

Females' Objectification of Others in Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* and *Desire Under the Elms*

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Abstract

Men's objectification of females is a common subject in literature but women's objectification of others is a less common issue. This study aims to investigate the extent to which the main female characters in O'Neill's two selected plays objectify others. Nina, the heroine of *Strange Interlude* and Abbie, the heroine of *Desire Under the Elms* are objectifiers of other people. This study focuses on three elements of Nussbaum's theory of objectification: instrumentality, fungibility and ownership. Results indicate that these female characters have objectified others by following the above mentioned elements of objectification theory. The study concludes that the two female characters are objectifiers of others as they do not want to lose their domineering status.

Keywords: female characters, O'Neill, instrumentality, fungibility, ownership.

1. Introduction

Writing about Eugene O'Neill is writing about the revival of the American theatre; before him "there was a wasteland...Two centuries of junk"(Dowling 2014, 27). O'Neill composed various dramas about women, matrimony, and sexual associations. His exemplifications of females are particularly renowned in his dramas. Additionally, his solid treatment of their psychological and emotional states proposes an ample awareness of their psyches, motivations and impulses concerning their actions. This is because O'Neill supposed that the playwright "must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it" (Diggins 2008, 335-336). Wells (2011) believes that O'Neill wished not to write about the social convictions, or at least his writings about that were not intentional. Despite this, many examples of such convictions could be found in his plays and those convictions vary between being educational, social or gender specific. The findings of another study carried out by Driedger (2012) suggest that O'Neill's female characters try to find the perfect man; they often have to choose between loving the seeker, the provider or the father. The life of those who have chosen the provider or seeker ends tragically. In the selected plays of O'Neill, the female, and sometimes even male characters, end up dead or out of their minds eventually. Most of the women in O'Neill's plays are locked in a battle between themselves and their societies; they are hollowed from the inside. Therefore, the image of the ideal male remains nothing more than a dream or an illusion.

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Conversely, Mahfouz (2010) mentions that O'Neill gives his characters animalistic characteristics. For example, he gives Eben, in *Desire Under the Elms*, the description of being a wild animal, to explain his tough, sensual, wild, and lustful desire. Eben and Abbie are described as two horny animals chasing their lusts and their attraction to each other is a 'beast-like' desire rather than being grounded in romance. Moreover, Rizal (2010) discusses the killing of Abbie's baby, clarifying the causes, conflicts, and situations that led to such heinous crime. Rizal (2010) gives an analysis of the hero and the heroine of the play and their characters. This is achieved by describing the setting of the play, the conflicts they struggle with, the environment they live in, the major problems and issues they face and internal conflicts that led them to do what they have done (especially Abbie's infanticide).

From the above-mentioned issues, it is clear that O'Neill embeds numerous issues in his dramas and objectification is one of them. Objectification alludes to considering someone as if he/she is a lesser individual than others (Nussbaum 1995). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) suggest that objectification theory is an integrative agenda for indulging in females' socialization and involvements of objectification which are converted into psychological complications. Objectification is an inflexible term when it comes to its definition. It is a confusing notion that is not easily simplified since it is 'slippery' and 'multi-limbed' in nature. Sexual objectification, in a common sense, involves dealing with people as merely things (Stock 2015). Philosophers provide various and more precise accounts of what this term might mean. According to MacKinnon (1989) sexual objectification is morally unacceptable and objectionable, while Nussbaum (1995) argues it is not and there could be some fruitful instances, through phenomena such as healthy sexual relationships. She acknowledges seven features of objectification. Nussbaum (1995) believes that people's understanding of objectification is too simplistic to serve as a normative concept by which people evaluate the moral implications of sexualization of women. Thus, her project is to clarify the concept. This is to be achieved by testing out the seven dimensions of objectification and distinguishing between its benign and harmful forms in different circumstances in relation to sex and daily life. She explains the relevant features as follows: "An objectifier perceives or treats the objectified as some or all of the following: as an instrument; as lacking in autonomy; as inert or lacking in agency; as fungible; as violable; as capable of being owned; as lacking in subjectivity and whose experiences and feelings need not be taken into account" (Nussbaum 1995, 257). Nussbaum (1995) claims that the issue of objectification is not merely essential to sexuality, but also to slavery, and that even animals can be objectified. Bartky (1990) explicates that objectification requires at least two individuals – one is the objectified individual and the other is the objectifier. Yet, Nussbaum (1995) explains that objectification is not merely associated with masculinity, as any person could be turned into an objectifier. If a person felt that one, or more, of the previous elements exists or is applicable to his/her situation, then a person must know that he/she is being objectified by the other partner and that person is being victimized. MacKinnon (1987) and Dworkin (1993) claim that women are being utilized as gadgets for men's wants. This is because womenfolk are raised to be cold and decent, in light of the fact that they accepted the affliction to reserve societal reflective principles (Johnson 2005).

Hence, this study uses Nussbaum's theory and applies it to two of the most controversial female characters in O'Neill's plays - Nina and Abbie. The study supports the notion that women can also be

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objectifiers of others. This idea contradicts the collectively accepted norm that objectification commonly occurs to females, not by females. Kant (1963) espouses the idea that both males and females can be objectified, although he maintains that ladies are the chief victims of objectification. The essential elements being practiced by the females in the two selected plays are: a) instrumentality: the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's purposes; b) fungibility: the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects or other people; c) ownership: the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold). This study aims to gather insight into the female characters' objectification of others by identifying the elements of objectification theory that the female characters follow. The study focuses on two pertinent questions:

1. How do the female characters objectify others?
2. Can objectification apply to everyday situations and how?

The objectives of this study are:

1. Use objectification theory to acquire an awareness of the female characters' objectification of others.
2. Demonstrate how objectification can apply to any situation in the characters' daily lives (it does not have to be related directly to sex).

The significance of the study lies in the fact that identifying the elements of objectification that the female characters follow would provide a deeper understanding of the portrayal of females in the two selected plays.

2. Nina's Objectification of Others in *Strange Interlude*

The study assumes that Nina and Abbie objectify others by using the same elements of objectification, specifically: instrumentality, fungibility and ownership. Nina encounters a profound clairvoyant mindlessness on costs of the loss of her intended spouse, Gordon, at war. Nina, the forlorn girl of the wealthy Professor, is sure that traditionalist respectability is an obstruction to her recognition. She appropriately challenges this restrictive moral ethical quality by getting intimately involved with the injured warriors at the clinic where she works. Nina invests in daring efforts to get a child; consequently, her objectification of others starts. The prime man being objectified by Nina is Sam her gullible spouse. She weds him just to get her solitary hope: "I want children. I must become a mother" (O'Neill 1928, 45). Everything works out positively and Nina gets pregnant at that point. Abruptly, she understands that insanity runs in her significant other's family, and she needs to prematurely end the pregnancy and consider having a new one. The primary component of her objectification (fungibility) starts to manifest as she supplants the unborn baby with another.

The second task for Nina is to determine a suited male to give her a child. Nina heads to the doctor (Ned) who previously recommended parenthood for her. Her sole aim when she meets him is finding a solid, fit male to give her another healthy youngster. At that point, Nina solicits what goes in her mind which is: "picking out a healthy male... and having a child by him that Sam would believe was his child" (O'Neill 1928, 80). Whilst Nina is at Ned's office examining her choices and explaining her state, she realizes that Ned is the ideal person for the task and she begins working on a method to obtain his seed; she

perceives him as “nothing... but a healthy male” (O'Neill 1928, 80). Nina is an opportunistic woman; throughout the story, as she sees an opportunity, she will act on it decisively. Inaudibly, she mumbles: “this doctor is healthy” (O'Neill 1928, 80) and she continues persuading herself that her deed of adultery is reasonable: “when he was Ned he once kissed me... but I cared nothing about him... so that's all right” (O'Neill 1928, 80). The doctor agrees to Nina's proposal and he considers himself to be one of the laboratory's guinea pigs. He convinces himself that he is doing a his friend Sam a favour by not making him lose his sanity and he is helping Nina to be a happy mother. The benefit for the doctor would be observing his experiment while playing a crucial part in it. Besides, he would achieve the aim of satisfying his sexual desire for Nina as he considers it “*a natural male reaction*” (O'Neill 1928, 177) in the presence of the female's beauty.

Nina assumes this to be a temporary affair, yet she continues seeing Ned consistently and the relationship between her and Ned gets deeper as they start to meet regularly. The connection between the two decisively resemble the affair between O'Neill and Carlotta (his third spouse). The sweethearts mumble through a lot of their distressed conversations saying, “*oh, those afternoons!*” (O'Neill 1928, 104). Those afternoons resemble those O'Neill has spent on his continuous visits to New York in the mid-twenties. These visits were apparently to deal with practices, yet in reality they were to draw the genuine attractions of an incredibly challenging artist. At this point, Ned is similar to O'Neill, as his “*dark, wiry*” (O'Neill 1928, 33) appearance proposes he eventually should be. He is O'Neill the alluring darling surrendering to a prohibited desire (Karim and Butt 2011). In Act VI, Nina's companion (Charlie) doubts the adultery of the two, so she considers manipulating him: “how his hand trembles! ...What a fool to be afraid of Charlie!... I can always twist him round my finger!” (O'Neill 1928, 112). Nina bears in mind restoring the elderly person's adoration to control him and to have the option of utilizing him. On another occasion, she declares to Sam's mother that she is really utilizing Sam: “I only married him because he needed me--and I needed children!” (O'Neill 1928, 59). Other than utilizing individuals as instruments and supplanting them by fungibility, Nina is fixated on ownership. Despite the fact that she despises her significant other, still she feels that he has a place with her: “oh, poor Sammy!...poor little boy!...one gives birth to little boys!...one doesn't drive them mad and kill them!”(O'Neill 1928, 104). Nina would not like to lose him, and she considers calling him ‘Sammy;’ this was a name that his mother used to call him.

According to Freud (2003), a marriage is not complete unless the wife has prospered in giving birth and is subsequently a strong mother for him or her. Nina's obsession of owning individuals gets to the point where she accepts that the youngster who might acquire his father's genetic qualities is not hers and she will not guarantee it as hers: “I hate it too, now, because it's sick, it's not my baby, it's his! (*with terrible ironic bitterness*)” (O'Neill 1928, 59). Yet, when she is mentally and intellectually prepared for a new bastard child, she centers around him choosing the unborn infant to be hers solitarily: “Not Ned's child!... not Sam's child!... mine!... my life moving in my child” (O'Neill 1928, 104). Nina connects everything she has ever wanted with the upcoming baby since he is only hers and he does not have a place with any other person. At the point when the child grows up and finds adoration, Nina turns into the average contemptuous mother-in-law as she does not want any person to own or claim her child. She is whining to

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Ned: “(unheedingly) If he marries her, it means he'll forget me!.. She'll keep him away from me! Oh, I know what wives can do! She'll use her body until she persuades him to forget me! My son” (O'Neill 1928, 162). Nina's fretful mind would not quit creating stories about how to destroy the new couple's life, as Ned notices: “her love already possesses him!... my son!...(vindictively). But she won't! ... as long as I live!” (O'Neill 1928, 153). Likewise, there is a division in O'Neill's correlation with the mother. She is not just the epitome item that the longing subject yearns for proprietorship and encounters sentiment of disaster and trouble on her absenteeism. Moderately, despite the appealing impression, this motherly symbol grasps a bad/harmful role and creates an impression of disquiet, uneasiness or fear as to what the circumstance could be (Karim and Butt 2011). Ned realizes what Nina's purposes are and he understands what ownership means to her as he communicates his thought process: “Oh, so you'll compromise on his sleeping with her...if you have to...but she must have no real claim to dispute your ownership, eh?... you'd like to make her the same sort of convenient slave for him that I was for you!” (O'Neill 1928, 162). Slaving individuals is Nina's most treasured crafting; she by no means says no to owning others. Moreover, she does not allow rejection. In the past, when she was encouraging Ned to wed her, she advised him that Sam should give her a divorce to be able to wed him instead. According to Ned, wedding Nina implies giving her ownership over him: “There it is!...marry!...own me!...ruin my career!”(O'Neill 1928, 97); he is accurate in these comments as Nina identifies him as one of her possessions: “He loves me!...he's mine” (O'Neill 1928, 120). Everything surrounding Nina must be hers. Nina is aiming at getting Ned's adoration back and owning him by reviving her sexual affair with him. Ned is sure that Nina is profoundly connected to Gordon, and she has never conquered her misfortune as she is revering everything identified with him. Likewise, she adores her child and accepts that Gordon is the genuine father:

(with a strange happy intensity) Oh, Ned...it seemed at times that Gordon must be its real father that Gordon must have come to me in a dream while I was lying asleep beside Sami and I was Happy I almost loved Sam then I felt he was a good husband! (O'Neill 1928, 78).

Nina is admitting that she 'almost' cherished Sam due to her conviction that Gordon is the father. Nina's feeling of ownership surpasses the world of the livings and extends to the other existence. Here she senses that Gordon is hers and he is the father of her youngster; no other male has had her spirit and mind expect for him. Winther (1961) simplifies O'Neill's viewpoint toward the departure from reality of the nostalgic ideal. Referencing that no single idea has made such a significant and enduring effect on the mind of O'Neill as that of the dangerous power of the nostalgic ideal. Nor has the power of deception to lead Man to dismiss the truth, within himself and in the nature of his repudiation to make a vast expanse of unfathomable dreams as a substitute for that actuality. Additionally, Ramin and Javanian (2014, 116) suggest that “O'Neill's characters are removed in time through their memories... and this removal corresponds to their removal in place to their past when they lived in splendor and respect”. Nina feels unstable, she begins her fungibility of substituting individuals and utilizing them as tools for her ownership: “I must win Charlie over again ... I don't feel safe” (O'Neill 1928, 112) and she even concedes that she makes use of others: “Poor Sam...I wanted to use him to save myself” (O'Neill 1928, 59). For Nina, owning

the entirety of the men she knows gives her an idealistic space of flawlessness; she verbalizes that perplexing situation whilst declaring that she must have four dissimilar men to gratify her:

My three men! ... I feel their desires converge in me!... to form one complete beautiful male desire which I absorb... and am whole... they dissolve in me, their life is my life ... the three!... husband! ... lover! ... father!... and the fourth man!... little man! ... little Gordon! ... he is mine too! ... that makes it perfect!...(O'Neill 1928, 129).

Nelson (1982, 3) further ponders that O'Neill's female protagonists outline or characterize themselves essentially based on "their relationships to the men in their lives". This is the thing which disintegrates their lives as they do not have complete or normal associations with men. Nina herself outlines another event of obliged mystic conditions. The readers are prepared to be aware of this ownership from the very beginning of her discourse and asides (Karim 2010).

3. Abbie's Objectification of Others in *Desire Under the Elms*

Abbie is all the opposite of Nina who occupies a position of a nurse and whose father is a university Professor. Abbie is an illiterate woman, originating from humble beginnings. Abbie is on a quest to find a home through espousing erroneous men. Despite her being dissimilar to Nina, she still applies the exact same elements of objectification. In this respect, objectification of others does not have to do with social ranks or marital status. Instead, it is a psychological matter relating to the individual's own needs. Nina wants a child: "I want a baby" (O'Neill 1928, 57) and Abbie looks for a home: "What if I did need a hum?" (O'Neill 1925, 25). Abbie uses her husband, kills her child, and manipulates others through means of objectification to possess the home she dreams of. Abbie, the 35-year-old, is married to Ephraim Cabot, the 75-year-old. This is due to her need of owning a house and not out of passion or love. She discerns that the old man brought her to satisfy his needs; still, she is passable with that as she trusts that she is the one who is using him as an instrument. When Eben (her stepson) attempts to humiliate her by mentioning that she is nothing more than a whore to his father: "He bought yew-like a harlot!.... An' the price he's payin' ye—this farm" (O'Neill 1925, 25), Abbie confidently replies: "Waal...What else'd I marry an old man like him fur? (O'Neill 1925, 25).

Abbie cannot hide her lust for ownership; on the first day she arrives at the Cabots' household, she claims the property as hers: "This be my farm--this be my hum--this be my kitchen!" (O'Neill 1925, 25). For an exceptionally long time, Abbie was working for other folks' houses, and she never established one for her own, which gave her insecurity; now she is eager to dominate everything at the house, even the bedroom: "It's a r'al nice bed. Is it my room, Ephraim?" (O'Neill 1925, 25) and Cabot replies: "(grimly--without looking up) Our'n!" (O'Neill 1925, 25). Cabot does not permit her to grant any status rather than domestic hard work as he states upon Abbie's entry to the house: "A hum's got t' hev a woman" (O'Neill 1925, 21). However, what he is not aware of is that Abbie has a plan to manipulate everyone in the house in order to maintain her ownership over the farm and the house. It is at this point that Abbie realizes that she may lose the homestead and not even be an heir since she is essentially 'just' a female. She addresses

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the elderly man to check whether she will be receiving anything if she has a child and Cabot answers: "(vehemently) I'd do anythin' ye axed, I tell ye! I swar it! May I be everlastin' damned t' hell if I wouldn't!" (O'Neill 1925, 35). Knowing that the child would bring her the homestead she has always wanted, she goes from "Mebbe the Lord'll give US a son" to "I want a son now" (O'Neill 1925, 35). This is the first time Abbie uses the plural pronoun *Us* which indicates her dishonesty as it is not actually *Theirs* since she mostly says *My* to reflect her dominance over her belongings. The whole matter resembles a trading business for her. Essentially, her thoughts are "Hand me the farm and I will give you a child in return, a child that ascertains your strength and virility." Realizing that a son is the key, she starts her schemes by persuading Cabot that the upcoming child is his: "Ye're a strong man yet, hain't ye? 'Tain't no ways impossible, be it?" (O'Neill 1925, 35). The next step will be inveigling Eben to get a child by him. Fungibility takes place here by exchanging the child for a homestead and substituting the husband with her stepson. After comprehending Cabot's weakness, Abbie is able to speak freely, saying: "I calc'late I kin git him t' do most anythin' fur me" (O'Neill 1925, 25). Henceforth, it is Eben's turn to be used instrumentally. This scheme is initiated when Abbie admires Eben's body which is 'too big' and 'too strong.' She discerns that most males would love to be admired or flattered by females. The next thing she does is interchange herself with the image of Eben's late mother, promising to do everything the mother used to do, like being caring and nice to him, in addition to singing for him:

EBEN--This was her hum. This was her farm.

ABBIE--This is my hum! This is my farm!

EBEN--He married her t' steal 'em. She was soft an' easy.

He couldn't 'preciate her.

ABBIE--He can't 'preciate me!

EBEN--He murdered her with his hardness.

ABBIE--He's murderin' me! (O'Neill 1925, 42-43)

In the above dialogue, Abbie tries to take the place of Eben's mother as she keeps resaying the same things that Eben mentions about his mother, and she guarantees that she would do all of them; she is even ready to hate her spouse and betray him for Eben's sake. She simply swaps herself with Eben's deceased mother. Seducing Eben through fungibility seems to be an effective approach to capturing Eben's heart. Abbie has already detected the great attachment between the two, so she aims to become the absolute image of his mother. Abbie starts owning Eben after knowing that missing his mother is his key area of weakness. She starts to use her spell over him: "Don't be afeered! I'll kiss ye pure, Eben--same 's if I was a Maw t' ye--an' ye kin kiss me back 's if yew was my son--my boy--sayin' good-night t' me!" (O'Neill 1925, 42). Abbie also clarifies: "I'm yernew Maw" (O'Neill 1925, 25). At the end of their conversation, Abbie uses the possessive (determiner) pronoun *My* again by calling Eben as 'my son' and 'my boy' as if Eben is hers, he is her child. Abbie's plan of owning Eben goes smoothly as she knows how to manipulate him. Freud (2003) contends that the child's fleshly relationship with his mother is a 'mother complex'. He expounded the idea by distinguishing that the male child has a delusion and he sentimentalizes his mother. In other words, the male child shows an enthusiasm for, or an erotic bond with, his mother. Abbie practices the same

process that Nina follows with her husband. She assures herself that Eben is hers now and she can use him as a tool to get what she wants. Long (2019) considers Abbie as an insidious dynamism, since she makes the main move, hustles into Eben's room, and starts kissing him. Eben hurls her away irately, fighting his attentiveness and recalling how she has substituted his mother. Abbie asserts that Eben will submit to his lust, since she is more grounded than him. Chabrowe (1976) proclaims that in the scene where Abbie allures Eben, she supplants his mother until the forbidden longing for the perceptiveness overwhelms him. Clark (1947) gives a mention to Abbie's referencing that in animating the stifled enthusiasm of Eben she ignores, or perhaps never recognizes, that the fleshy drive can barely be controlled. She depends upon her own craftiness to regulate her tricks without the slightest hesitation for as long as she could. Abbie does not have much to offer, so she has to put herself in matrimony to guarantee the homestead (her first authentic home) which father and child struggle over as a debate of right (Nelson 1982). Moreover, Abbie appreciates Eben's body, and she debilitates her skills to fulfill her longings. She manipulates and controls him as she has utilized Cabot, previously she said: "I'd most give up hope o' ever doin' my own wuk in my own hum, an' then your Paw come" (O'Neill 1925, 26). Cabot is her last hope in finding a home to secure her life.

Abbie betrays her husband by making love to his son. Although both lovers desire each other, it is Abbie who takes the initiative. It is she who goes to Eben's bedroom and who "*covers his mouth with kisses*"(O'Neill 1925, 26). But Eben does not want to admit his desire. Thus, he resists at the beginning, but finally answers her kisses. After all, he is a man. But in order to make love to him, Abbie has to adopt his mother's identity. Thus, Abbie never has had a true self. She is the farm, the elms, and finally Eben's mother, but never herself. Although her own sexual drive as well as her interest in inheriting the farm motivate Abbie to seduce Eben, she ultimately falls in love with him. However, her main concern is owning the farm for herself. Rizal (2010) describes the two protagonists' characters (Abbie and Eben); he suggests that Eben is attracted to Abbie because she is an old woman and that is his favorite type. Eben likes older women as he is so attached to his mother and after her death, he tries to find a substitute for her, and Abbie is the one to be his sexual partner.

Not long after her birth, Abbie perceives that some mischief has occurred based on her association with Eben. For this, she needs to take an extraordinary decision. Abbie has an anxiety of losing Eben. In addition, her cravings look as if they are growing that she needs to stop being unnecessarily ravenous at some point and ponders the actuality. It is revealed that she faces genuine repercussions for connecting with both Eben and Cabot for her welfares. As it appears to Eben that Abbie has used him just for her own benefits, he finds a way to reveal her disloyalty. To declare her reverence for him, she smothers the infant. The feelings of guilt and the concealed fear of losing Eben is evident through her act. Sexual orientation is something versatile and temperamental, Abbie's change from being resigned to being rough is originating from her genderless character. That is, because of femininity, to achieve her dream of having a stable life, she puts confidence on her remarriage with Cabot to defeat the previous difficulties and flimsiness later on (Butler 2006). Abbie carries out infanticide; this is child manslaughter by parents within the main postnatal year (Friedman, Resnick, 2007). Specialists who study child murder recognize a few unique groups of guardians who murder their offspring. Some murder their youngsters out of significant depression and deep

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misery (Levy, Sanders, and Sabraw 2002) simply like Abbie's case. Seen in this light, the enticement develops not just as a struggle between two couples, but also as a contention of two passionate driving forces in which motherly love is overwhelmed by sexual desire. It is this suffocating of the maternal drive that later empowers Abbie to smother her own baby. A homicide which is really two killings in one. It is, all together, the passing of the child and of the father who encountered his resurrection in the baby's origins, and who currently shares the fault for the baby's demise which will lead to his own execution (Cahill 1992). Eben is irate on the grounds that the child is 'his', not in view of the infant himself. Like the farm, he considers the child to be as one of his properties. Since Abbie has ransacked both, he goes to search for the sheriff for she is not just a killer but likewise a robber.

Abbie realizes what she requires from Eben and that is brazenly looking for sex in its most primitive form. On the opposite end, Eben's relation with Abbie implies no adoration, however suggesting a cognizant disdain he has kept for his father. The core flawless self Eben perceives for himself is with his deceased mother. For that reason, Eben wants to go into an intimate affair with his step-mother to finish his vengeance plot upon his father. Abbie is both powerful and destructive since she is, as Leech (1963, 48) supposes, "her step-son's seducer and the murderess of her child". Yet Abbie is not really so powerful. As Drucker (1982, 9) explains: "O'Neill's most tragic women are those for whom sexual passion has become a disease from which no recovery is possible". Abbie certainly fits this description. While the action of the play revolves entirely around her, Abbie proves to be just another figure without a real identity, another female caricature defined by men. Voglino (1999, 47) suggests that the play "is the astonishingly reliable dramatization of blood relatives who have lost their feeling of ethical manner".

Diggins (2008) communicates his thoughts regarding humans' instinct and their interest in expanding and extending their possessions. Abbie follows this nature when she attempts to submit her significant other to her sexual desire targeting the farm. At the same time, the point behind her intimate attraction to Eben, her opponent, is love and birthing a baby. Her yearnings are submitting each and all to her drive and control. When she is compelled to separate her affection between Eben and her baby, the hallowed nature of the womb is lessened. Having held an alternative life, it is never again the sole sphere of the emblematic child, and it is rendered pointless to him. Deprived of this mythic feature, she uncovers her evil side and expresses herself again as a female who is ready to go to any dimension to possess what she desires (Cahill 1992). Butler (2006) contends that, when people experience the loss of their friends, family or homes, they are exposed to the risk of personal change. During the time of melancholy, there is mental acclimatization to an impermanent encounter that would be trailed by a recuperation. This progression can encourage acknowledgment of oneself and the bonds that attach people to everyone around them and characterize what their identities are. The feeling of loss can uncover an absence of independence and instead feature a fragmented personality. Constituting oneself as indicated by what people possess, additionally, indicates what they do not have. Before the act of killing the baby, Abbie told Eben that she was using him, and he was nothing more than an instrument to her: "(with a shrill laugh) ... Did ye think I was in love with ye--a weak thin' like yew! Not much! I on'y wanted ye fur a purpose o' my own--an' I'll hev ye fur it yet 'cause I'm stronger'n yew be!" (O'Neill 1925, 39). And Eben's answer was: "(resentfully) I knowed well it was

on'y part o' yer plan t' swallereverythin'!" (O'Neill 1925, 40). Abbie turns from using Eben as her instrument into using fungibility for his sake as she decides to trade the child to win Eben's heart again. Sacrifice is the ultimate degree of love and Abbie's sacrifice is great and horrible at the same time as she looks for an endless domination over Eben. Mostly, Abbie tries to possess everything, from animated objects (Eben, the child and Cabot) to unanimated objects (the farm, the house, the kitchen, the bedroom, and Eben's love). Eventually she loses all of them.

4. Conclusion

This paper discusses the theme of women's objectification of others. Scholars keep referring to the fact that O'Neill gives his female characters shallow parts and presents them as merely victims of patriarchal society. Nelson (1982), in her famous article about O'Neill and his women, assumes that all the female characters in O'Neill's dramas are defined by their roles as wives, mothers and daughters designed to satisfy men's desires. Yet, this paper argues that women can actually be objectifiers of others by using them as instruments or tools (instrumentality), by exchanging them with things or other people (fungibility) or possessing them (ownership). Nina wants a child to overcome her remorse and when she gets pregnant, she aborts the child she is carrying and conceives another through adultery claiming him to be her husband's. Likewise, Abbie betrays her husband to have a baby and when she has the baby, she sacrifices him for the sake of her love. Abbie's behavior is much crueler and dangerous. These two characters are so complicated, and they have crossed the line with their actions. As the father of the American drama, O'Neill, proclaims: "what shall it profit a Man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? (O'Neill 1990, 164).

إزدراء الإناث للآخرين في مسرحتي يوجين أونيل (فاصل غريب) و(رغبة تحت أشجار الدردار)

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الملخص

يعد موضوع معاملة الرجال للنساء كأشياء موضوعاً شائعاً في الأدب، لكن أن تقوم النساء بمعاملة الآخرين بتلك الطريقة يعد أمراً أقل شيوعاً. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من مدى قيام الشخصيات النسائية الرئيسية في مسرحتي أونيل المختارتين بمعاملة الآخرين كأشياء. والنساء هن: نينا بطلة مسرحية فاصل غريب، وأبي بطلة مسرحية رغبة تحت أشجار الدردار. تستفيد الدراسة الحالية من ثلاثة عناصر لنظرية نوسباوم عن الإزدراء والشيفية، وهي على وجه التحديد: الأداة، والتبادلية، والملكية. تشير النتائج إلى أن هذه الشخصيات الأنثوية قد قامت بمعاملة الآخرين كأشياء، وذلك باتباع العناصر المذكورة أعلاه لنظرية الشيفية. واستنتجت الدراسة أن الشخصيتين النسويتين تقومان بتبديل الأفراد المقربين منهما حتى لا تفقد سيطرتهم. الكلمات المفتاحية: الشخصيات النسائية، أونيل، الأداة، التبادلية، الملكية.

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