

**Psychological Disclosure of a World within Human Mind: A Study of  
Eugene O'neill's *The Emperor Jones***

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**Abstract**

*The Emperor Jones* is a psychological study of the mind, fears, visions, and dreams of Brutus Jones, the protagonist of the work. In the same piece, Tom-Tom symbolizes the last heartbeat and death of a person. Jones's awareness is expressed in his technique of cinematic flashbacks linking past and present. Symbolism and psychology merge here and the whole play becomes one long drama. Eugene O'Neill compresses the summary of an event of trauma into eight scenes, expressing the personal and collective trauma of an individual and a society caused by a distorted sense of self and one's concept of identity with respect to political repression as well as cultural colonization. By externalizing the symptoms of psychological trauma in the reconstruction of Black identity together with nationalism, O'Neill's play symbolically lets readers participate in perceptions of the evolution of trauma and the ongoing threat of psychosocial trauma.

**Keywords:** *Trauma, Black Nationalism, identity, expressionist drama*

**Introduction**

*The Emperor Jones* is a psychological study of the mind, fears, visions and dreams of Brutus Jones, the protagonist of the work. In the same piece, Tom-Tom symbolizes the last heartbeat and death of a person. Jones's awareness is expressed in his technique of cinematic flashbacks linking past and present. Symbolism and psychology merge here and the whole play becomes his one long drama. Emperor Jones represents the nervous breakdown of a black man under the stress of anxiety and exhaustion. Somnath Sarkar explains the issue of psychology in the play in his article, "Significance of Tom-Tom in Neill's Emperor Jones":

Tom-tom is part and parcel of the psychological action; at first it is the call to war; then it merges into the Emperor Jones' vision of the slaves working to its beat; finally, it becomes its own throbbing, feverish temples, all the while it's our heart beating more and more rapidly as we follow his fate. (2)

In Western academic circles, critical interest in Eugene O'Neill has long grown and now includes almost all of his works. His brilliant themes and clever, innovative theatrical installations captivated his critics. His research focuses on its expressionist features, comparative research and ethno-oriented studies. Expressionism and external influences on its work have been widely studied.

In terms of the fundamental elements of expressionism, Manuel (2005) embodied African American artistic expression in *The Emperor Jones*, which marked a new step in the attitude of pictorial fashion. Zhang Wenqian in his article "Representation of Trauma in *The Emperor Jones*" writes:

Expressionism and external influence of his plays are widely investigated, as exemplified by Clara Blackburn's paper (1941) which studies the continental influences on O'Neill's expressionistic dramas particularly the impact from Strindberg who is considered to be the father of expressionism in drama because "he dared to project his own soul, his inner self, on the stage. (111)

Zhang Wenqian in his article "Representation of Trauma in *The Emperor Jones*" again elaborates the article and further writes:

In terms of basic expressionistic factors, Manuel (2005) manifests the artistic representation of African Americans in *The Emperor Jones* which marks a new step in the treatment of the depiction fad. Additionally, Corery (1969) illustrates that his expressionistic play *The Emperor Jones* turned for details about witch doctors to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. (116)

The hallucinations Brutus Jones experiences during his desperate escape into the woods are first personal, then racial, as he sinks deeper and deeper into his primitive past under the pressure of fear. In a confused state of mind, he shoots at different sights and visions that he perceives to be real and is then killed by a silver bullet fired at him. Thus, written in the tradition of expressionist drama, the play becomes a spiritual study of the character.

Dr. M. Nallathambi quotes Dr. Raghavacharyulu in his research article "Symbolism in *The Emperor Jones*,":

The edge of the Great Forest is an extensive symbolization of both the glory and horror of his freedom, of both his terrifying patience and his sensuous isolation. The flight is from himself, and the imitated values of the white man are only a temporary defence against the unbearable reprisals of human freedom. Unknown forms of fear and terror emerge from the forest shades, and the power of blackness haunts him, injuring his pride and crippling his will. The struggle is real for him, "and the personified values of the white man are only temporary defences against an intolerable situation, which is seen as revenge against human freedom. From the shadow of the forest appear unknown forms of fear and terror and their power. . The darkness haunts him, wounding his pride and crippling his will. (116)

He descends through successive levels of the superego and the personal unconscious until he descends in an atavistic descent directly into the dark vortex of his raceless consciousness. Jones originally moved to the Caribbean island to escape his past and America's greater history of slavery. He fled to the island after first murdering another die in a game that can be considered a classic example of black-on-black violence, especially in a white supremacy that denies blacks any other meaningful means of earning money except for illegal gambling.

Jones kills a prison guard who belongs to white racial group, while being in prison for the first murder. He then flees to the Caribbean. In doing so, he effectively killed white American authority figures and then fled to a country where such authority did not exist. While in the Caribbean, Jones assumed that he could indeed escape his past by fleeing to where it happened - America. Jones found that he could rise to a higher level on the island than in America. Equally important, he undertook all the work on his own.

Alone, Jones believes he can escape the prejudices and cultural narratives that trap him in the collective memory of American slavery. He believed that by changing places, he could escape from the past and society and rewrite the path of the future. Ranald summarises it in his article, "From Trial to Triumph: The Early Plays":

Emperor Brutus Jones, the ex-Pullman porter, either throws off, or loses the trappings of white civilization as he moves through eight scenes back to his African origins, making a personal journey of internal discovery, reliving in reverse his own life and the Black Experience. He kills Jeff a former friend, then sequentially a prison guard, an auctioneer and a planter bidding at a slave auction, and re-imagines the slave ship. Finally, wearing only a breech-cloth, he confronts the crocodile god and his witch doctor, calling on Jesus in his terror. (61-62)

Although Eugene O'Neill is a white male and the era in which the play was written complicates some of these ideas (e.g. the very ominous idea that African Americans can never escape slavery). The message that can be read (about equality) to a black audience in a contemporary context is the same message that the racial system still exists in American society and that people of colour are the norm. It's a poignant reminder of how dehumanizing it is.

Emperor Jones is a fine example of psychoanalysis. It is an expressionist game in which psychological or inner reality is central. In expressionist drama, the playwright is effective for expressing internal action dreams, visions, aspirations, desires, emotions and the like, the inner monologue dramatic monologue technique. The monologue apparatus, an individual's speech to himself, is then used to express a character's soul or psyche, through both the stream of consciousness of the novelists and expressionist playwrights. O'Neill used it very effectively and successfully in his works.

Jones' mind also contains unconscious ideas and symbols derived from his own personal circumstances, forming a structure of his personal unconscious. In people, it is philosophically agreed upon that their minds contain ideas from the collective unconscious that crop up naturally because they are part of humanity. Similarly, there are ideas that are inherited from a particular race, tribe, or family. Jones' mind also contains unconscious ideas and symbols from his own personal circumstances, and his background from various levels, thus forming a structure of his personal unconscious.

Ultimately, his own consciousness, his ego, emerges from his personal unconscious. By collective unconscious, Jung therefore means his own racial memories deeply buried in the unconscious; By "personal unconscious" he means the memories of one's past actions, especially the memories of one's sins and bad deeds, then there is the "personal conscience" or the ego of the individual.

### **Trauma**

Expressionism is a dramatic technique that allows the playwright to portray the "inner reality", the soul or spirit of the characters. The focus shifts from the outer reality to the inner reality. An action that moves freely in space and time according to the character's thoughts. Subconscious sounds become deeper and deeper, actions become more and more internalized, and what happens in the soul becomes more important than external actions. Expressionism as an artistic movement appeared as a sort of rebellion against the mutual exclusivity of romanticism and realism. It is, on the one hand, rebellion against tendencies towards realism and naturalism, and on the other hand, against tendencies towards realism and against a class or an idea, comprising different ideas about society.

Expressionists advocate "real" reality. This reality refers to the inner world of thoughts and visions. They are very interested in psychology and admire the primacy of mind over matter. They are subjective and have to do with the "inner" reality of the human mind. Expressionists examine human passions rather than people's histories and achievements. In the words of N.S. Wilson: "In a nutshell, he tries to dramatize a person's inner workings and portray what is going on in his soul, showing the emotion of fear. He is a victim of the personification of fear alone in the forest. It represents the breakdown of the Negroid psyche under the stress of fear and exhaustion.

The play is a study of the psychology of a man haunted by past crimes and unconscious racist memories. Eugene O'Neill explores Jones' traumatic experiences in his eight short scenes that illustrate the personal and collective trauma caused by a distorted sense of self and identity in the context of political oppression and cultural colonization. By examining the symptoms of trauma in the reproduction of black identity and Black Nationalism, O'Neill made a symbolic contribution to the development of trauma and the perception of Black Nationalism together with the threat of ongoing psychosocial trauma.

He invites readers to join her for lasting artistic value and universal meaning. O'Neill makes a symbolic contribution to the development of trauma and the perception of ongoing psychosocial trauma threats. Invite readers to participate in She gives enduring artistic value and universal significance.

In the play, O'Neill showed how Emperor Jones's ego or self collapses under the impact of terror and how his personal and racial memories invade him and cause the ego or personal consciousness to disintegrate. It is in this way that Jones's past shapes his present, leading him to decline and fall.

The Emperor Jones is a chronicle of the gradual collapse of Brutus Jones' mind/ego and the unravelling of his personal and collective unconsciousness. The first two visions of Jeff and the jailer come from his personal unconscious, but subsequent hallucinations suggest that Jones never actually had the traumatic experience of being auctioned off as a slave, and that the It comes from racial memory, as I had no direct knowledge of Congolese magicians. However, when fear strikes and there is no cultural veneer to protect him, his racial subconscious projects terrifying visions that completely overwhelm his consciousness.

### **Conclusion**

The secret is obviously not in the symbol, but in the skilful adaptation. O'Neill achieves a dynamic synthesis between symbolism and dramatic action. The focus of the game is outward but constantly turned inward, placing the final reveal in the logical climax of the reveal. However, outer reality has the first and last word, Brutus Jones emerges hauntingly as himself, a colossal figure who transformed love into the true power that awakened it, universal but not human, individual but not Eugene O'Neill.

Eugene O'Neill presents eight scenes that represent the individual and collective traumas of individuals and societies caused by a distorted sense of self and their identity in the context of political and real oppression. cultural populace. a brief summary of events. By excluding the symptoms of trauma in the reconstruction of black identity and black nationalism, O'Neill invites readers to symbolically participate in the progression of trauma and recognize awareness of the continuing threat of psychosocial trauma.

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