



## Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill

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Providing a representative selection of O'Neill's voluminous correspondence (more than three thousand of his letters are known to exist), written between 1901 and 1952 to intimate friends, family, and literary and theatrical personalities, this collection of more than six hundred letters offers new and revealing insights into the guardedly private life and thoughts of America's greatest playwright. The letters depict O'Neill as somewhat different from the melancholy figure biographers have portrayed. As the editors state in their introduction, readers "may be surprised by O'Neill's day-to-day appearance as an ordinary man, avowing friendships, showing concern for his children, warring with the IRS, ... watching over his health, going to ball games, ... and trying, sometimes not very successfully, to bring his diurnal existence into a reasonably coherent fiscal, personal, and spiritual order."

Readers may be surprised, too, by how much some of these letters reveal O'Neill to have been calculatedly duplicitous in his relationships with women. In 1927, for example, when he is temporarily living in New York, having left his second wife Agnes and two children in Bermuda, he writes to her: "Darling, I do wish you were here! But don't come! It would break us entirely just now with the bankroll so low." A self-professed "model" husband, he neglects to tell Agnes he is having an affair with Carlotta Monterey, who would become his third wife; and a month later, back in Bermuda with his family, he writes to Carlotta: "God, how I long for you!... I am horribly lonely for you."

The correspondence here will be of great interest both to specialists and to general readers.

## Sources for Further Study

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*New Statesman and Society*. I, November 25, 1988, p. 44.

*New York*. XXI, November 7, 1988, p. 92.

*The New York Times Book Review*. XCIII, November 6, 1988, p. 12.

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*Time*. CXXXII, November 7, 1988, p. 120.

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