

[O'Neill and Camille: Domestic Drama in “The Web” and “Recklessness”]

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[Abstract] *Early in his career, O'Neill aspired to be a popular playwright. This contrasts with the conventional assessment of O'Neill's ambitions. These earliest plays drawing on popular melodrama and relying on explicitly commercial theatrical inspiration do not fit the established model of the O'Neill who insisted he wanted “to be an artist” or nothing. The plays also draw on the influence of Dumas' La dame aux camélias, O'Neill was been influenced by Ibsen and Strindberg in his later works, but these plays reveal these influences from the start. Finally, they demonstrate that O'Neill had family relationships that had nothing to do with the autobiography in Long Day's Journey into Night. O'Neill intended “Recklessness” as a possible vehicle for his father. O'Neill is better placed in the context of late 19th and early 20th century theatre; continuing to regard him as sui generis, hobbles our understanding of American theatre and O'Neill's genius.*

[Keywords] *Eugene O'Neill; melodrama; feminist drama; domestic drama; “The Web”; “Recklessness”; one-act plays; American theatre; modern drama*