

### CHAPTER THREE

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Dion Anthony hides his true self under a mask, of sensuality and cynicism. ( he was sensitive and gifted ) His wife Margaret loves the masked Dion, but fears Dion unmasked. Psychological behaviour of characters is shown by using masks. William Brown, a successful and an inspired architect, " The great God Brown " envied his boyhood friend, Dion, depended on Dion's talent and gift "

Cybel, a prostitute finally understands Dion. Margaret, not knowing about the death of Dion loves the masked Brown supposing him to be Dion. Later, Brown dies at the hands of police.

Cybel lessened the torture of the disturbed minds of the men coming to her. She was, ' Mother ' or ' Earth Mother '. She gave them the love of a mother and was a proper guide to them.

Mother of Billy Brown was very ambitious. She expected Billy to be a worthy and a professional after his college education. According to Billy's liking, she proposed to him the professional of architecture. Just like that Dion Anthony's mother was also hopeful. She inspired her son to develop the skill in painting and architecture.

Margaret, the wife of Dion Anthony, was pretty and vivacious. Her eyes were big and romantic. This dreamy girl like Dion. She liked the voice of Dion. She was fond of him only when he was in disguise as we have already observed. She says,

MARGARET      Dion's different from all the others.  
He can paint beautifully and write poetry  
and plays and sings and dances so  
marvellously. But he's sad and shy, too,  
just like a baby sometimes and he  
understands what I am really like  
inside and I'd love to run my fingers  
through his hair - and I love him! Yes,  
I love him! ( she stretches out her  
arms to the moon ) Oh, Dion, I love  
you!<sup>16</sup>

Margaret being very pretty. Billy Brown desired to have her. He desired to kiss her. But she allowed him to do so in the relation of a brother and a sister, just like a brother. She also told him that she loved Dion.

Margaret was faithful to Dion and she had told it to Billy, without any reservations.

Her long waiting for Dion in the moon light endeared him much to her as it can be noted in Dion's expression of his love for her.

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16      The Plays of Eugene O'Neill :  
( NewYork : Random House, 1949 ) , p.263.

DION.           Waiting - waiting for me - O God in  
the moon, did you hear ? She loves me !  
I'm not afraid ! I am strong ! I can  
love ! She protests me ! Her arms <sup>are</sup> softly  
around me ! She is warmly around me !  
She is my skin ! She is my armor ! Now I  
am born - I - the I ! - one and  
indivisible - I who love Margaret !<sup>17</sup>

Their love culminated into their marriage but only to make Margaret aware of her husband's excessive drinking. She was bold enough to warn him about that. At the same time she was equally concerned about his gambling. Being an ambitious woman, it was but natural for her to expect her husband to be a good businessman. Moreover as she happened to discover in him the genius for painting, she goaded him on to become a successful painter.

She had a foresight. For the sake of her children she wanted to mould her husband in to a bright personality. Gay tempered as she was she always loved life and lived almost on sweet dreams which would come true in future.

Another important thing about Margaret was the role she played as a conscientious caretaker of Dion. He worked for Brown and was never successful in his business. As such she was of and on called upon to soothe his disturbed mind.

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Her constant longing to bring about a change in his behaviour so that he should be a better man is revealed in her loving words what is more she never lost the balance of her mind in whatever she did in this reward.

She always wanted some cheerful atmosphere to be maintained in their family life. But at the same time she never liked her husband to indulge their children too much.

She was very proud of her home, children and husband. She was always cheerful and wanted to keep it up the end of her life. Especially she always looked forward to the bright future of her children.

She was a good mother. She says,

MARGARET. Not for my sake but for your own and above all for the children's!<sup>18</sup>

Dion died at Brown's office. It was not known to Margaret for many days. It was the most tragic moment in her life but it was kept a secret for quite some time. She waited for him, because he was in the habit of remaining away from home for days.

As Margaret refused once Brown's advances he decided to take revenge upon her. Accordingly he planned and in the mask of Dion he met her. She was easily in. But the most ironic thing here was her taking masked Billy Brown to be Dion and warning him not to utter rude words that is

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18 Ibid, p. 222.

because she was loyal to her husband to the last.

Her expectation regarding her husband did not come true. Her dream was shattered to pieces by his sudden death. She intended to make him a respected person but fate came in her way.

As fate played its game Billy Brown also played a trick to deceive her. He disguised himself as masked Dion and cheated her into accepting his love.

Mistaking him for her husband she says ;

MARGARET. I have never thought of Billy Brown  
except as a friend and lately not  
even that! He's just a stupid old  
fool!<sup>19</sup>

When she knew the reality of Dion, she covered her face in her arms and overcome with grief sobbed.

She was very sensitive and at the sight of the dead body of Dion, she exclaims ;

MARGARET. My lover! My husband! My boy! ( she kisses the  
make ) Good - by. Thank you for happiness!  
And you're not dead, sweetheart! You can  
never die till my heart dies! You will  
live forever! You will sleep under my  
heart!<sup>20</sup>

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19 " Ibid, p.322.

20 Ibid, p.323.

Margaret had to see the passing away of her dreammaker, of her children's caretaker, a painter of her life, an architect of her family and future.

Dion's wife Margaret received her name from 'the Marguerite of Faust ', because she represents ' the eternal girl woman'<sup>21</sup>

Cybel is the main female character in this play. By profession she was a prostitute but she was a support to all the men, who were disturbed psychologically.

Cybel desired to give joy or pleasure to the men coming to her. She says;

CYBEL .        and then I am damn sorry for the lot  
                  of yous, every damn mother's son - of -  
                  a gun of you, that I'd like to run out  
                  naked into the street and love the  
                  whole mob to death like I was bringing  
                  you all a new brand of dope that 'd  
                  make you forget every - thing that every  
                  was for good<sup>22</sup>

She was very frank. She told the men visiting her to go back to their homes. She told Dion too to go home. She reminded him of his worried wife at home. She gave him good

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21        Egil Tornqvist, "Personal Nomenclature in the Plays of O'Neill ", 'Modern Drama', Vol. 9, Year, (1966) p.369.

22        Ibid, p.286.

advise to help maintain the balance of Dion's mind. It is this that prompts Dion and Brown to call her 'Earth Mother'.

She desired to give the pleasant moments to the men coming to her. She was ready to sacrifice herself for the happiness of the men.

Thus it is that she was the real caretaker of her men. In Cybel's warm and protective embraces Dion used to hide himself. She was for him the well of mother's affection.

Cybel's character is fully developed by O'Neill.

As Gary A. Vena puts it;

Without her mask, Cybel is the Earth Mother, in whom Dion Anthony will find forgiveness and salvation. She represents the highest order of philosopher - Where in O'Neill's plays and her words of wisdom are stated clearly and directly ;

Life is all right if you let it alone. She personifies all the positive forces in life. For Cybel, the values of life must not be denied, experienced fully, affirmatively and hopefully. Therefore in her role as a confessor, to Dion Anthony and later to William Brown, she can inspire a confidence in each so that the face behind the mask of each man is the face in which, in turn, strengthens Cybel's maternal affections. She nourishes those same individuals who seek her protection.<sup>23</sup>

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23 Gary, A/Vena, "The Role of Prostitutes in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill", Drama Critique - Vol. II-Year (1968 )  
p.12,13.



While generalizing the position of women in relation to men she expressed her feeling, caused by her bitter experiences of men. When Cybel's steps were heard by Dion in his sleepy state, He asked ;

"Who are you ? ",  
to which Cybel answered ,  
"Only another female." ( p.278).

It is nothing but an expression of the behaviour of man with women. Every one of His looks to woman in one and the same way.

She had the quality of absorbing faults of men which is the quality of Earth, and as such she was called " Miss Earth ", It was an indication of goodness in her, though she was a prostitute. As Dion Anthony was in need of her happy company; He says;

DION. But please don't stop stroking my aching  
brow. Your hand is a cool mud poultice on  
the sting of thought<sup>24</sup>

Cybel was very affectionate, loving and tender ,  
the real caretaker of the suffering souls. Not only the  
bodily pains were mitigated by her but she also relieved  
the psychological tortures of men. She was the comforter and  
the place of relief for men.

She was very philosophical about human life. The loneliness was the key to happiness, was her saying -

Cybel, a prostitute in this play, entertained her men by enjoyable conversation. The men expected the love of mother from her. Why did the men go to the prostitutes ? The answer to this is given by Doris Nelson;

The men go to prostitutes to punish themselves for their guilt feeling towards the chaste women in their lives.<sup>25</sup>

A prostitute by profession, but a mother by temperament is the special thing about this character of O'Neill in this play. She was not fleecing the men, who visited her, but she was the good, guide for the men, she cared.

As Doris Falk says;

In the play this mother is Cybel, who wears the mask of a prostitute, but is beneath it ' an incarnation of Cybel, the earth mother doomed to segregation as a pariah in a world of unnatural laws but patronized by her segregators who are thus themselves the first victims of their laws.'<sup>26</sup>

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- 25 Doris Nelson, "O'Neill's Women: A special Section",  
The Eugene O'Neill News letter (Summer fall-1982).
- 26 Doris Falk, Eugene O'Neill and The Tragic Tension.  
(New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Uni., Press, 1958),  
p.101,102.

It is nothing but an indirect attack on the contemporary society and its inhuman laws. Many times these laws force the men to behave wrongly. The men coming to Cybel are the victims of such laws. But Cybel was not the woman of callous nature. Indeed, <sup>she was quite</sup> kind and considerate to one and all.

Dion, a regular visitor to Cybel knew her well. He was fool in money matters and as a result he failed in his business. He was used by Brown as a good painter. To soften his suffering mind he used to go to Cybel she also understood him as such and guided him properly. Dion referred to her,

Dion, who is drinking himself to death, finds his sole consolation in Cybel. Whom he playfully refers to as 'Old sacred cow', 'Old Filth' and 'Sentimental Old Pig.' She is the one person who accepts his real self, the martyred soul beneath the Mephistophelian exterior (' Haven't I told you ', she once admonishes him, ' to take off your mask in the house ? '), and she in turn removing the mask of 'the hardened prostitute', discloses only to him her true face the indomitable, all compassionate Earth Mother. Their mutual understanding is so profound that no one can disturb it, nor even Brown, Covetuous of everything Dion has, Brown buys Cybel as his mistress but he can never really possess her.<sup>27</sup>

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27      Louis Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Artist.

(Boston : Little, Brown, 1973 ), p.169.

Cybel offered uniform treatment to all the men visiting her. What is more she treated them according to their needs ; The most disturbed man was kindly considered. She gave showered all her affection on him, that is why she nursed Dion, when he had lost his balance. But in the case of Brown, she only loved him as he was in his good senses as yet.

Cybel was described by Henry F. Pommer. in Modern Drama,

The third group to which Cybel has ties, the mystics, is distinguished from the Earth Mother by increased euphoria and more clear cut universal acceptance. She has moments of ' deep grief ', times she ' sighs wearily ' and wonders ' what is the good of bearing children ? what's the use of giving birth to death ? ' (III, 288) Yet she is completely unpossessive, and would never say, like Margaret Brown , My lover .... You can never die till my heart dies (325 ) she has uncanny luck at solitaire because she doesn't care about winning, only about playing - playing also the solitary game of an affectionate but essentially unattached person ' Life is all right, if you let it alone ' (280) As a prostitute, she is an appropriate symbol of mysticism's refusal to distort life with narrow moral categories.<sup>28</sup>

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28 "The Mysticism of Eugene O'Neill".

Henry Pommer, F. Modern Drama, 9 (May 1967 ) - p. 33.

She was always on her toes to receive . The persons coming to her for playing that solitary game. It was but natural that she loved Dion and Billy Brown. And she had the capacity for that, she was full of passion and love. Thus it is that Dion and Cybel were her friends for seven years. Dion expressed her love for him;

DION .     (taking off his mask, wearily comes and sits down at her feet and lays his head in her lap with a grateful smile ) You're strong. You always give. You've given my weakness strength to live.<sup>29</sup>

Cybel's nature was of this type. She gave full joy to Dion.

In case of Brown also she used the same treatment. As the following conversation reveals it to us;

BROWN     I don't want justice. I want love.

CYBEL     There is only love.

BROWN     Thank you, mother. (Then feebly ) I'm getting sleepy. What's the prayer you taught me ? - Our Father ?

CYBEL     (With Calm exultance ) Our father who Art !

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29     The Plays of Eugene.

O'Neill (New York : Random House 1949 ), p.285.

BROWN. (taking her tone exultantly ) who art!  
who art! ( Suddenly with ecstasy ) I know!  
I have found Him! I hear Him speak!  
'Blessed are they that weep, for they  
shall laugh!' Only he that has wept can  
laugh! .....

CYBEL. Always spring comes again bearing life!  
Always again! Always, Always for ever  
again!- Spring again! life again! Summer  
and fall and death and peace again!  
( with agonized sorrows ) but always,  
always, love and conception and birth and  
pain again - spring bearing the  
intolerable clalice of life again! ( Then  
with agonized exaltance ) - bearing the  
glorious, blazing crown of life again!  
( She stands like an idol of Earth, her  
eyes staring out over the world )<sup>30</sup>

As Cybel revealed the facts of life Grief and joy  
come to us turn by turn. Life is always changing.

At the end Dion, afraid of police, dies in the  
hands of cybel. The police Captain enters, he asks,

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CAPTAIN. Well, what's his name ?

CYBEL. Man !

CAPTAIN. How d'yuh spell it ?<sup>31</sup>

It is remarkable that only the other sex was considered by Cybel. What was important was not the name but the sex of the person concerned. Thus the person was recognized by his sex only.

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31 Ibid, p. 323.