his plays which was completed along with his twenty long plays and a number of short ones between 1920 and 1943. O'Neill's most distinguished short plays include four early sea dramas, *Bound East for Cardiff*, *In the Zone*, *The Long Voyage Home*, and *The Moon of the Caribbees*, which were written between 1913 and 1917, and produced in 1924 under the overall title *S. S. Glencairn, The Emperor Jones* (1921); and *The Hairy Ape* (1923).

O'Neill's plays were written from an intensely personal point of view, deriving directly from the scarring effects of his tragic relationships with his family—his parents, who loved and tormented each other; his older brother, who both loved and corrupted him and died of alcoholism in middle age; and O'Neill himself, caught and torn between love for and rage at all three—and from the events that he himself experienced and felt.

Among O'Neill's most celebrated long plays are *Anna Christie* (1922); *Desire Under the Elms* (1925); and *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), both of which evoked the harshness and inevitability of Greek tragedy that he felt in his own life; and *The Great God Brown* (1926) and *Strange Interlude* (1928), in which he used experimental techniques such as expressionistic dialogue and spoken aside that have since become accepted on the stage but at that time were revolutionary. Following a
long succession of tragic visions, O’Neill’s only comedy, the lighthearted and nostalgic *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933), appeared on Broadway. *The Iceman Cometh* (1946), the most complex and perhaps the finest of all O’Neill’s tragedy, followed.

Even in his last writings, O’Neill’s youth continued to absorb his attention. The posthumous production of *Long Day’s Journey into Night* (1956) brought to light an agonizingly autobiographical play, one of O’Neill’s greatest. Its sequel, *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1952), was produced the following year.