

Old Testament Themes in Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*

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Abstract

This article is dealing with the Old Testament themes as the imitation of idea Eugene O'Neill's play entitled Beyond the Horizon. The part of Old Testament that is used for this research is the Book of Genesis Chapter 25-35. Moreover, this research employs a descriptive qualitative method. There is one aim of this analysis based on the problem. It is to describe the Old Testament themes in Eugene O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon. In analyzing the data, the first step is directly to separate and classify the data whether the data are important or not for the research. The second step is analyzing the data based on the theories used. The third is drawing conclusion based on the analysis that has been conducted. Having obtained the result of the research, there are seven Old Testament themes which appear in Eugene O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon. They are the two brothers, the sons and parents, the reversal of roles, the bowl of lentils; the exile; the wrestling with God, and the reconciliation. From those themes that have been analyzed in the analysis part, a thematic relation between Old Testament and Beyond the Horizon that is the search for God.

Key Words: *Genesis, Old Testament, theme*

Introduction

To have a good understanding in literature is not easy, it is like an adventure. Literature has aspects at least as complex as those of any human personality. It can arouse every conceivable kind of emotion in us, often several emotions at once. It can appeal to our evaluating ability, to our critical intelligence, by humor, irony, or satire. It can move us to the deepest kind of sympathy through pathos and tragedy. It can delight us by the beautiful and restful world of dream and fantasy. It can plunge us into the powerful and turbulent world of imagination. It helps us to love, to sympathize, to hate properly, to tolerate, and to reject, to realize the realities of the known and of the unknown. The world of literature is like a sort of chain-gang work on an endless road which makes us able to have an insight into truth and the key to how to search for truth. William J. Grace in his book entitled *Response to Literature*, states that "literature is a creative work of art, an object that an artist makes. It is not merely an idea, a theory, a system of thought, although idea, theory, and system of thought enter into it" (Grace: 1965, 5).

It is true, of course, that literature also appears in Old Testament. The books of the Old Testament identified as narratives, poetic works, prophetic works or law. Most of these are board categories that include various distinct types or genres of literature and oral tradition. In both online and content, Old Testament books are narratives, that is, they report the events of the past. *The Book of Genesis* is composed, as are most of the other narratives works of numerous individual stories, most of which originally circulated independently and orally. The patriarchal stories in *Genesis* 11-50 have been called legends, sagas, and more accurately family story (Britannica Encyclopedia; 2003).

Considering the description above, I am eager to take challenge to investigate Old Testament themes in Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*.

Theoretical Framework

Because I cannot be haphazard in gathering some correlated theories to support and prove my argument in elaborating the problem formulated in this thesis, I will convey several points below which are badly needed as the major references. To acquire the easier analysis of problem statements, the whole points which are arranged had a correlation to the next based on its significance level

Bible Review

These overviews in this section are taken mostly from theories of some books; Labriola's *The Bible as Literature*, Gerald's *Old Testament Life and Literature*, Tos's *Approaches to the Bible; Old Testament* and Encarta Encyclopedia.

General Description

Albert Labriola elaborates in his book that the Bible includes the Hebraic and Christian scriptures, respectively the Old and New Testaments. Whereas Jews accept the Old Testament as biblical, Christians broaden that outlook to include both the Old and New Testaments. Accepting the scriptures as the revealed word of the Lord is a matter of faith, and systematic analysis of the scriptures is theological interpretation, which results in a code of beliefs called religion. Adherents to a particular religion generally assemble in a place of worship and participate in liturgies. Although religious readers perceive the scriptures as the revealed word of the Lord, many others view the Bible solely as literature and as a wellspring of myths and fables. Nevertheless, religious readers often examine the literary features of the Bible, which they perceive as effective means by which the word of the Lord is conveyed to humankind. To approach the Bible as literature thus serves the purposes of all readers. Doing so requires an overview of the major parts of the Bible, each with its distinctive literary features (Labriola 2003; 19).

Old Testament

The earliest use of the term "Old Testament" is attributed to Melito, Bishop of Sardis about A.D. 180. Tertullian, a Roman centurion who became a Christian, is believed to have been the first to designate the Christian writings as the "New Testament" (about A.D. 200) (Gerald 1997: ii). The Old Testament is a collection of selected writings composed and edited by members of the Hebrew-Jewish community between the twelfth century B.C and the beginning of the Christian era (Gerald 1997: 75). It includes such diverse materials as prophetic oracles, teaching of wise men, instructions of priests and ancient records of the royal courts. Some material is historical, some is legendary, some is legalistic, and some is didactic. The term Old Testament is from the Latin word for "Covenant" came to be applied to those scriptures on the basis of the writings of Paul and other early Christians who distinguished between the "Old Covenant" that God made with Israel and the "New Covenant" established through Jesus Christ (Encarta Encyclopedia 2003). Furthermore, because the early church believed in the continuity of history and of divine activity, Old Testament is included in the Christian Bible, the written records of both the Old and the New Covenants.

The Old Testament recounts the act of creation that is culminating in the origin of Adam and Eve. Their disobedience that causes expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and the population of the earth with their progeny follow in rapid succession. From generation to generation, their descendants toil but at times becomes evildoers. God intervenes by summoning a representative or prophet, who communicates his word to the people and urges them to rectify their evildoing. Moreover, punishment ensues for the reprobates that are as the most dramatic example being the Deluge. As the saga of the Israelites unfolds, they suffer captivity under the Egyptians that are liberated by the power of the Lord enacted through Moses, then wander for forty years before entering Canaan. Thereafter, their saga continues as they settle in Canaan, engage in numerous conflicts with adversaries who beset them on all fronts, exercise military power and political hegemony through their renowned kings, suffer periodic lapses in their fidelity to the Lord, experience defeats by their adversaries, and undergo punishment by the Lord (Gerald, 1997; 3). These and other events are well documented in the major parts of the Old Testament they are the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Wisdom Books, and the Prophetic Books.

Book of Genesis

Book of Genesis is one of books in the Old Testament. The English title is derived from the words *Genesis Kosmou* (Greek, "Origin of the Cosmos") (Britannica Encyclopedia; 2003). In addition, the basic aim of genesis is to relate all of creation and history to God, and, specifically, to explain the role of Israel in the world (Encarta Encyclopedia; 2003).

Book of Genesis Ch. 25-35 in Old Testament presents story about Jacob and Esau. Jacob and Esau are Isaac's son, Abraham's grandsons. Following Abraham's death, God reveals to Isaac's wife Rebekah that she will soon give birth to two sons who will represent two nations, one stronger than the other. When Rebekah delivers, Esau is born first and is extremely hairy. Jacob, who is smooth skinned, is born immediately after grasping the heel of his brother. Isaac's two sons grow to be opposites. Esau is a hunter and a brash man. Jacob stays at home, soft-spoken but quick-witted. One day, Esau comes home famished, demanding to be fed, and

agrees to give Jacob his inheritance rights in exchange for a bowl of soup. Moreover, like his own father, Isaac prospers in Canaan and, despite occasional errors in judgment, enlarges his property, making alliances with area rulers and continuing to erect monuments to God. One day, when he is old and blind, Isaac instructs Esau to catch some game and prepare him a meal so that he may give the elder son his blessing. While Esau is gone, Rebekah helps Jacob deceive his father, preparing a separate meal and disguising the younger son with hairy arms and Esau's clothing. When Jacob presents Isaac with the meal, Isaac who smells Esau's clothing and feels the hairy body proceeds to bless Jacob, promising him the inheritance of God's covenant and a greater status than his brother. Esau returns to discover the deception, but it is too late. Isaac, though dismayed, says that he cannot revoke the stolen blessing. After that, Jacob flees in fear of Esau, traveling to the house of his uncle Laban in upper Mesopotamia. En route, Jacob dreams of a stairway leading up to heaven, where angels and god reside. In the dream, God promises the same covenant he previously made with Abraham and Isaac. Jacob arrives at Laban's house, where he agrees to work for his uncle in exchange for the hand of Laban's daughter, Rachel in marriage. Laban deceives Jacob into marrying Leah, Rachel's older sister, before marrying Rachel. The two wives compete for Jacob's favor and, along with their maids, give birth to eleven sons and a daughter. After twenty years, Jacob heeds God's urging and leaves to return to Canaan, taking his family, his flocks, and Laban's collection of idols or miniature representatives of Gods. Rachel, who has stolen the idol figurines from her father, hides them under her skirt when Laban traces down the fleeing clan in the desert. Unable to produce his belongings, Laban settles his differences with Jacob, who erects a pillar of stone as a "witness" to God of their peaceful resolution. Jacob continues on and, nearing home, fears an encounter with Esau. Jacob prepares gifts to appease his brother and, dividing his family and belonging into two camps, spends the night alone on the river Jabbok. Jacob meets God, who, disguised as a man, physically wrestles with Jacob until dawn. Jacob demands a blessing from his opponent, and the man blesses Jacob by renaming him "Israel", meaning, "he struggles with God". The next morning, Jacob meets Esau, who welcomes his brother with open arm.

Method

Mimetic Approach

Among the methods of classifying the many types of critical theories and practices, the most basic and most illuminating is a four-part scheme proposed by M.H. Abrams, which distinguished critical approaches.

"According to Abrams, in explaining and judging a work of literature, they refer the work primarily to the outer world, or to the reader, or to the author, or else look upon the work as an entity in itself" (Abrams in Morner, 1998; 121).

Moreover, this research wants to investigate the Old Testament themes as the imitation of idea in Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*. To do so, I will use mimetic approach. Abrams in *The Mirror and The Lamp* stated that,

The mimetic orientation-the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspect of the universe was probably the most primitive aesthetic theory, but mimesis is no simple concept by the time it makes its first recorded appearance in the dialogue of Plato. The art of painting, poetry, music, dancing and sculpture, Socrates says, are all imitation. "imitation" is a relation term, signifying two items and some correspondence between them (Abrams, 1976; 8).

Mimetic Approach is an approach to literary criticism that views an individual work in terms of the "truth" of its representation of reality of the world and of human life and character. Furthermore, Aristotle defended literature against Plato's charge by pointing out that literature imitates life by combining universal psychological truths with probable events rather than by being a literal account of actual events (Aristotle in Morner 1998: 122).

Discussion

The Old Testament Themes

At first glance, it may be difficult to recognize the influence of the biblical story. Indeed, *Beyond the Horizon* contains no references, or direct allusions, to the Old Testament in general, or to the Jacob and Esau narrative in particular. Furthermore, the plot of the play, particularly in its resolution, differs from the biblical narrative. Yet the influence of the Old Testament can be found in striking thematic correspondences. The story of Jacob and Esau is deeply embedded in the thematic texture of the play and becomes a metaphor, a paradigm for the strife of the Mayo brothers. Seven prominent biblical themes in the play are found in this research. They are

the two brothers, the sons and parents, the reversal of roles, the bowl of lentils; the exile; the wrestling with God, and the reconciliation. Below are the explanation of the themes one by one.

The Two Brothers

Both in *the Book of Genesis Ch. 25-35* and *Beyond the Horizon*, they have similar description about the two brothers. Jacob and Esau who are two brothers in Genesis are sharply contrasted in character and aspirations. Jacob who is the younger brother is delicate and spiritual. Meanwhile, Esau, by contrast, is strong and physical. Esau hunted the beasts of the field with dexterity and success, until he became a conqueror, ruling over his neighbors. Jacob was a plain man, one that liked the true delights of retirement, better than all pretended pleasures. He was a stranger and a pilgrim in his spirit and a shepherd all his days.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

(Gen., 25, 27)

Furthermore, Esau is a man of action and appetites. One day, when he comes hungry from the field, he sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils. In opposite, as a young man, Jacob is passive and timid. He obeys his mother when she orders him to steal the blessing from Isaac, which is reserved for Esau. He listens to her when she advises him to escape his brother's wrath and flee to Haran.

The two brothers in *Beyond the Horizon* bear a striking resemblance to the biblical brothers. Robert is a sensitive thinker and an avid reader. As it is described in the first scene.

ROBERT MAYO is discovered sitting on the fence. He is a tall, slender young man of twenty-three. There is a touch of the poet about him expressed in his high forehead and wide, dark eyes. His features are delicate and refined, leaning to weakness in the mouth and chin. He is dressed in grey corduroy trousers pushed into high-laced boots, and a blue flannel shirt with a bright colored tie. He is reading a book by the fading sunset light. He shuts this, keeping a finger in to mark the place, and turns his head toward the horizon, gazing out over the fields and hills. His lips move as if he were reciting something to himself.

(O'Neill, Act 1, Scene 1; 4)

Like Jacob, Robert is the dreamer and intellectual of the two, a lifetime of frailty preventing him from working as a father, and he dreams of seeing the world and living in places beyond the small confines of his family's farm. It is showed in the dialogue when Robert argues about his planning for voyage to Andrew that he has to go for his dream.

ROBERT—No, I oughtn't. You're trying to wish an eye-for-business on me I don't possess. (*Pointing to the horizon—dreamily.*) Supposing I was to tell you that it's just Beauty that's calling me, the beauty of the far off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East, which lures me in the books I've read, the need of the freedom of great wide spaces, the joy of wandering on and on—in quest of the secret which is hidden just over there, beyond the horizon? Suppose I told you that was the one and only reason for my going? (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 1, 13)

Robert's habit is reading books and he wants to see another life outside the farm. Moreover, Robert is in quest of revelation like Jacob who dreams of angels ascending and descending a ladder.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. (Gen 28, 12)

Meanwhile, the older brother, Andrew Mayo, is husky and sun-bronzed. Like Esau, he is a man of the field, and like Esau, who is described as "cunning", Andrew is intelligent in a shrewd way.

He is twenty-seven years old, an opposite type to ROBERT—husky, sun-bronzed, handsome in a large-featured, manly fashion—a son of the soil, intelligent in a shrewd way, but with nothing of the intellectual about him. (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 1; 4)

Like his biblical prototype, he is rather contemptuous of the world of the imagination and of the spirit. The sea, which attracts Robert does not fascinate Andrew, as he says to Robert;

ANDREW—Then you might as well stay right here, because we've got all you're looking for right on this farm. There's wide space enough, Lord knows; and you can have all the sea you want by walking a mile down to the beach; and there's plenty of horizon to look at, and beauty enough for anyone, except in the winter. (*He grins.*) As for the mystery and spell, and other things you mentioned, I haven't met 'em yet, but they're probably lying around somewheres. I'll have you understand this is a first class farm with all the fixings. (*He laughs.*) (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 1; 13)

Andrew derives more satisfaction from the earth than ever from any book. Like his father, Andrew is wedded to the soil and is thus naturally destined to inherit the farm. While, Robert's essence lies in wandering and in the pursuit of beauty and mystery.

The Sons and Parents

In the play, as in the biblical story, the mother dotes on the younger son, while the father loves the elder and chooses him as his heir. Isaac loves Esau. Esau is the father's darling, and Jacob is the mother's. Though godly parents must feel their affections most drawn over towards a godly child, yet they will not show partiality.

And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. (Gen., 25, 28)

It is same as James Mayo who favors Andrew because, like him, he is a true farmer. Like Esau, Andrew is the breadwinner. He brings home food from the field. James Mayo really loves Andrew, it is showed by his expression when he knows that Andrew wants to take Robert's position on ship.

MAYO—(*Restraining his anger with an effort.*) It sounds strange to hear you, Andy, that I always thought had good sense, talkin' crazy like that. And you don't believe yourself one bit of what you've been sayin'—not 'less you've suddenly gone out of your mind. (*Scornfully.*) Get a man to take your place! Where'd I get him, tell me, with the shortage of farm labor hereabouts? And if I could get one, what int'rest d'you suppose he'd take beyond doin' as little work as he could for the money I paid him? You ain't been workin' here for no hire, Andy, that you kin give me your notice to quit like you've done. The farm is your'n as well as mine. You've always worked on it with that understanding; and what you're sayin' you intend doin' is just skulkin' out o' your rightful responsibility (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 2; 39)

Andrew makes his father disappointed by joining with his uncle in voyage. In opposite, the biblical mother, Rebekah, loves and protects her younger son, Jacob. Kate Mayo, who has once been a schoolteacher loves Robert. She constantly worries about his health and is deeply upset by his plans to leave home.

Later she protects him from Mrs. Atkins' blatant and malicious accusations. Both Jacob and Robert are mother's sons. Both, indeed, are strongly influenced by women later in their lives. Jacob obeys his wives, Rachel and Leah. Robert sometimes gives in to Ruth's wishes too easily, particularly at the beginning of their relationship.

The Reversal of Roles

When Rebekah conceives, God says to her:

And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. (Gen 25, 23)

Furthermore, the promises of the Messiah, and of the land of Canaan, have come down to Isaac. Isaac being now about 135 years of age, and his sons about 75, and not duly considering the Divine word concerning his two sons, that the elder should serve the younger, resolved to put all the honor and power that were in the promise, upon Esau his eldest son.

Rebekah knows that the blessing is intended for Jacob, and expects he will have it. Nevertheless, she blames Isaac by putting a cheat on him; she blames Jacob by tempting him to wickedness.

The prophecy comes to pass. Jacob buys Esau's birthright with a bowl of lentils and secures the covenantal blessing from his father, Isaac:

"Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee" (Gen., 27, 29).

It is not only the elder destined to serve the younger, but Jacob is assigned a role, which is most alien to his nature. He is timid and submissive, a dreamer. In the blessing, he is called upon to be a leader, a man of action and authority. He habitually withdraws from action, but in the future, he will have to command and rule. Esau, the proud and independent brother, will bow down to Jacob.

Jacob, with some difficulty, gains his point, and gets the blessing. This blessing is in very general terms. No mention is made of the distinguishing mercies in the covenant with Abraham. This might be owing to Isaac having Esau in his mind, though it is Jacob who is before him. He cannot be ignorant how Esau has despised the best things. Moreover, his attachment to Esau, so as to disregard the mind of God, must have greatly weakened his own faith in these things.

In the play a similar reversal of roles and fates occurs, although the theme of usurpation is absent. Robert gives up his sea voyage for the love of Ruth.

ROBERT—(*Conquered by this appeal—an irrevocable decision in his voice.*) I won't go, Ruth. I promise you. There! Don't cry! (*He presses her to him, stroking her hair tenderly. After a pause, he speaks with happy hopefulness.*) Perhaps after all Andy was right—righter than he knew—when he said I could find all the things I was seeking for here, at home on the farm. The mystery and the wonder—our love should bring them home to us. I think love must have been the secret—the secret that called to me from over the world's rim—the secret beyond every horizon; and when I did not come, it came to me. (*He clasps RUTH to him fiercely.*) Oh, Ruth, you are right! Our love is sweeter than any distant dream. It is the meaning of all life, the whole world. The kingdom of heaven is within—us! (*He kisses her passionately and steps to the ground, lifting RUTH in his arms and carrying her to the road where he puts her down.*). (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 1; 21)

Robert changes his decision after knowing the truth that Ruth loves him. Hence, he cannot join with his uncle that is Mr. Scott on ship. Although Robert has no any experience in farming, he decides to become a farmer and show his father that he is as good as Mayo or Andy, as what he says to his family on the night of his departure.

ROBERT—(*In joyous high spirits.*) I want you all to understand one thing—I'm not going to be a loafer on your hands any longer. This means the beginning of a new life for me in every way. I'm sick and disgusted at myself for sitting around and seeing everyone else hard at work, while all I've been doing is keep the accounts—a couple of hours work a week! I'm going to settle right down and take a real interest in the farm, and do my share. I'll prove to you, Pa, that I'm as good a Mayo as you are—or Andy, when I want to be. (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 2; 34)

Andrew, who is also in love with Ruth, decides to join his uncle on the ship. Both brothers thus choose a vocation which runs against their natures. Robert inherits the farm while Andrew, the son of the soil, takes off to the sea. The farmer becomes a sailor; the sailor is turned farmer. Like the biblical brothers, Robert and Andrew find themselves in roles which contradict and thwart their identities.

The Bowl of Lentils

In his anger and pain, Andrew gives up his inheritance as Esau had done, for a bowl of lentils.

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright. (Gen., 25, 34)

It is as bad a bargain as his is who sells a birthright for a dish of pottage. Esau eats and drinks, pleased his palate, satisfied his appetite, and then carelessly rises up and goes his way, without any serious thought, or any regret, about the bad bargain he has made. Thus, Esau despised his birthright. By his neglect and contempt afterwards, and by justifying himself in what he has done, he puts the bargain past recall. People are ruined, not so much by doing what is amiss, as by doing it and not repenting of it.

MAYO—(*Restraining his anger with an effort.*) It sounds strange to hear you, Andy, that I always thought had good sense, talkin' crazy like that. And you don't believe yourself one bit of what you've been sayin'—not 'less you've suddenly gone out of your mind. (*Scornfully.*) Get a man to take your place! Where'd I get him, tell me, with the shortage of farm labor hereabouts? And if I could get one, what int'rest d'you suppose he'd take beyond doin' as little work as he could for the money I paid him? You ain't been workin' here for no hire, Andy, that you kin give me your notice to quit like you've done. The farm is your'n as well as mine. You've always worked on it with that understanding; and what you're sayin' you intend doin' is just skulkin' out o' your rightful responsibility. (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 2; 39)

In the years of his travels, Andrew's practical side, his shrewd eye for business, overrides his love for the land. At first, he is engaged in legitimate wheat trade. Later, however, he drifts to speculating. Andrew speculates in wheat, in that which he used to grow with his hands. He is turned from a creator to a parasite, as the dying Robert tells him:

ROBERT—(*After a pause.*) You—a farmer—to gamble in a wheat pit with scraps of paper. There's a spiritual significance in that picture, Andy. (*He smiles bitterly.*) I'm a failure, and Ruth's another—but we can both justly lay some of the blame for our stumbling on God. But you're the deepest-dyed failure of the three, Andy. You've spent eight years running away from yourself. Do you see what I mean? You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership. And now— (*He stops as if seeking vainly for words.*) My brain is muddled. But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray you've gotten from the truth. So you'll be punished. You'll have to suffer to win back— (*His voice*

grows weaker and he sighs wearily.) It's no use. I can't say it. (*He lies back and closes his eyes, breathing pantingly.*)

(O'Neill Act 3, Scene 1; 109)

This destructiveness is the betrayal of the spirit. It is not the gambling money, or the love of Ruth, forgotten in six months, which induces Andy to give up his birthright, but spiteful envy. He sells his soul for no gain.

The Exile

In the play, as in the Bible, the reversal of roles and heirs result in a long and bitter separation. This is a period of exile, a period of purgatorial experiences. When Esau understands that Jacob has the blessing, he cries with a great and exceeding bitter cry. Esau who deprives of his inheritance and betrayed by father and brother, leaves home and defies his father's values. He marries a second Canaanite woman, a deed which flies in the face of Isaac's decree and settles in the land of Seir.

And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. (Gen., 28, 1)

Andrew, similarly, leaves home and rejects the values he has been brought up on. As a punishment, James Mayo banishes his son from his house. It is because he gets disappointed in accepting Andrew's decision in taking Robert's position in joining the ship.

MAYO—(*Grabs ROBERT'S arm and pushes him aside—then stands for a moment gasping for breath before ANDREW. He points to the door with a shaking finger.*) Yes—go!—go!—You're no son o' mine—no son o' mine! You can go to hell if you want to! Don't let me find you here—in the mornin'—or—or—I'll *throw* you out! (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 2; 42)

The love between father and son is turned to anger, and in both stories the father dies before reconciliation can occur.

Jacob is an exile in Haran, away from his mother and his home. His uncle, Laban, tricks him into working fourteen years for his daughter, Rachel. Laban, who is meant to be Jacob's protector and benefactor, becomes his exploiter. Although the details of the plot in the two stories are different, Robert who is like Jacob, is deprived of the protective influence of his uncle. He is lonely and isolated on the farm. His confidence in his ability to become a Mayo is quickly shattered when he realizes how deeply he hates the work and how unsuited he is for farming. After his father's death, the farm deteriorates rapidly. The farm hands despise Robert and desert him one by one. His mother-in-law hounds him with accusations. And even his wife, for whose love he undertook this hardship, is turned into a harsh browbeater.

Both Jacob and Robert are alienated and derided. Yet both continue to struggle. Their struggle is heroic and awe-inspiring. It is a struggle against all odds, a struggle that, by its very nature, cannot end in an unequivocal victory, a struggle with invincible powers.

The Wrestling with God

On the night preceding his meeting with Esau, a night of loneliness and untold terrors, Jacob confronts a man whose identity is unknown. The man wrestles with him until the breaking of the day, maims him, but cannot subdue him. Jacob will not let the man go until he blesses him. The man gives Jacob a new name, Israel and Jacob names the place by Peniel.

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. **25** And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. **26** And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. **27** And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. **28** And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. **29** And Jacob asked him, and said, tell me, I pray thee, thy name. and he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. **30** And Jacob called the name of the place Pe-ni`el: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (Gen.,32, 24-30)

Jacob emerges limping, but triumphant. He survives the awesome confrontation and lives on to become a patriarch and a father of multitudes. The meaning of this strange and magnificent event is Jacob receives a new name, Israel: he is no longer a follower, but a "prince" who dares to confront God. He has undergone a startling transformation.

After years of inner strife, Jacob finds in himself strength to overcome his fears: his fear of confrontation, his fear of independence, and his overriding fear of Esau. Jacob could have run away. But he stood his ground,

resisted the force, and faced what he had to face--alone. He looked into his own darkness and battled with it. At the break of day, he felt that he had seen the face of God.

There is a stubborn determination in Jacob's wrestling and in his demand for a blessing. Jacob has already been blessed by his father. However, that blessing is stolen. He does not deserve it. It does not mean for him. He is not there. This time Jacob is determined to prove his worth. He pits his soul against the divine, demanding a new blessing as a sign that he has earned his birthright. This time it has to be him. And he is, indeed, worthy. He exhibits a boldness of spirit which equals the heroic confrontations of his ancestors. He comes to his own, richly deserving his new and honorable name, Israel.

Meanwhile, James Mayo is described as a person who does not believe with God. It is told by Robert how he believes on fairy because he has no any knowledge about religion.

But you know how contemptuous of all religion Pa's always been—even the mention of it in the house makes him angry. (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 1; 18)

Moreover, James Mayo does not want to talk about religion in his house that makes his family has no religion touch in their life.

ROBERT—He'd bullied Ma into being ashamed of believing in anything and he'd forbidden her to teach Andy or me. There wasn't much about our home but the life on the farm. I didn't like that, so I *had* to believe in fairies. (*With a smile.*) Perhaps I still do believe in them. (O'Neill Act 1, Scene 1; 18)

So is Andrew. The spiteful and self-righteous religion of Mrs. Atkins is satirized. Robert, after the death of his daughter Mary, openly denies God. He says to Ruth about his desperate feeling.

I could curse God from the bottom of my soul—if there was a God! (*He is racked by a violent fit of coughing and hurriedly puts his handkerchief to his lips.*) (O'Neill Act 3, Scene 1; 92)

He does not believe in God. It is because the miracle he hopes is only dream, which does not come true.

The Reconciliation

In the Bible and in the play, there is a moving reconciliation between the brothers. The expression of love is free and warm. In the Bible, the brothers' past bitterness seems to have vanished. Jacob has overcome his fear of Esau, and Esau has forgotten his anger.

And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. (Gen., 33, 4)

Meanwhile, Andrew comes home to his brother to support him in his sickness. He tells his feeling toward Robert to Ruth that he loves his brother more than everything in this world.

Why, I love Rob better'n anybody in the world and always did. There isn't a thing on God's green earth I wouldn't have done to keep trouble away from him. (O'Neill Act 3, Scene 1; 113)

The meeting between the biblical brothers is brief. Esau is remarkably generous, but Jacob is wary of him. He does not quite trust his brother; he is restrained and uncertain. He promises Esau to visit him in Seir, but he never does. The brothers remain distant, different, and separate.

In the play, Andrew's love for Robert is put to a severe test. Will Andrew obey Robert and marry Ruth? He dislikes her intensely. He talks to her with impatience and aversion as if he were ashamed of ever having loved her. If he marries her, he will have to wrestle with the same unbearable burden of hate that Robert had had to struggle with. Is he capable of doing it? Andrew's final words to Ruth give no answer to these questions:

The reconciliation is marked by rapid, painful discoveries. In the few hours he spends with Robert, Andrew learns more about himself than he had done in his entire lifetime. He does face the truth: "we've made such a mess of things."

The strange biblical prophecy, "The elder shall serve the younger," shapes the lives of Jacob and Esau and casts its long shadow on their relationship. Andy, like Esau but in a more desperate way, becomes his brother's server. He is doomed by his love for his brother, and by the irreversible twists of fate. If he obeys Robert, he will be trapped by the farm and the woman. If he does not obey him, he will be tormented by his moral debt to his dead brother. Like Esau, who is told by his father that;

And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. (Gen., 27, 40)

Andrew is condemned to a life of bondage and waste. Esau, however, creates a new life for himself in the land of Seir and is further more comforted by Isaac's distant promise of freedom from the rule of Jacob. Andrew cannot have his own independent future, because Robert's will deprives him of choices, even the choice of his own mode of expiation, and forces him to stay on the farm.

From the elaboration of the themes, I can sum up that the biblical story sheds light on the quality of love and distance, affinity and contrast between the brothers. It links their struggle to the archetypal rivalry and the archetypal search for identity. It adds richness and depth to the lives of the New England farmers, and it becomes a vehicle for the expression of the search for God. Yet it is in the outcome of this quest that the parallel ultimately splits apart, showing the fundamental difference between the biblical promise of life and continuity, and the tragic life in *Beyond the Horizon*.

In the biblical story, the existence of God is never doubted. The covenantal promise, which God had given Abraham, preserves the lives of the patriarchs and ensures the continuity of the family and the community. It transcends the twists and turns of events and overrides the threatening conflicts between father and son, brother and brother. Isaac survives Abraham's sacrificial sword, Jacob escapes the wrath of Esau, and Esau ultimately frees himself from his brother's yoke. The covenantal vision, transmitted from father to son and shared by the community, is reassuring and inspiring.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, by contrast, is grim and ambivalent. Throughout the play, he seeks God, but he constantly doubts Him and questions His presence. Robert dies with a comforting vision and seems to have found God. But he cannot pass on to his brother his mysterious and perhaps redeeming legacy. Neither Ruth, who is not beyond the "*troubling of any hope*," nor Andrew, can touch his secret which thus becomes a burden and a curse. Robert's God is hard and lonesome.

Upon further consideration, however, this conclusion appears to be hasty. The search for God is disguised, but it is the driving force behind Robert's actions. Throughout the play, he is engaged in a formidable struggle. His conflicts do not occur on the social level. He does not battle his wife, his brother, or his workers, and he even makes allowances for his mother-in-law. Robert's struggles occur on the spiritual plane. He seems to be locked in combat with a mysterious force. He demands an explanation for his suffering and his failures. He relentlessly pursues the "secret beyond the horizon." As he tells Ruth:

ROBERT—(*Excitedly.*) We'll make a new start, Ruth—just you and I. Life owes us some happiness after what we've been through. (*Vehemently.*) It must! Otherwise our suffering would be meaningless—and that is unthinkable. (O'Neill Act 3, Scene 1; 94)

In the Bible, the confrontation with God is concrete, physical, stunning. In the play, it is indirect, diffused, and symbolic. And yet Robert, like Jacob, is a wrestler. He believes that life has meaning and he insists on being vindicated, not by men, but by the unfathomable being beyond him.

Robert's wrestling arena is the farm. It is here that his mettle is ultimately tested. When he chooses to become a farmer, he finds out that he must carry an unbearable burden—he must live with hate. He hates the farm and Ruth hates him. He works hard on the farm, honoring his commitment to the land, and to Ruth. He faces up to the farm, and his mistakes, daily. What may not be immediately obvious is that Robert has choices that are he could sell the farm, he could lease it, and he could desert it. He does not do any of these things. If he did, he would have jeopardized the lives of the three women dependent on him. He works on the farm and brings it to ruin. And yet he prevails. He made a mistake in marrying Ruth, but he tries to save the relationship and improve its quality. As he says to Ruth:

ROBERT—(*Gets up and puts his hand on her shoulder.*) I know you do. But let's both of us try to do better. We can both improve. Say a word of encouragement once in a while when things go wrong, even if it is my fault. You know the odds I've been up against since Pa died. I'm not a farmer. I've never claimed to be one. But there's nothing else I can do under the circumstances, and I've got to pull things through somehow. With your help, I can do it. With you against me—(*He shrugs his shoulders. There is a pause. Then he bends down and kisses her hair—with an attempt at cheerfulness.*) So you promise that; and I'll promise to be here when the clock strikes—and anything else you tell me to. Is it a bargain? (O'Neill Act 2, Scene 1; 60)

From one angle, Robert dies pathetically. He leaves behind him a wrecked farm, debts, and a wife broken by suffering. Unlike Jacob, who survives the confrontation at Peniel and lives on to become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, Robert dies desolate and childless. And yet the "cold pitiless light" in the final scene is mellowed by the "bright color" of the rising sun. Dawn in this play signifies promise and revelation.

For although he lives in spiritual exile, in death Robert's struggles seem to be re-warded. He dies exultantly. At the hour of his death, he finds the "comfort" was associating with "the primitive religious instinct." It is as if he has managed at last to wrest the secret from the oblivion of death, as if he has finally grasped the mystery of existence. He attempts to leave behind him not despair, but hope:

ROBERT—Remember, Andy, Ruth has suffered double her share, and you haven't suffered at all. (*His voice faltering with weakness.*) Only through contact with suffering, Andy, will you—awaken. Listen. You must marry Ruth—afterwards. (O'Neill Act 3, Scene 1; 109)

For Andy, who has lost interest in the farm and in Ruth, this is an unbearably grim commitment. And yet Robert, who is unaware of his brother's limitations, is determined to correct the mistakes of the past, and once more reverse the roles. The farmer will go back to the soil, and the woman will marry the man she had always loved. Robert's legacy signifies his victory over his own jealousy and hate, a victory over him-self. He escapes from his room and climbs to the top of a roadside bank where he can see the sun rise. He frees himself from the forces that chained him and wildly asserts his independence:

He feels vindicated and, for once, worthy of respect. He has wrestled with the power beyond and prevailed. His final speech is ecstatic:

ROBERT—(*In a voice which is suddenly ringing with the happiness of hope.*) You mustn't feel sorry for me. It's ridiculous! Don't you see I'm happy at last—because I'm making a start to the far-off places—free—free!—freed from the farm—free to wander on and on—eternally! Even the hills are powerless to shut me in now. (*He raises himself on his elbow, his face radiant, and points to the horizon.*) Look! Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come—(*Exultantly.*) And this time I'm going—I'm free! It isn't the end. It's a free beginning—the start of my voyage! Don't you see? I've won to my trip—the right of release—beyond the horizon! Oh, you ought to be glad—glad—for my sake! (*He collapses weakly.*) Andy! (ANDREW bends down to him.) Remember RUTH— (O'Neill Act 3, Scene 2; 116)

Robert died with his freedom to see the life beyond the horizon.

Conclusion

Eugene O'Neill's play entitled *Beyond the Horizon* is chosen as the object of my analysis. After analyzing the play, I as the researcher can take conclusion that there are seven Old Testament Themes which appear in the play. These themes are analyzed based on the theory put forward in the preceding chapter.

Here the analysis is formed into a section that consists of the explanation of each seven themes. They are the two brothers, the sons and parents, the reversal of roles, the bowl of lentils; the exile; the wrestling with God, and the reconciliation. These themes are proved by comparing the Old Testament's text and *Beyond the Horizon's* dialogue. Furthermore, from the seven Old Testament themes, I find thematic relation between them that is the search for God.

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