

# Hitler: Jung: O'Neill

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The "madness" of Adolf Hitler remains an open question. At the height of the dictator's power, Harvard psychoanalyst Walter C. Langer<sup>1)</sup> prepared a psychological portrait for the wartime OSS in an effort to predict his likely reaction in a given scenario; Langer suggested that Hitler was psychologically impaired due to a genital defect. On the other hand, however, various witnesses have reported that Hitler often consciously and deliberately flew into apparently mad rages in order to cow and manipulate others; he was quite capable, then, of turning his "insanity" on or off at will.<sup>2)</sup>

Whether or not Hitler the man was clinically crazy, his movement is generally perceived as cultural insanity, a reversion to barbarism from the heart of Western civilization. Historians and literati have presented Hitler as Satan incarnated, often though without any real attempt to understand his psychological underpinnings. Psychohistorians who have investigated the subject<sup>3)</sup> have often been unable to assess Hitler's relevance to our culture.

It is the thesis of this paper that American playwright Eugene O'Neill, who seems to have been preoccupied with the Hitler figure as an integral part of several of his projects during the 1940s, (despite repeated disclaimers) deliberately grounded his characterization of the man and his movement upon the insights of Swiss analytic psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, who had frequently discussed the Hitler phenomenon during the 1930s. For both of these observers, the Hitler figure transcended the question of mental health. His real significance was what he revealed about the nature of the human psyche and society.

In the fall of 1915, a twenty-six-year-old Austrian soldier at the German front, a loner from the Vienna slums, a ne'er-do-well with thwarted artistic ambitions, an unknown young man named Adolf Hitler composed a crude, weird poem which, in retrospect, somehow seems to have captured the essence of the infamous future dictator

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1) Walter C. Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report*. New York: Basic Books, 1972.

2) For instance: Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1963, pp. 329-30.

3) Cf. the sources cited by Robert G.L. Waite in his afterword to Langer, p.225; by Erikson, p.337; and by John Toland, *Adolf Hitler*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976.

more comprehensively than any historian, biographer, dramatist, propagandist, or psychologist—and certainly better than he in his own political manifesto, *Mein Kampf*—managed subsequently to do:

I often go in bitter nights  
 To Wotan's oak in the quiet glade  
 With dark powers to weave a union...  
 The runic letters the moon makes with its magic spell  
 And all who are full of impudence during the day  
 Are made small by the magic formula!  
 They draw shining steel...but instead of going into combat  
 They solidify into stalagmites.  
 So the false ones part from the real ones...  
 I reach into a nest of woods  
 And then give to the good and just  
 With my formula blessings and prosperity.<sup>4)</sup>

Some three years later, on October 13, 1918, the Sixteenth Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment was struck by a British mustard-gas attack in Belgium. One of the victims, the corporal who wrote the perversely prophetic lines above, was temporarily blinded by the gas and was taken to a military hospital at Pasewalk in Pomerania for treatment. He recovered his sight there but learned, on November 9, that his beloved German Reich was being torn apart by revolution. The news caused him to cry for the first time since his mother's death more than a decade earlier. His blindness returned.

This time he was treated by a consulting psychiatrist, Edmund Forster, chief of the Berlin University Nerve Clinic. In Forster's opinion, the corporal's case was a classic example of hysterical symptoms and he continued to refer to it in his lectures for many years. Forster's friend, Dr. Ernest Weiss, fictionalized Forster's wartime experiences in the novel *The Eyewitness*; the protagonist of that book used hypnosis to alleviate the hysterical blindness of a soldier identified only as "A.H."<sup>5)</sup> We may speculate that the historical Hitler, then, was to some extent a mental construct created by Edmund Forster; the hypnosis may have played a pivotal role in transforming the *Luftmensch* into the *Fuehrer*.

For, according to Hitler's own account of the incident, he heard (hypnotically induced?) voices summoning him to save Germany. As a direct result of this auditory "vision" he suddenly regained his sight on the night of November 11, the day of the armistice that ended the war. For him, as for Saul of Tarsus almost two millennian before, the blinding and the calling marked the beginning of his future. The Pasewalk hallucination transformed him into a perverse twentieth-century version of Joan of Arc. His sensitive, mystical

4) Quoted in Toland, p. 68.

5) Toland, p. xvi; Langer, p. 156.

nature combined with the circumstances of the moment to profoundly affect his psychology. Whether or not Hitler was then or ever genuinely mad, his actions from that moment on marked him as a man whose mentality was not fully consonant with that of his fellows.

Shortly after recovering his sight Hitler was released from the hospital and subsequently from the army. He promptly entered radical politics and began his crusade to save Germany from the racial and social evils he saw threatening to destroy it from within and without. It took him more than a decade of hard work and uncanny fortune to seize absolute power and begin actualizing his "crazy" dreams. During most of the period of his ascendancy he was considered something of a joke, a crank, a *schlemiel*. After the hapless "Beer Hall Putsch" which first catapulted him into the world's headlines, Edgar Ansell Mowrer could not believe that "this provincial dandy" could be "the terrible rebel" he had heard about: "He seemed for all the world like a travelling salesman for a clothing firm."<sup>6</sup>

Even after his political take-over, to many observers he remained something of a charlatan. As late as December 1937 Dorothy Thompson could still portray him as

formless, almost faceless, a man whose countenance is a caricature, a man whose framework seems cartilaginous, without bones. He is inconsequent and voluble, ill poised and insecure. He is the very prototype of the little man.<sup>7</sup>

But the German mass media machine, equipped with all the multiform resources of a modern state, soon transformed him into a superman:

the acme of German honor and purity; the Resurrector of the German family and home. He is the greatest architect of all time; the greatest military genius in all history. He has an inexhaustible fount of knowledge. He is a man of action and the creator of new social values. He is, indeed, according to the Nazi propaganda bureau, the paragon of all virtues.<sup>8</sup>

Hitler was portrayed as a man of tremendous willpower and selfdiscipline. If he had no sex life it was because of his singleminded devotion to the German people and the new Reich he had created. Despite this sense of mission, however, due to his deep insight into human nature he was tolerant of the foibles of his countrymen. He was pictured as the soul of kindness and generosity, a man with a tremendous amount of patience who would never spill a drop of human blood if it could possibly be avoided. Nevertheless, when it came to improving Germany's position in the world he was absolutely fearless, tireless, and determined.

Even though he receives serious setbacks and the situation appears to be hopeless, he never loses faith and always gets what he goes after. He refuses to be coerced into compromises of

6) Quoted in Langer, p. 44.

7) Ibid., p. 44.

8) Langer, p. 53.

any sort and is always ready to assume the full responsibility for his actions...Even his refusal to permit ordinary scruples to get in his way is cited as a sign of his greatness. The fact that he did not communicate with his family for over ten years becomes a great virtue since it meant a severe deprivation to the young man who was determined to make something of himself before he returned home!<sup>9)</sup>

C. G. Jung, who has often been mistakenly branded as a Nazi sympathizer by rival psychoanalysts, who regard him as a traitor to his great benefactor Sigmund Freud, was greatly interested in the Hitler phenomenon as a vindication of some of his cultural analyses. In 1918 he had noted that "the lower, darker half" of the Germanic collective unconscious was still in a precivilized phase; as Christianity increasingly lost its authority over modern populations, the "more menacingly" would the primordial component of the psyche "be heard prowling about in its underground prison, ready at any moment to burst out with devastating consequences."<sup>10)</sup> He believed that the phenomenon of Nazism was the fulfillment of that prophecy; nevertheless, when he addressed the Institute of Medical Psychology in London in 1935 he professed amazement at the current state of affairs.

Who would have thought...that it would be possible...for such things to happen in Germany as are happening today? Would you have believed that a whole nation of highly intelligent and cultivated people could be seized by the fascinating power of an archetype?<sup>11)</sup>

A year later, before the same audience, he further expounded on his theme. In his view, Germany had been the "first country to experience the miracles worked by democracy's ghost, the State." In nations where the state had become all-powerful, democracy "became its own mirror-image, its own ghost, while the ghost became appallingly real, an all-embracing mystical presence and personality." The modern totalitarian state had superseded the medieval *Civitas Dei* in its aspirations and was much more brutal and efficient at enforcing those aspirations.

And a new miracle happened. Out of nowhere certain men came and each of them said like Louis XIV, "L'etat c'est moi." They are the new leaders. The State has proved its personal reality by incarnating itself in men that came from Galilee, inconspicuous nobodies previously, but equipped with the great spirit voice that cowed the people into soundless obedience....

This process... is particularly drastic in Hitler's case. Hitler himself as an ordinary person is a shy and friendly man with artistic tastes and gifts. As a mere man he is inoffensive and modest, and has nice eyes. But he comes from Brunau, a little town that has already produced two famous mediums, the Schneider brothers....<sup>12)</sup> Hitler is presumably the third and the

9) Ibid., pp. 49-53.

10) Carl Gustav Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, vol. 10 of *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. New York: Pantheon, 1964, pp. 12-13.

11) Carl Gustav Jung, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 18 of *The Collected Works*, Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 164.

12) Hitler began his *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1939, p. 3) with the sentence,

most efficient medium from Brunnau. When the State-spirit speaks through him, he sends forth a voice of thunder and his word is so powerful it sweeps together crowds of millions like fallen leaves.<sup>13)</sup>

Jung continued his London address by comparing Hitler with Christ, the swastika with the cross. But essentially, in his view, National Socialism was a neo-pagan movement which contained "the most beautiful Wotanistic symbolism, Indogermanic speculation, and so on."<sup>14)</sup>

It was the Odinic (Wotanic) metaphor, which Hitler himself had invoked in his poetry, that Jung extended later in the year, as Hitler was extending his own power through the formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis. This time, Jung directly identified Hitler as a reincarnated Wotan, the "ancient god of storm and frenzy," "a restless wanderer who creates unrest and stirs up strife, now here, now there, and works magic." Wotan, who had originally confined his influence to the "berserkers, who found their vocation as the Blackshirts of mythical kings," has again "come to life in the German Youth Movement, and right at the beginning the blood of several sheep was shed in honour of his resurrection." But the most impressive aspect of the phenomenon, as far as Jung was concerned, was that "one man, who is obviously 'possessed,' has infected a whole nation to such an extent that everything is set in motion and has started rolling on its course towards perdition".<sup>15)</sup>

Just after the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938, Jung told journalist H. R. Knickerbocker that primitive societies had two types of leaders: the physically powerful chief and the medicine man "who was not strong in himself but was strong by reason of the power which the people projected into him.... Hitler belongs to the category of the truly mystic medicine man."

He is the loud-speaker which magnifies the inaudible whispers of the German soul until they can be heard by the German's conscious ear.... Hitler's power is not political; it is *magic*....

Hitler's secret is twofold; first, that his unconscious has exceptional access to his consciousness, and second, that he allows himself to be moved by it. He is like a man who listens intently to a stream of suggestions in a whispered voice from a mysterious source, and then *acts upon them*.... The true leader is always *led*.<sup>16)</sup>

Jung had been in Germany the year before and had witnessed Hitler's Berlin reception

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"Today I consider it my good fortune that fate designated Brunnau on the Inn as the place of my birth." But the Schneiders probably had very little to do with this declaration. A more likely allusion is that Napoleon's troops had shot there a man named Palm for daring to print an early nationalist polemic, *In the Hour of Germany's Deepest Humiliation*.

13) Jung, *Symbolic Life*, pp.574-75.

14) *Ibid.*, p.576.

15) Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, pp.180-81, 185.

16) Quoted in H.R. Knickerbocker, *Is Tomorrow Hitler's? 200 Questions on the Battle of Mankind*. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941, pp.45-47.

of his Axis partner Benito Mussolini. Jung offered Knickerbocker a remarkable description of the German dictator. He looked like

a sort of scaffolding of wood covered with cloth, an automaton with a mask, like a robot or a mask of a robot. During the whole performance he never laughed; it was as though he were in a bad humor, sulking. He showed no human sign. His expression was that of an inhumanly single-minded purposiveness, with no sense of humor. He seemed as if he might be a double of a real person, and that Hitler the man might perhaps be hiding inside like an appendix, and deliberately so hiding in order not to disturb the mechanism. With Hitler you do not feel that you are with a man. You are with a medicine man, a form of spiritual vessel, a demi-deity, or even better, a myth. With Hitler you are scared. You know you would never be able to talk to that man; because there is nobody there. He is not a man, but a collective. He is not an individual, but a whole nation.<sup>17)</sup>

Early the following year Jung continued in a similar vein. He told Howard L. Philip that Hitler "is like a mask, but there is nothing behind that mask...."

I would not place him as a man, for individually he is quite uninteresting and unimportant. He is simply a great phenomenon.... Hitler does not even fit into his clothes! Hitler is all mask.<sup>18)</sup>

After the war Jung added a further comment on Hitler's appearance, remembering him as "a psychic scarecrow (with a broomstick for an outstretched arm) rather than a human being".<sup>19)</sup>

It was essentially this Jungian characterization, albeit without the Wotanistic symbolism, that Nobel laureate O'Neill relied upon in his own struggles to dramatize the meaning that Nazism had for his time.

Many literary critics, Edwin A. Engel<sup>20)</sup> among them, have gone to great lengths in attributing O'Neill's insights into the human condition to his reading of the early psychoanalysts. O'Neill went to equally great lengths in denouncing those critics. "I am no deep student of psychoanalysis," he wrote to Barrett H. Clark,<sup>21)</sup> "of all the books written by Freud, Jung, etc., I have read only four, and Jung is the only one who interests me. Some of his suggestions I find extraordinarily illuminating...."

Earlier, in reply to queries by Northwestern University doctoral candidate Martha Carolyn Sparrow,<sup>22)</sup> he had only admitted to reading two of Sigmund Freud's books,

17) Ibid., pp. 49-50. Paragraphing altered.

18) Jung in William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, eds., *C.G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*. Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 138.

19) Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 204.

20) Edwin A. Engel, *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.

21) O'Neill in Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays*. New York: Dover, 1947.

22) Quoted in Martha Carolyn Sparrow, *The Influence of Psychoanalytical Material on the Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. Unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 1931, pp. 76-77.

*Totem and Taboo* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and he maintained that, although "fairly familiar" with the tenets of psychoanalysis, "never consciously was I for a moment influenced to shape my material along the lines of any psychological theory." He went on to confess, however, that "the book that interested me the most... is Jung's 'Psychology of the Unconscious'.... If I have been influenced unconsciously it must have been by this book more than any other psychological work."

O'Neill seems to have been somewhat disingenuous in his responses to Sparrow and Clark. In November 1923 he had told Malcolm Crowley that the *Disguises of Love* by Freud's first disciple Wilhelm Stekel contained enough case histories "to furnish plots to all the playwrights who ever lived." In the mid-1920s, while he was writing *Lazarus Laughed*, which, with its elaborate use of masks and choruses, is ostensibly his most "Jungian" play,<sup>23)</sup> he discussed Freud's *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* with Manuel Komroff, an editor for the Liveright publishing company which put out the English translations of Stekel and other psychologists of that ilk. Before 1925 he is known to have owned Richard Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, the same book that impelled Jung to specialize in psychiatry. By March 10, 1925, according to his own diary, he was reading Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, which included a critique of Gustav Le Bon's social theories; these theories anticipated many of Jung's own views about collective human behavior and, in effect, were consciously put into practice through Hitler's demagogical methods.<sup>24)</sup> In addition, O'Neill's wife owned a copy of Freud's *The Problem of Anxiety*. Also, he is known to have discussed psychoanalytic theory with his psychiatrist neighbor, Louis Bisch. Moreover, in 1923~25 he was treated for various problems by *Psychoanalytic Review* editor Smith Ely Jelliffe (who had co-written *Psychoanalysis and the Drama* in 1922), and in 1926 he underwent a six-week analysis by Gilbert V. Hamilton, an associate of Kenneth Macgowan.<sup>25)</sup>

Macgowan, O'Neill, and stage designer Robert Edmond Jones were the members of a famous theatrical "triumvirate" of the mid-1920s. Macgowan had written that the role of modern drama was "the illumination of those deep and vigorous and eternal processes of the human soul which the psychology of Freud and Jung has given us...."<sup>26)</sup> In the same year, 1921, although O'Neill had not called for their use, Jones employed masks in his designs for *The Hairy Ape*. The following year, O'Neill himself portrayed a masked Death in *The Fountain*, and also used a Congo mask in *All God's*

23) Oscar Cargill, "Fusion-Point of Jung and Nietzsche," in his *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism*. New York University Press, 1961, pp. 419-11.

24) Cf. Hitler on the role of the rabble rouser and, for convenience, Knickerbocker, p. 50.

25) Egil Tornqvist, *A Drama of Souls: Studies in O'Neill's Supernaturalistic Technique*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, p. 36 Virginia Floyd, *Eugene O'Neill at Work: Newly Released Ideas for Plays*. New York: Ungar, 1981, p. 74.

26) Kenneth Macgowan, *The Theatre of Tomorrow*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1921, p. 224.

*Chillun Got Wings* in 1923 -- the same year that Macgowan tried to analyze the use of masks in drama and religion in his book *Masks and Demons*. The triumvirate was formed, the following year with their "dramatic arrangement" of *The Ancient Mariner*, and continued throughout its brief existence to experiment with the "Jungian" (but also, of course, Sophoclean) devices of masks and choruses.

It is clear, then, that O'Neill was much more knowledgeable about psychoanalytic theory and its dramatic possibilities than he let on. This is not to say, however, that he had not earlier intuitively reached quite Jungian insights, which were then reinforced and systematized by his later studies. As early as 1922, for example, he had told a journalist that our emotions

are the result not only of our individual experience but of the experiences of the whole human race back through the ages. They are the deep undercurrent, whereas our thoughts are often only the small individual surface reactions.<sup>27)</sup>

And it would be quite simple to portray his early (1920, presumably pre-psychoanalytic) *The Emperor Jones* as an examination of the process of psychic regression backwards through Brutus Jones' traumatic experiences and beyond these through those of his race;<sup>28)</sup> or to trace the *anima/animus* symbolism in Scene Two, Act Three of *Lazarus Laughed*; or to point to the various guises of the Goddess of the State (Our Mother of Destruction and Death, Our Mother of Gluttony, Our Mother of Bureaucracy and Fertility, Our Mother of the Holy Face of Insatiable Famine, Our Gentle Lady of Cannibalism, etc.) in *The Last Conquest* as gruesome parodies of the Great Mother archetype; or, indeed, to find numerous other overt or covert references to Jungian psychology in his various works. As he told Ms. Sparrow,<sup>29)</sup> "the 'unconscious' influence stuff strikes me as always extremely suspicious! It is so darned easy to prove!"

It is my purpose in the pages remaining, however, to show that O'Neill's portrayal of Hitler paralleled that of Jung. This may have been coincidental, as O'Neill would undoubtedly have maintained. I would only point out, that Jung's remarks about Hitler were all made in an English-language context and, in the case of his conversation with Knickerbocker, widely distributed through the popular American press. O'Neill need not have made any formal research through esoteric German scholarly journals to have been exposed to Jung's Hitler.

During World War II, O'Neill was intensely concerned about the threat of totalitarianism. In the summer of 1940, as the German forces occupied all of western Europe and threatened to bomb England out of the war, he began working on "*The Last Conquerer*," a "duality of Man play-- Good-Evil, Christ-Devil--begins Temptation on the Mount--

27) Quoted in Mary B. Mullet, "The Extraordinary Story of Eugene O'Neill," *American Magazine* 94 (1922), 34.

28) Eugene O'Neill, "Memoranda on Masks," in Cargill, pp. 116-19.

29) Quoted in Sparrow, p. 77.



through to Crucifixion--Devil a modern power realist--symbolical spiritual conflict today and in all times".<sup>30)</sup> The main focus of the play was a character called variously The World-Dictator or the Savior of the World:

There is no physical resemblance between him and any of the dictators of totalitarian nations, like Hitler of Germany, who has preceded him and whose realistic wars, although they met temporary material defeat in the end, triumphed in principle and so ravaged and maimed and tortured the already sick and faithless souls of men, that they paved the way for final worldwide spiritual exhaustion and the acceptance of the new Salvation and the Divine Tyrant Redeemer principle in a Holy and Indivisible World State. The Savior of the World owes much to these men, whose spiritual heir He is, but of course He can never admit He owes His power to anything but His own Divine Genius and He had decreed that no memory of these men must ever be spoken or written.<sup>31)</sup>

The insistence that there was "no physical resemblance" with Hitler is, of course, a patent example of psychological scotoma and denial. But there is an even closer physical resemblance to the Caligula of the earlier *Lazarus Laughed*, who has "large troubled eyes of a glazed greenish-blue, [which] glare out with a shifty feverish suspicion at everyone.... His mouth also is childish, the red lips soft and feminine in outline." Caligula gives the impression of one who "has long ago become naively insensitive to any human suffering but [his] own".<sup>32)</sup> The eyes of the World-Dictator, likewise, are pale greenish-blue, "still and glassy;" he "still possesses a depraved and deprived adolescence, a youthful cruelty, an immature imperviousness to the sight of sorrow and pain".<sup>33)</sup> But, again, the World-Dictator/Hitler equation is neatly demonstrated by a remark that O'Neill made in 1943 about a possible revival of *Lazarus Laughed*: he noted then that "Hitler doing his little dance of triumph after the fall of France [when O'Neill began drafting *The Last Conquest*] is very like my Caligula".<sup>34)</sup> In addition, as Virginia Floyd has pointed out, O'Neill also incorporated some discarded *Lazarus* dialog and staging ideas into his notes for *The Last Conquest*.<sup>35)</sup>

That the Hitler figure was much on his mind at the time is further evidenced by the fact that O'Neill interrupted his work on *The Last Conquest* to begin another (also unfinished) piece called *Blind Alley Guy*. The central, though offstage, character in this play is a mobster named Walter, whose biography bears a close resemblance to Hitler's own and whose name, which means *ruling the hosts*, sounds suspiciously like "Hitler." Just as Jung often described Hitler in a manner that resembled the way a

30) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, p. 317.

31) Ibid., p. 319.

32) Eugene O'Neill *Lazarus Laughed*, in vol. 1 of *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. New York: Random House, 1934, p. 299.

33) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, p. 328-29.

34) Ibid., p. 112.

35) Floyd, pp. 103, 111.

playwright might compose his stage directions, O'Neill described Walter the way an analyst might jot down his notes for a case history:

frustration (unconscious), inability to feel, which is driving motive behind criminal, anti-social career--hatred for society in which he feels alien, longing for death sublimated into desire for destruction--no real belief in social program--owe it to own mob--hatred for Christ, unconscious ambition [to] supplant, become victor Anti-Christ--reason he hates Jews--liberty means his liberty alone as supreme master...<sup>36)</sup>

In the context of the often accidental nature of O'Neill's alleged Jungianism, it may be useful to note that his early depiction of Caligula's feminine traits may be echoed in Jung's statement that "Hitler's unconscious seems to be female."<sup>37)</sup> Of course, a subthesis of this paper is that, at least in his raw manuscripts, before he had them worked up into finished products which rather thoroughly sublimated and subsumed the more obvious borrowings from the psychologist, O'Neill was deeply indebted to Jung for his conceptualization of Adolf Hitler. (Sometimes, though, in their general analyses of the human psyche, O'Neill seems to have anticipated Jung rather than the other way around.)

In 1940, in his first attempts to write *The Last Conquest*, he pointed out that, above all, the World-Dictator, just like Jung's Hitler,

has the quality of a medium, a hypnotic subject, a fanatic who is empty and lifeless when not possessed by his fanaticism, an actor who is a starry vehicle for the part he plays.<sup>38)</sup>

Floyd has pointed out that O'Neill once described Hitler as "a ham actor," "a dictator who is also a fifth rate ham."<sup>39)</sup>

In a later revision, he returned to another aspect of the Jungian description of Hitler: the World-Dictator is "a small man, not over five feet--mystic egomaniac--a fanatic hysteric--Satan uses him as a perfect instrument for a stronger will." Unlike the earlier dictators who had cynically proclaimed their divinity in order to manipulate the people, "this one really believed it, believes in myth of his divine origins".<sup>40)</sup> (This particular aspect of Hitler's character was not analyzed by Jung until after the war, when he diagnosed the condition as *pseudologia phantastica*, "that form of hysteria which is characterized by a peculiar talent for believing one's own lies."<sup>41)</sup>)

Nearly a year after beginning the play, O'Neill added a prologue. Its scene is "The Hall of Black Mirrors in the Savior's Palace on a night in the Future--once upon a time in that spiral of the past we call the future," a rather Jungian, ahistoric moment. The World Savior is meeting there with his twelve-member council, "the Super Elite

36) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, pp.359-60.

37) Jung, *Symbolic Life*, p.578.

38) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, pp.328-29.

39) Floyd, p.329.

40) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, p.331.

41) Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, pp.203-04.

class of the World State." The councillors "do not appear to be living men. They are too small, for one thing--no larger than a ventriloquist's dummy." They have "a wooden quality, all the faces carved imitations of each other--emotionless faces, coldly intelligent, insensitive, capable, ruthlessly determined." On the other hand, the Savior "seems to be a living man, although because of the mystic trance He is now in, it is difficult to tell. He appears large and powerful, but in reality He is a small man not over four feet in height".<sup>42)</sup>

Then the Black Magician, an alter ego of the World-Dictator, enters. He is the thirteenth minister, the Minister of Spiritual Affairs and Superstitions who, psychoanalyst-like, has been monitoring men's thoughts and dreams. He outlines his plan to recreate the events that led up to Christ's crucifixion in order to finally subvert the doctrines of humility and renunciation.<sup>43)</sup>

The recreation, commencing in Scene One, begins at the Mount of Temptation. The Magician and Christ enter, wearing identical clothes. After some debate, the Magician, "like an old actor making up for part he has played many times," changes into his Ministerial uniform and "makes up the conventional Mephisto face." Then he removes a ventriloquist's dummy--the Savior of the World--from the "box of tricks" he has carried onto the stage with him: "Caesar again--but Tiberius had a mind but this little man has only the cunning I gave him--dictator dummy--the God Father of his own divinity--theologians of Alexandria would have had a great time rationalizing this nut." Then, in a close parallel to the political analysis Jung had sketched out, the Magician referred to the dummy figure as the

final perfect expression of the highest low desire in the heart of every man--the lust for power--the fear of liberty--you had better beware of this little monster--he faces men as they are and uses them accordingly--he sees they are still beasts if you but scratch their surfaces.

Then the dummy offers Christ "spiritual leadership of New Order--work under me--but don't tell them you are Son of God--because they think that I--." His speech is interrupted by the approach of a crowd; there is the sound of a "goose step up a mountainside" and the dummy does not want to be seen "consorting with a Jew, even if he is only ghost of a dead Jew. Don't let your being a Jew bother you. I have had a family tree manufactured for you which shows you are, like me, the son of an Aryan...."<sup>44)</sup> After Christ delivers the Sermon on the Mount to an unresponsive crowd, the dummy orders them to return to their barracks and salutes

the New Order! You have nothing to lose but liberty! Forward in the name of the State! I

42) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, p.328.

43) Ibid., p.329.

44) A long-standing but apparently false rumor about Hitler is that he himself had Jewish ancestry. Whether true or not, there is a good deal of evidence that Hitler believed it and rather desperately tried to find (or manufacture) conclusive evidence of its invalidity.

promise you that never will there be peace on earth! The future must be destroyed! There must be nothing left in the spirit but the desire for death!

At the end of the scene the Magician confides in Christ that the dummy is not the real ruler but only the symbol of the "modern world spirit".<sup>45)</sup>

Again echoing Jung's remarks concerning "democracy's ghost, the State," O'Neill later added a speech to the Mount of Temptation scene in which the Magician extolled the

death of democracy—men grew tired of the responsibility of living free with no higher law than the criminal code to define the use of freedom—their spirits corrupt and fat—the goddess of Liberty fat woman in a circus—democracy with a paunch and a bad heart and impotent. There is no conflict—no good nor evil—they are all virtually dead—a fine thing for me to be—a fat corpse ruling the brains of corpses—I am a pathetic fat man, a gorged physical cannibal king, who vomits the carrion human flesh, which is all he has left to eat.<sup>46)</sup>

Scene Two is a celebration of "the New Feast of All Fools." This time the Magician wears the uniform of the chief of the secret police. Around the dummy's platform and throne there are "lines of dummy troops—painted drop rows of spectators, all in gesture of salute—bands, flags with sickles, hammers, swastikas, etc."<sup>47)</sup>

In later scenes, the parts alternately of Judas and Pontius Pilate are played by the Perfect Subject-Citizen of the State, the Tribune of the People: a "hulking, low-browed, submissive, cowed" man with "huge gorilla-like strength but so completely enslaved doesn't need manacles any more. His eyes are vacant—without a hope or dream or thought—his great strength always exhausted—all he seems to desire is sleep." He has the "dim sure instinct that Satan is his real God and Slave-Master"<sup>48)</sup> Years earlier, O'Neill had written that, by using the Jungian device of a masked mob, "a new type of play may be written in which the Mob as King, Hero, Villain, or Fool will be the main character—the Great Democratic Play!"<sup>49)</sup> It seems that *The Last Conquest* was conceived in part as a fulfillment of that goal.

At the end of the play "it is the unseen (?) man on the cross who tempts the Devil with all the peace of the spirit of renunciation." But the dawn comes and the Magician discovers that *he* is the figure on the cross, wearing Christ's clothes. The Magician puts on his own clothes again and begins his

old dictator mob-moving harangue—in asides, his disgust with its lies—his horror that he had begun to believe them himself—Christ's words keep breaking through—his confused remittance—possessed—but joy in it, too—getting rid of self, freedom—finally, his speech becomes Sermon

45) O'Neill, quoted in Floyd, 322-23.

46) Ibid., p. 330.

47) Ibid., pp. 323-24.

48) Ibid., p. 343.

49) "Memoranda on Masks," p. 118.

on Mount.

The marionettes raise their arms "in hail salute".<sup>50)</sup>

O'Neill relied throughout much of his career on the work of psychoanalysts generally and of Jung, a sometime psychoanalyst, in particular. This was especially so, late in his productive life, in his treatment of the archetypal Hitler/World-Dictator figure of *The Last Conquest*, not only in the physical description but also in the analysis of the social conditions leading to his successes and their essential hollowness. O'Neill, as an artist, went somewhat further, deliberately blurring the identities of the Black Magician, Christ, the World Savior/World-Dictator, the council of state and mankind as a whole in a way that Jung had only hinted at. Part of his reliance on Jung was direct; undoubtedly some of it was unconscious; and most likely a great deal of it was merely circumstantial, based on the facts that the two men lived through the same international crises and socio-technological changes, that they were of a similar penetrating poetic-prophetic bent, and that they both read deeply some of the same materials (Friedrich Nietzsche, Eastern mystics, and so forth). It is true of course that O'Neill also relied to a great extent on earlier observations he had made without benefit of the Freudians; his development of the play *Lazarus Laughed*, for example, was of great significance in his thinking about *The Last Conquest*. Perhaps it could be said fairly of both men that their ideas about the nature of the human condition were

as old as literature, and the interpretations I suggest are such as might have occurred to any author in any time with a deep curiosity about the underlying motives that actuate human relationships...<sup>51)</sup>

Neither O'Neill nor Jung was overly concerned with the psychic condition of an individual man named Adolf Hitler. Both men, however, saw the German dictator as symptomatic of a much wider phenomenon. Hitler's madness, if such it was, seemed to reflect a serious flaw in the psychic condition of modern man. Science and rationalism, the tools of utopian progress for many reflective men between 1500 and 1900, had seemingly destroyed religion and other traditional humanistic attitudes and had created dystopian totalitarianism in their stead. Hitler, Jung, and O'Neill were all to some extent products of the times. Now they are all three long gone. But the issues that they raised, separately and from their different standpoints, are with us still: What is the nature of modern cultural "madness?" To what extent do we each share in a collective insanity? Is the State the ghost of democracy; is Christianity merely the ghost of a dead Jew? What is the future state of mankind? The questions Hitler, Jung, and O'Neill asked have not yet been fully answered by their successors.

50) O'Neill, quoted in Flyod, 321.

51) O'Neill to Clark, in Clark, in Clark, p. 136

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