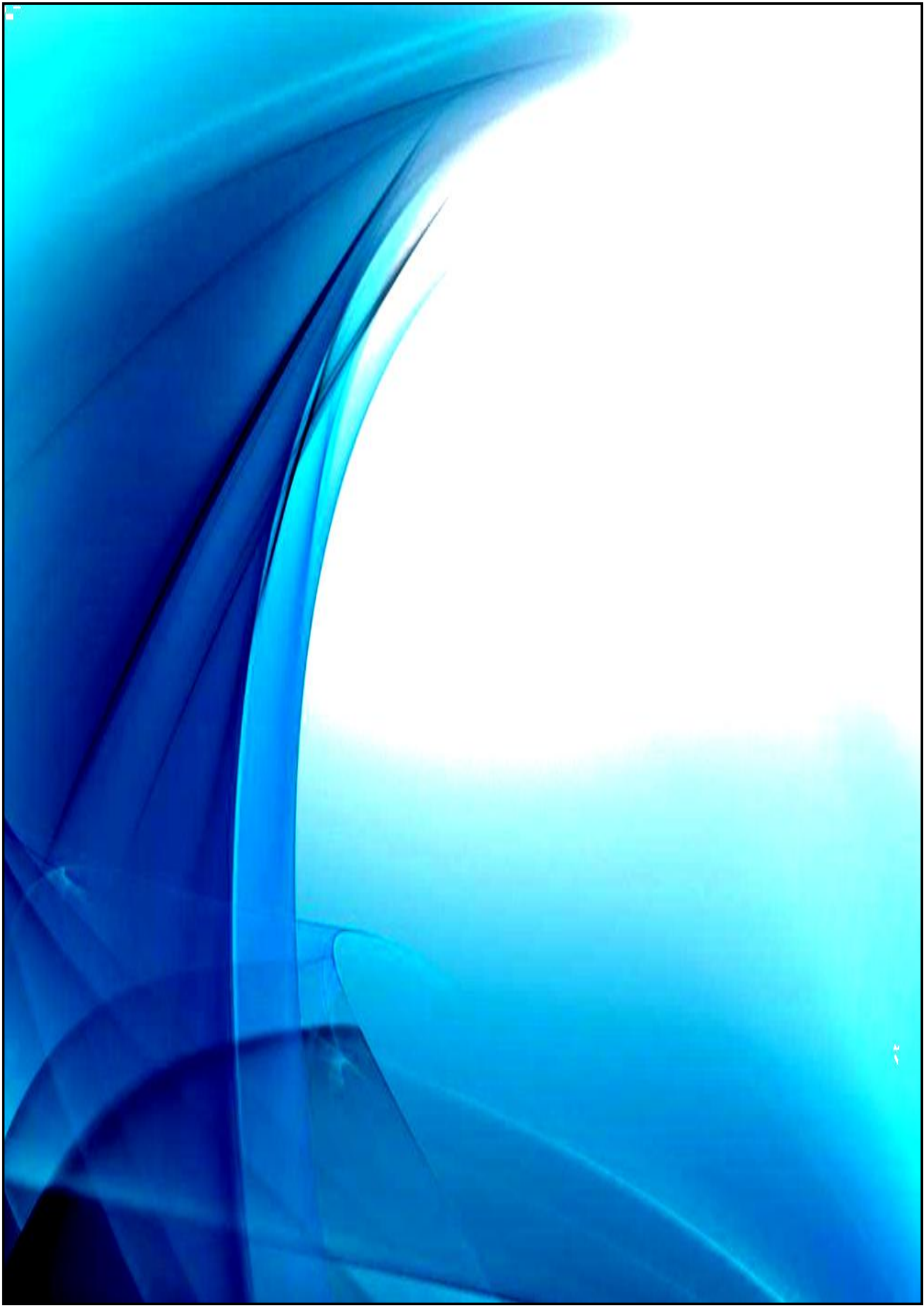


جامعة أحمد بن يحيى الونشريسي

-تيسمسيلت-

المعيار

مجلة نصف سنوية متعددة التخصصات

مصنفة " C "

في الآداب، الحقوق والعلوم السياسية، علوم وتقنيات النشاطات البدنية والرياضية، العلوم الاقتصادية، والعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية

المجلد السادس عشر العدد 01 جوان 2025

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مجلة نصف سنوية متعددة التخصصات

مصنفة " C "

جامعة أحمد بن يحيى الونشريسي، تيسمسيلت – الجزائر–

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-المعيار مجلة علمية مصنفة تنشر البحوث الأكاديمية والدراسات الفكرية والعلمية والأدبية التي لم يسبق نشرها من قبل.

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- تتم كتابة البحوث كاملة أو الفقرات والمصطلحات والكلمات باللغة الأجنبية داخل البحوث المكتوبة باللغة الفرنسية بخط (**Times new roman**) حجم (**12**)، وفي الهامش بالخط نفسه حجم(**10**).

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- لا يقل حجم البحث عن **08** صفحات ولا تتجاوز **15** صفحة.

- المواد المنشورة تعبر عن آراء أصحابها، والمجلة غير مسئولة عن آراء وأحكام الكتاب. كما أن ترتيب البحوث يخضع لاعتبارات تقنية وفنية.

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أ. د. عيساني امحمد.

المعيار

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رئيس التحرير:
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كلمة العدد

السلام عليكم،

بعد واجب التّحيّة تطل عليكم **مجلة المعيار** –كما عودتكم – بمجلد جديد وعدد متجدد هو **المجلد السادس عشر، العدد الأول**، حاملة في طيّاتها مجموعة ثرية ومتنوعة من المقالات العلميّة والبحوث الأكاديمية، التي تتناول طيفا واسعا من المواضيع والقضايا التي تهم القارئ المتطلّع للمعرفة والفهم العميق.

وكالمتوقع، يتضمن هذا العدد نخبة من المقالات التي كتبت بأقلام نَيِّرَةٍ، وبأفكار ناضجة، تجمع بين العمق العلمي والطّرح الجذّاب، وذلك في مجالات شتّى، تشمل: **الأدب، والقانون، والسّياسة، والاقتصاد، والاجتماع، وغيرها** وبلسان مختلف اللّغات منها الانجليزيّة، الفرنسية والألمانيّة، ومن الميادين التي تتجدّد أهميتها مع متغيرات الواقع وتحديات العصر.

ومَا يضفي على هذا العدد طابعا خاصّا، هو ما يتضمنه من أعمال كتبت من داخل الوطن ومن خارجه، في دليل واضح على عمق الامتداد العلميّ للمجلة، وحرصها على جمع الآراء والأصوات العلميّة من كافة الأصقاع، فكلّ مقال يضيف بعدا ورؤية تساهم في بناء معرفة شاملة ورؤية متوازنة نتطلّع من خلالها إلى نيل رضى القارئ والفوز بإعجابه.

المدير المسؤول عن النشر

أ.د. عيساني امحمد

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Unraveling Reciprocal Intricacies in *The Iceman Cometh* and "Hughie": Intertextual Misreadings

Mr. Mohamed Amine Dekkiche[1*], Prof. Assia Kaced[2]

[1]University of Algiers 2 Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, Algeria.
mohamedamine.dekkiche@univ-alger2.dz

2University of Algiers 2 Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, Algeria.
assia.kaced@univ-alger2.dz

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Abstract

This paper dissects the textual relationship between Eugene O'Neill's "Hughie" (1941) and *The Iceman Cometh* (1939). On the surface, the plays seem to have similar constructions like sharing the same symbolic and decrepit setting in addition to using dialogue instead of actions to expose the inner self-deception. Nevertheless, the objective of the study is to seek how the interpretation of each work broadens once we read it in relation to the other. This happens after revealing some hidden links between them and reflecting on the very nature of that relationship. In pursuit of such goal, this research uses Kristeva's theory of intertextuality and Bloom's approach of misreading to delve into the transposed signs in the texts that go beyond the aforementioned affinities. Actually, although O'Neill wrote "Hughie" after *The Iceman Cometh*, the plays enhance each other's understanding by unraveling the complexities behind the motives of their characters.

***Keywords*:** "Hughie"; Intertextuality; Misreading; *The Iceman Cometh*

*Corresponding Author

1. Introduction

No literary work is an island that is remotely detached from the continuously growing community of literary and even non-literary texts. After all, literature itself is not only an art of expression but also an act of communication. It is intricately interwoven with our inner and outer worlds, especially when we contemplate the depths of our thoughts and emotions in order to share them and interact with others. Theoretically speaking, if someone is born and isolated from the world of humans, his or her need to communicate will be lowered to the ground as both the animate and inanimate objects around would not respond. In a similar way, the art of writing may not happen and will surely lose much of its value if it does not correlate with other artistic forms.

Moreover, the need for communication affirms one's existence and worth in this world; nevertheless, it may lose its merit if it does not reach the true depths of understanding. For this purpose, understanding the essence of other people's expressions cannot be entirely based on their sheer intentions; it should be taken in regard with the general context of communication. Likewise, writers should be aware that what they try to converse is not going to be entirely cloaked in what they finitely intend. Actually, meaning can slip from the grasp of their authority since it is related to a specific context of literary production that writers themselves cannot control. Thus, the underlying ideas and essence of the literary work in this research paper is going to be conceived in accordance with a larger body of external words and texts that will provide it with more possibilities of understanding. In other words, meaning is not confined to a certain literary work per se, but it exists in connection to other texts.

To this end, Eugene O'Neill's "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* are no exception to these textual phenomena, and once these plays are viewed from the lenses of each other, new interpretations emerge unexpectedly and transcend what could be otherwise read if they were not brought together. Indeed, the possibilities for meaning in any artistic work are not found alone within the boundaries of its production, but they go beyond to encompass its relational and referential aspect to other texts. For that reason, in order to attempt more understanding of any literary text, it is important to fathom the processes behind writing; accordingly, approaching literary interpretation from the theoretical lenses of intertextuality and misreading provides more insights about the relation between texts and enlarges the scope of understanding both plays.

2. Literary Position of the Plays

Before daring the intertextual misreading of O'Neill's plays in relation to each other, it is interesting to situate them in the literary world first. Actually, "Hughie" is the last one-act play to be finished by Eugene O'Neill in 1941, but it was first produced seventeen years later, in 1958. This short work, as O'Neill wrote in a letter to George Jean Nathan, a critic and magazine editor, was supposed to be the finale of a series that contains seven or eight one-act plays entitled "By Way Of Obit" **(O'Neill, 1988, p. 531)**. Despite its surprising length, bearing in mind that some of the American playwright's plays like *The Iceman Cometh* needed nearly four hours of performance, Bogard (1972) considered the fifty-minutes play "an epitome of O'Neill's mature theatrical style and statement" (p. 419). Meanwhile, Virginia Floyd (1985) judged it as "the finest American one-act play**" (as cited in Dowling, 2009, p. 214).** This is the least that can be said about such gem that tried to dramatize human despair and loneliness between two dissimilar characters: Erie Smith and Charlie Hughes. Certainly, O'Neill (1988) wanted to experiment with a new technique where

> the main character talks about a person who has died to a person who does little but listen. Via this monologue you get a complete picture of the person who has died – his or her whole life story – but just as complete a picture of the life and character of the narrator. And you also get, by another means – a use of stage directions, mostly – an insight into the whole life of the person who does little but listen**. (p. 531)**

Actually, although the play is entitled "Hughie", this character is dead, and that made Erie Smith so lonely and sad. In his incessant long talk in order to garner more support from the almost silent night clerk, he reveals the reality about himself at that night. However, although the new night clerk barely speaks, his internal monologues, which are in a way symbolic responses to Erie's long speeches, slowly unpeel his reality as well. In fact, the technique in this play makes it more suitable to "be read than staged" **(O'Neill, 1988, p. 531)**, yet this did not diminish the value of its theatrical production since its revival was successful in America and aboard **(Dowling, 2009, p. 211).**

Despite the undeniable caliber of this gem, rarely had it been to critics to bring this one-act play in par with a quintessential work like *The Iceman Cometh*. Categorizing it as a masterpiece is the least that can be said about it. This play was completed in 1939, but it was not originally produced until 1946 because O'Neill foretold in a letter to Dudley Nichols in 1942 that the play might be misunderstood:

> No, *The Iceman Cometh* would be wrong now. A New York audience could neither see nor hear its meaning. The pity and tragedy of defensive pipe dreams would be deemed downright unpatriotic, and uninspired by the Atlantic Charter, even if the audience did catch that meaning. But after the war is over, I am afraid from present indications that American audiences will understand a lot of *The Iceman Cometh* only too well. **(p. 537)**

Surely the play tests the psychological despair of the characters in Harry Hope's saloon to the extremes as they find themselves in the burg of the life lies and pipe dreams that they have been building for a long time. However, the walls started to crumble after the coming of Theodore Hickman (Hickey), who himself is just another ironic victim of vital lies. The play is surely tense as it exposes not only the self-deception of it characters but also the delusions of humanity in as well. Probably this is why, in the view of O'Neill and in the reality of its relatively moderate success, the audience of New York were not ready for such bold psychological squeezing. Astonishingly, its revival in 1956 testified its real triumph **(Bogard, 1972, p. xvi)** and positively reflected the high quality of the late O'Neill as a dramatist. After all, O'Neill (1988) expressed his strong admiration to the play whether it was going to be received well or not by the audience, and he declared his love and pride in writing this "opus" in letters to family and friends like George J. Nathan, Lawrence Langner, and Norman H. Pearson. For example, he wrote to Pearson: "I consider this play one of the best I have ever written. In many respects, it is the most satisfying work of all, up to that date" **(O'Neill, 1988, p. 530).**

3. Theories Applied

In order to understand the meaning that springs out of the interaction between "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh*, it is important to approach the upcoming analysis methodically. This should be done from organized theoretical perspectives, namely intertextuality and misreading. To begin with, the term intertextuality was first coined by Julia Kristeva, but in essence its spirit can be traced in Roland Barthes, her teacher, and Mikhail Bakhtin. In his elaboration on the notion of Dialogism, Bakhtin (1935) has stressed on the inevitable connection between texts and claimed that "every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" **(p.280)**. Similarly, Barthes (1968) has advocated the decentralization of the writer as the only source of authority, in other words meaning, in his seminal obituary on "The Death of the Author" where he states that a text is "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none' of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" **(p. 146).** Nevertheless, Kristeva

(1966) in a way has combined both views and goes further to announce that "each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read … any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" **(p. 66).** Said another way, meaning in the literary text is not strictly limited to the specific frontiers of that literary piece, but it is highly dynamic as it transcends the dialogic aspects and the intentions of the writer in that text. Furthermore, the array of quotations she talked about earlier is not retained in a solid form, but it is intertwined with the text and proves to be more intangible and symbolic. That is to say, "intertextuality denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another**" (Kristeva, 1974, p. 111).** Accordingly, the scope of interpretation and reading, especially once the vertical axis of intertextuality is considered, can surely be enlarged as the meaning is present not only within a text but also at the level of the relationship to other texts.

Equally important in terms of theoretical tools, while intertextuality is interested in the relationship between the texts, Bloom seeks to explain the nature of that relationship. As a result, he introduces the concept of misreading. In this respect, the terms "misreading" is going to be considered from two perspectives. On the one hand, this study claims that misreading is the other face of reading. In other words, this "non-Bloomian" approach to misreading suggests that since the literary text is open to interpretation, every reading can be valid, but it can be both right and wrong at the same time. After all, the act of mis/reading is a proof to the multifaceted layers of meaning inside the text, for they bypass the will and vision of the producer of the artistic work. On the other hand, a Bloomian approach to misreading, according to *A Map of Misreading*, means that writers are inhibited by anxiety after encountering or attempting to write a literary text. It makes writers, who are themselves readers, seek to assert their position in the competitive world of literature by knowingly or unknowingly struggling with past, present, and even upcoming texts.

This article will not incorporate all the revisionary ratios because of the nature of the relationship found in the chosen works of O'Neill. It is going to mis/read the plays mainly under the light of clinamen and tessera while drawing attention to askesis and apophrades where necessary. Actually, Bloom pairs clinamen to tessera. according to Bloom (1973), clinamen is a "corrective movement … [It] implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem moves**" (p. 14).** In other words, when using clinamen as a mode of misreading, new texts flow in the same course of previous texts in terms of ideas or structures, but there comes a moment when collision happens and leads the new text to change direction, thus resulting something new. Meanwhile, tessera as a related mode of misreading is concerned with the antithetical completion: "poet antithetically 'completes' his precursor, by so

reading the parent-poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense, as though the precursor had failed to go far enough" **(Bloom, 1973, p. 14)**. To put it differently, the new text tries to reach where the previous one could not go any further, hence seeking new meanings and enlarging the scope of understanding of the previous text.

Harold Bloom has also associated askesis to apophrades as two complementary and interactive modes of misreading. In fact, askesis as a mode of misreading is "a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude" **(Bloom, 1973, p. 15).** As if the writers restrain themselves in their struggle with the anterior texts. In relation to askesis, Bloom (1973) has categorized apophrades as another mode of misreading that stands for "the return of the dead" **(p. 15)**. In other words, apohrades is associated with the writer's final phases of life where misreading goes beyond temporality since not only the new text is approached from the eyes of the old text but also the old text interacts with the new one **(Bloom, 1973, p. 16).**

4. Intertextual Misreadings

What is remarkable about these plays is how they are entangled with each other, though each keeps its different identity. Each dramatizes human loneliness, despair, and pain using different theatrical devices. For example, the amalgam of seventeen pipe dreamers who keep deceiving themselves in order to survive the harshness of the world and their failure by relying on drunkenness and fake support of each other is contrasted to only two characters who seem to be talking in parallel lines, most of the play, while drowning in their own depression. Bogard (1972) said that "*Hughie* was left to reiterate with a difference the themes of *The Iceman Cometh*" **(p. 419).** Nevertheless, using the word "reiterate" is not entirely accurate because that one-act play did more than repeating what O'Neill presented in one of his longest plays. Inevitably, since this is a study of misreading and intertextuality, not of influence or source hunting, the claim here is that due to the interaction of these two texts, meaning and interpretation in both plays broadened in regard to each other. The transposition of signs made "Hughie" (henceforth *Hg* whenever cited) undertakes a corrective movement (clinamen) that resulted in the antithetical completion (tessera). Consequently, because of the very presence of these two related modes of misreading, it falls in a state of solitude (askesis) as it reveals that meaning goes beyond what it obviously state, and this leads to the return of the dead (apophrades) whereby *The Iceman Cometh* (henceforth *IC* whenever cited) itself is going to be read in a new way.

4.1 Clinamen and Tessera in *The Iceman Cometh* and "Hughie"

As a first step of analysis in this research, it should be remembered that the gist of intertextuality is the transformation, absorption, and transposition of one sign system into another; accordingly, in order to dissect those assimilated utterances, revealing the intertextual nodes of contact between "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* is crucially important. To start with, O'Neill has once again made the theatrical stage the best test ground to uncover the inner struggle and tortured souls of his characters. In both plays, the setting seems to be similar to a very high extent. Both hotels remind us of the other: The one in "Hughie" is situated "on a West Side street in midtown New York" **(Hg, p. 262)** while the one in *The Iceman Cometh* is located "on the downtown West Side of New York" **(IC, p. 5).** Choosing New York in both plays is not accidental because the cosmopolitan city is a miniature to the world and gathers people from different backgrounds and countries. Bearing in mind that O'Neill had been travelling from one city to another in the U.S., the city ceases to be a mere gathering of people; it symbolizes a site where humanity in concentrated in a small area. Furthermore, the bad shape of both hotels is a reflection not only to their physical appearance but also to the quality of people inside. The hotel in "Hughie" is "anything a paying guest wants it to be, a third class dump," **(Hg, p. 262)** while in *The Iceman Cometh* it is "a cheap gin mill of the five-cent whiskey, last-resort variety" **(IC, p. 5).** On the one hand, such degradation is the materialized reflection of agonized human being whom O'Neill would give us a glimpse to what is happening inside them. On the other hand, the dreadful conditions in both buildings are themselves symbols to the broken hearts in the middle of a fancy city like New York, which is itself a reflection to humanity in general.

Another matching aspect in both works is how dramatization itself took place. The American playwright used a methodic word exchange rather than actions in gradually revealing the inner struggles of the characters. In "Hughie", Erie Smith spent all his time in the lobby talking to the night clerk and rarely moving while the night clerk barely stirs a muscle in his chair while listening and occasionally replying to his interlocutor. Meanwhile, the characters in *The Iceman Cometh* spent most of their time sitting in chairs and speaking to each other. Indeed, due to the length of the play, there was a movement in and out as characters appeared and disappeared on the stage, and almost brawled on certain occasions, but the main device that led to the escalation of the events happened at the level of dialogue. Due to this extensive word exchange, characters in both plays revealed what they probably themselves did not know about their psychological struggles. It is impossible not to notice their loneliness and despair which are hidden behind self-established walls of vital lies.

As a matter of fact, while the setting and theatrical devices used in the two plays bring them even closer, the subtlety of the titles is a prime indication of the absorptive and transformative aspect of intertextuality. Both titles are factually about characters that are yet to come and change the course of the prior events. Obviously, *The Iceman Cometh* is about the waiting of an absent character called Theodore Hickman (Hickey). All the characters of the play were looking forward to meet him at Harry Hope's birthday where he used to bring with him joy and throw free drinks to his companions. His arrival used to be their salvation during those times of inertia; thus, he was important to provide solace for the pitiful denizens of that place. Nonetheless, meeting Hickey this time brought up unprecedented consequences, yet whatever happened after he "*cometh*" to his companions, the events started to take different directions. In a similar way, "Hughie" is all about the search of the absent character called Hughie. He is indeed irreversibly gone because of his death, but later on the course of the action is going to change once he "*cometh*" not as flesh and bones but as an "incarnated" figure in the name of Charlie Hughes. Accordingly, in spite of the absence of Hickey and Hughie at the beginning of the play, and although Hickey brought calamity instead of the miracle of hope, the titles of both plays imply very important characters who should be seen as the demarcation line between despair and happiness in these two plays.

As a result, in order to proceed with this intertextual misreading of the two plays in relation to each other, what should be stated here is that "Hughie" followed the same course of *The Iceman Cometh* to a certain degree, in terms of fallen setting, piercing dialogues, and subtle titles; however, as the corrective movement of clinamen indicates, O'Neill felt the need *not* to reiterate his previous text and its themes as they are, which would otherwise result in presenting another version of *The Iceman Cometh*, but to change their direction towards the antithetical completion (tessera). In other words, the similar elements in those works should not be regarded in the denotative sense as a material influence of a text on another. They should be understood in terms of a transposition of a sign system into another. For instance, despite being demarcation lines, the "incarnation" of Hughie in Charlie Hughes brought a change towards hope; on the contrary, the coming of Hickey led to a down fall in the abyss of despair, because the former decided to start a new page of lies while the latter ironically wanted to close that book of lies and preach the truth.

Furthermore, in this antithetical misreading, some remarkable departures of "Hughie" from the previous text of *The Iceman Cometh* can be noticed. Putting the obvious difference in length of the works and number of characters aside, although the focus on words rather than actions in both plays is the main theatrical device of unpeeling the inner thoughts and truth of characters, the stage directions and dialogues are anything but

identical. In a way, *The Iceman Cometh* is full of incessant din as characters were loudly announcing their pipe dreams and their implausible plans for tomorrow. Every single piece of thought and emotion is blurted out on the stage whether it was to express sadness, happiness, or disbelief. Meanwhile, such maximalism in the play made it possible for music to be played, cups to be smashed, fights to be sparked, and screams to be heard. In other words, the play did not have anything to hide from the audience, making the world outside the walls of that haven meaningless. This play is surely vibrant in sounds inside because it is meant to be performed, unlike "Hughie" which, as O'Neill (1988) wrote earlier, fits "be read than staged" **(p. 531)**. Accordingly, silence dominated the play except when Erie Smith is talking or occasionally making noises like "*clacking his room key like a castanet*" **(Hg, p. 274).** Such silence inside is indeed a direct result of the minimalism used in the play that was reinforced with the lack of response from the night clerk.

More importantly, antithetical completion can be noticed in the nature of dialogues, which are presented in two dissimilar manners. While the characters in *The Iceman Cometh* genuinely listened and reacted to each other throughout the whole play, Erie Smith and night clerk appear not to be communicating at all until the final moments of the play. Bogard (1972) has found dialogue here "in essence two parallel almost uninterrupted monologues" **(p. 419).** Smith is absorbed in excessive talking about anything but hardly thinks aloud; Hughes is plunged in extensive thinking about the outside world but rarely talks. For the majority of the play, they are shown to be talking but not communicating with one another. Probably this is why O'Neill constantly refers to Charlie Hughes only as "a night clerk" and did not even mention his name in the characters' list **(Hg, p. 261),** something unusual for a playwright who always names his characters and defines them wherever necessary in the character lists before the beginning of any play. Consequently, using dialogue in two different senses makes loneliness better understood in "Hughie" and tragedy better conceived in *The Iceman Cometh*. In fact, the two characters in the former play are lonely despite their close proximity in space as none is communicating or paying attention to the other. Meanwhile, the residents of Harry Hope's saloon embody the human tragedy of loss and despair, so they *communicate* their pipe dreams of yesterday and tomorrow because "no here has to worry about where they're going next … there is no farther they can go." **(IC, p. 25)**

Undeniably, this research finds the way whereby characters in "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* unconsciously beseech solace and support as the quintessence of antithetical misreading in both works. Kurt Eisen (1994) argued that the two characters in the one-act play "respond to one another's "performing self" (outer) and "perceiving self" (inner) just as Theodore "Hickey" Hickman and Larry Slade do in *Iceman*" **(as cited in**

Dowling, 2009, p. 214). Such interpretation is indeed valid because Smith and Charlie from the one side and Hickey and Larry form the other side are opposite to each other in terms of personality and their roles in the plays. Nevertheless, the latter pair does not seem to be in utter need for each other, so the claim here is different from that of Eisen's. The situation of Erie Smith and Charlie Hughes is close to that of Don Parritt and Larry Slade. In fact, in terms of physical appearance and personality, the night clerk is not a copycat of neither Larry nor any other character in *The Iceman Cometh*; nevertheless, he resembles Larry Slade to some extent. Although both characters have distinct physical features, except for being tall with large noses, Larry's "expression of tired tolerance" **(IC, p.8)** and Charlie's weary smile of "The-Patron-Is-Always-Right" **(Hg, p. 263)** is a sign of something similar binding them. They surely have listened to several characters in the past and have automatically assumed this attitude out of habit. Still, both feigned outlooks, though assuring and assertive, are fake. They are simultaneously close to and far from the surrounding characters: close in the sense of a probable need for companionship and far in the sense of not wanting to meddle with anyone but their inner worlds. In this respect, Larry better clarifies Charlie's character traits. They both do not care any longer but keep those lying looks because people around need to believe in something: for an agoraphobic to be able to leave the place, for a corrupt policeman to get his job back, and even for a black gambler to be white. In other words, the image of support is in reality only a reflection of indifference. As a result, loneliness and emptiness is felt in the joints of both plays, but it is stressed more in "Hughie", especially when the characters seem not to communicate most of the time.

Meanwhile, Smith and Parritt fall in the same circle of loneliness and despair. These miserable characters cannot literally stand the world without moral backup. According to what they revealed about themselves throughout the course of the plays, Erie Smith is the transposed image of Don Parritt in the sense they needed an outsider to affirm their existence and support their pipe dreams. Smith does not actually announce it to the night clerk, but Parritt better expresses it when he impulsively tells Larry: "Christ, Larry, I was glad to find you. I kept saying to myself, 'If I can only find Larry. He's the one guy in the world who can understand—' … all I've been through" **(IC, p. 26).** Despite this direct plea, Parritt does not exactly find what he is looking for, but ironically later on by the end of the play Smith gets what he heartily desired. Moreover, although they were treated indifferently by Charlie and Larry in their first encounter, as Charlie responded "with a compliant, uninterested smile" **(Hg, p. 265)** and Larry "without cordiality" **(IC, p. 22),** they could not help but to try hard to amass more support from them.Their need to converse, despite the initial indirect rejection from their interlocutor, stems out from the inner

emptiness that haunts them. Nevertheless, they persisted in their quest to found external support even though Smith repeated to himself: "Christ, it's lonely. I wish Hughie was here" **(Hg, p. 283),** and Parritt announced to Larry: "It's been lonely as hell**" (IC, p. 26).**

The most remarkable misreading concerning Erie Smith and Don Parritt is the fear of ascension, whether by walking the stairs or taking an elevator. This is an important transformation and absorption of the sign system in *The Iceman Cometh* by "Hughie". To explain it more, Smith "*makes a move in the direction of the elevator, of right front – gloomily… But [he] stops, glancing around the deserted lobby with forlorn distaste, jiggling the room key in his hand*" **(Hg, p. 272).** He hesitates and expresses his gloominess only because he going to sleep! No, sleeping is undeniably another form of death, and it is a clear reminder of Parritt who "puts on an act of dramatic bravado – forcing a grin … walks to the door with a careless swagger and disappears in the hall" **(IC, 210)** in order to commit suicide by going to his room and throwing himself from the window at end of *The Iceman Cometh*. This happens during a moment of extreme despair and harsh realization. Such scenario almost happened again at the end of "Hughie" when Smith descended to the bottom of despair and gloomily went on:

> But even that ain't my big worry, Charlie. My big worry is the run of bad luck I've had since Hughie got took to the hospital. Not a win. That ain't natural … I got a lousy hunch when I lost Hughie I lost my luck-I mean, I've lost the old confidence. He used to give me confidence.
> *He turns away from the desk.*
> No use gabbin' here all night. You can't do me no good.
> *He starts toward the elevator.* **(Hg, p. 290)**

Smith likens the late Hughie to hope in life and the vital supporter of his pipe dreams; thus, the absence of such a character is going to leave him all alone in face of the harsh reality of the self.

Oddly enough, in a dissimilar fashion to the continuous apathy of Larry that led Parritt to kill himself, Charlie Hughes's sudden reaction provides an antithetical misreading to both plays. Once Smith moves towards the elevator, the night clerk miraculously calls him

> *Pleadingly*.
> Just a minute, Erie, if you don't mind.
> *With awe.*

> So you're an old friend of Arnold Rothstein! Would you mind telling me if it's really true when Arnold Rothstein plays poker, one white chip is-a hundred dollars?
> ERIE
> *Dully exasperated.*
> Say, for Christ's sake, what's it to you-?
> *He stops abruptly, staring probingly at the CLERK. There is a pause. Suddenly his face lights up with a saving revelation. He grins warmly and saunters confidently back to the desk.* **(p. 290)**

The epiphany, though subtle, saves the life of Erie once this dialogue is linked to the deja-vu scenario in *The Iceman Cometh*. This moment marks the climax of the one-act play and pays tribute to the similar situation where Eugene O'Neill offers an alternative version to the end of Parritt. As if he wants to say that even the smallest reflection of solace, even if feigned, may save a person's life.

This leads to the assertion that "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* present a complementary view of surviving despite psychological decline. Such liveliness within the crumbled world of the plays is made possible with the use of vital lies and pipe dreams. It is certainly not specific to the aforementioned characters; it is applicable to all the characters of the plays without exception. Even Larry and the night clerk who pretend not to be affected and try to "pity" the ones drowned in that quagmire are victims of special pipe dreams of denial and need solace and support. For instance, although Larry assumed the stance of the "foolospher" who cares about nothing anymore, he admits his pipe dream by the end of the play:

> Be God, there's no hope! I'll never be a success in the grandstand—or anywhere else! Life is too much for me! I'll be a weak fool looking with pity at the two sides of everything till the day I die!
> *With an intense bitter sincerity.*
> May that day come soon!
> *He pauses startledly, surprised at himself—then with a sardonic grin.*
> Be God, I'm the only real convert to death Hickey made here. From the bottom of my coward's heart I mean that now! **(IC, p. 218)**

Actually, the inner process covering his pipe dream is not revealed to the audience because the play is meant for performance; however, although Charlie Hughes did not confess his pipe dream directly, O'Neill offers wonderful insights on how this process is undertaken

inside. In fact, the night clerk is anything but himself. Whenever talked to, his body replies automatically, but his mind is roams the night and noises outside embracing everything better other than his. He would love to collect garbage cans **(Hg, p.271),** work in El trains **(p. 274)**, or join a squad of firemen **(p. 282).** In other words, his mind followed the course of anything that might make it slip this job that he surely does not like. In fact, the night clerk realized somehow that escaping reality by imagining outside the borders of the hotel has its limits; thus, by unexpectedly showing support and initiating communication with Erie, he does not only save the latter from committing suicide, as argued earlier, but also himself because he needs to live a new pipe dream without sinking deep in his despair. On the other side, Larry broke the chain of solace and support which led to two drastic events: the death of Parritt and the admittance of his self-deception. As a result, O'Neill presents two complementary and antithetical misreadings of Larry and Charlie. The first one is depicting the former from the outside while the latter form the inside; the second one is speculating the consequences of maintaining or breaking the support of someone else's pipe dream.

In general, both works dramatize the importance and consequences of endorsing or neglecting how characters desperately cling to the pipe dreams of the past, present, and future. O'Neill wanted to test the previous idea further by observing the outcomes of breaking the circle of support/solace, even if it is for a short period of time. For example, the death of Hughie caused Erie to encounter the harshness of the world and the darkness of the soul all alone after he had enjoyed the haven of pipe dreams for long with the support of his late companion. Paradoxically, the residents of Harry Hope's saloon suddenly found themselves confronting their past nightmares and present inertia because Hickey, the then harbinger of solace, has started a new movement of facing the truth of their fallen self. Consequently, everyone discovered in one way or another that, just like the miserable hotels which shelter them, they "were forced to deteriorate in order to survive" **(Hg, p. 262).** They all succumbed to vital lies and pipe dreams, knowing that it is a lesser sacrifice so as to forget the scandals of the past, survive the harshness of the present, and hope for a better uncertain future. Accordingly, both plays end in a renewed hope for the characters who evade the encounter with reality by all means, as if it is an expression of solace and support from O'Neill himself; however, they end in a gloomy way for the ones who honestly acknowledge the bitter truth: Parritt and Larry.

In this respect, the way the elusive connection between "pipe dreams" and "truth" is transposed in "Hughie" calls for admiration and takes the reader to the other dimension of *The Iceman Cometh*. Initially, Erie Smith announces the sad reality of the pipe dream to the night clerk when he said "if every guy along Broadway who kids himself was to drop dead there wouldn't be nobody left. Ain't it the truth, Charlie?" **(Hg, p. 285).** This indeed

recalls the events of Harry Hope's saloon when Larry noticed that Hickey "brought the touch of death" **(IC, p. 131)** as he preached about the benefits of abandoning the long established pipe dreams. Also, Erie links the pipe dreams to truth, even indirectly, and this evokes Larry who famously ruminates about the nature of truth:

> To hell with the truth! As the history of the world proves, the truth has no bearing on anything. It's irrelevant and immaterial, as the lawyers say. The lie of a pipe dream is what gives life to the whole misbegotten mad lot of us, drunk or sober. **(p. 12)**

The absorption, transformation, and in turn an antithetical understanding of the notion of truth is sadly presented, although with ignorance, when Charlie Hughes vacantly responded to serious belief of Erie Smith:

> NIGHT CLERK
> *His glassy eyes stare through ERIE's face. He stammers deferentially.*
> Truth? I'm afraid I didn't get- What's the truth?
> ERIE
> *Hopelessly*.
> Nothing, Pal. Not a thing. **(Hg, p. 285)**

Accordingly, Erie could not explain anything, with his eyes fallen on the floor unable even to twirl the key in his hand **(Hg, p. 285),** because it is ironic not to understand the relationship between the pipe dream and truth. Probably his reaction of defeat is also directed to the audience and the readers who reacted like the night clerk and could not relate his version of "philosophy" with that of Larry, "The Old Grandstand Foolosopher**" (IC, p. 74).**

4.2 Askesis and Apophrades in "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh*

Whatever possible misreading springs out bringing "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* together, meaning surely transcends these texts. In other words, in writing the one-act play with such belief of imperfection, the American playwright realized that state of solitude (askesis). Even if Eugene O'Neill would have written another work to cover everything he had in mind in relation to what is discussed before, it is impossible to put all on paper. This state of solitude before or even at the early moments of writing "Hughie" led to the resurrection of the dead (apophrades) once the new text absorbed and transformed former texts, specifically *The Iceman Cometh*. In fact, if the dead is assumed to return under the light of this misreading, what is obviously at hand is the revivification of the one-act play genre. The American playwright wrote such kind of plays during his "amateur" days,

yet he revitalized the one-act play at the end of his career, as though he wanted to justify his choice even in those days. Actually, apophrades transcends mere revival of genres or texts. Bloom has also argued that when it comes to this trope of misreading, even a past text is liable to change meaning as it is going to be perceived in a new spirit **(1973, p. 16).** Such assertion is also a reminder of what T. S. Eliot (1957) famously claimed in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

> what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it … the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities. **(pp. 49-50)**

In this regard, Bogard suggested that "Hughie" is an epilogue to *The Iceman Cometh* (1972, p. 418) because it expresses the long play in a shorter period. Nevertheless, although this research endorses the claim that both works offer better understanding and broadened interpretation when brought together, "Hughie" fits, perforce, in the middle or even more perfectly as a prologue to *The Iceman Cometh*. In this case, Harry Hope would be himself the night clerk who gathered those useless derelicts long ago with the condition of reciprocating solace and support in pipe dreams in order to be able to survive as a group. Whether "Hughie" is the past, present, or future of *The Iceman Cometh*, it undeniably scavenges the ancient fabric of the latter.

5. Conclusion

The essence of this scholarly investigation can be symbolically reflected in Erie Smith's response to the night clerk: "you don't look like Hughie, but you remind me of him somehow" **(*Hg*, p. 265)**! In other words, "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* diverge at some levels like the duration of performance, nature of dialogues, and stage directions; nevertheless, each evokes the immaterial presence of the other to the mis/reader. What make these two works responsive to each other go beyond the outward or even inward similarities because, as the intertextual study indicates, the transposition of signs dissolves one text into the other. In fact, "Hughie" and *The Iceman Cometh* can be read in relation to each other once the theories of Kristeva's intertextuality and Bloom's misreading are incorporated. The two plays prove to be intertwined, leading the minimalistic "Hughie" to be categorized as a complementary missing episode to the maximalistic *The Iceman Cometh*. This labeling does not intend to devalue the one-act because it is clear how each play offers broader understanding to each other. On the contrary, both equally help to understand the delusional quest for solace and support in a deceptive world of words and

pipe dreams. They show the aftermaths of that quest whether they end in success or failure. Certainly, since the two plays indeed offer a complementary understanding when mis/read from each other's eyes, this is a proof that literature does not acknowledge the unidirectional current of interpretation. By and large, this interactional mis/reading that was helped with intertextual considerations shows that the quest for understanding and appreciating a literary text should not be sought only in the targeted texts themselves but also the in relationship to other texts.

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