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## Synopses

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## SYNOPSIS

ON *DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS*

*Toshio Kimura*

We can find in this play sets of the conflicting opposites employed in order to show Man's "glorious, self-destructive struggle to make the Force (behind) express hum", O'Neill once wrote he was always conscious.

While one year cycle in which the story develops and ends is suggestive of the playwright's cyclical view of life, three nights allotted to three parts of the play are the time O'Neill deliberately chose for the delineation of the *dark* inner lives of the characters. The handling of time corresponds with that of place. The world in *Desire* is sharply divided into two—the outside of the farm-house, symbolized by the words such as "sky", "sun", "gold", "California", "West", "freedom" etc., and the inside, embraced by two enormous elms and fenced in by the stone wall. The comings-in and goings-out of the main characters reflect their wavering between their opposing selves.

Human events being closely associated with cosmic events in this play, the coming of Abbie implies the advent of spring to the Cabots' home. But Ephraim mistakably identifies himself with nature, vainly tries to regain spring in himself, though of course he is in his old age—winter, and 'dances' (a dithyramb) frantically in celebration of the child who he thinks is his own. Ironically enough, Eben, the real father of the child, can not 'dance' and child, the 'spring', is to be killed by its own mother. It is only through the death of the child that Eben and Abbie come to the confirmation of their love, and they go 'out', while Ephraim, defying nature, determines to remain 'in' this house alone. In this respect this curious tale of spring is the exact reverse of *The Winter's Tale*.

Lastly, though Eben declares he is “Maw—every drop o’blood’ (soft, elms), he is also ‘dead spit ‘n’ image’ of his father (hard, stone). According to O’Neill’s pattern of thought, these parental opposites manifest themselves in the opposing selves of Eben, and they are but transitory stages in the perpetual flow of biocosmic process.

## COLLECTIVE EXISTENCE AS A NECESSITY OF NEGATION

### Steinbeck's Social Novels

*Kuniji Miyazaki*

This essay is an analysis of some constituents of John Steinbeck's social novels. The work towards the definition of 'Dynamic realism' or 'Impersonal novels' may lead to clarify the problems which these social novels involve. But it seems to me more important to consider that the spirit of realism goes through the mental process to deny all the attributes to human nature and abstract the necessary phases of history peculiar to his contemporary situation. It follows logically that abstract beings will take the form of real things when they emerge from the surface of consciousness.

There is every reason to say that the novels dealt with here should be placed in one category of "social novels"; *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1938), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *The Moon is Down* (1942), *Cannery Row* (1944), and *The Pearl* (1948). All of the heroes and main characters are locked within the horizons of subsistence, while they realize the cause of their desperate environment. That is why there develops the struggle between Darwinian view of society and the prototypal belief of Old Testament, only to the frustration of the latter. Jim's glorified death admits no compromise between employers and employees. In the world of non-compromise, laborers, negroes and even indigenes are segregated from the modern capitalist social mechanism. All the Joads share a sense of exile, the source of which can be traced back to the world of Old Testament, but they never reach Cannan. In his search for a possibility for common people to obtain absolute liberty Steinbeck is

an important and unparalleled novelist.

The typical situation of John Steinbeck is in contrast to that of Charles Dickens. Steinbeck employs the method of abstracting the situation typical of the crises in history and of driving away mental subjectivity from human consciousness. He does not insist that despair, apprehension and solitude can alone set people free, but the situation he presents implicitly suggests the necessity of absolute liberty. Dickens, who describes the good and evil of a situation, urges the possibility of human happiness. The latter is at once a preacher and a social reformer, while the former is an observer.

No one can be punished unless he has committed a crime. But men often see punishment for nothing. The background of these novels, therefore, can be said a typical situation of our time; as is depicted in *Der Prozess* by Franz Kafka, the established social system has built such high walls that common people cannot escape it. When they can neither break through the walls by themselves nor reject the irrational punishment to death for themselves, they have no alternative to alienate themselves from the erroneous system in search for liberation. Alienation leads people to the denial of desire, feeling, wisdom and other moral senses. On this account it can be induced that 'Impersonal novels' are the natural consequence of negative procedure within consciousness.

In the process of negation not for the sake of mere abstraction but for the sake of real purpose, he has been trying to lay a foundation upon which ought to be based a collective existence of real being. Steinbeck suggests "Flies conquering flypapers" by the mouth of 'Mayor Orden'. The phrase implies not an allegory but an embodiment of the possibility:

## A PROBLEM OF TRANSLATION OF COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH IN MODERN JAPANESE FICTION

*Kenshiro Homma*

The problem of translation, no matter which languages it may be concerned with, is embraced, or embraces many complicated aspects, and especially when it comes to the question of putting Japanese into English, the matter becomes much more difficult. This is chiefly because, as scholars point out, the Japanese language is completely isolated from any other language in the world.

How should translation be done? This question still is a bone of contention among scholars. It seems to boil down to the following two points: 1) literal or 2) free translation. So far as literature is concerned, it seems that a free translation trying to evaluate and express literary merits or characteristics of the original is much more important than a word-for-word translation, because faithfulness to the original is very often apt to mar the atmosphere of the original.

A good translation, if I may be allowed to say so, is the same as or better than the original, not only in quality but also expressions. This implies that translation should aim to reach a high level of creation, not merely following a slavish imitation of the original. It is also desirable that the translation should be easy and delightful reading. Boldly speaking, the translator should endeavor to inspire the soul of the creator into his translation. To achieve this glorious objective, it is a prerequisite for the Japanese translator to keep in mind the linguistic differences such as usage, structure and whatnot between the two languages. The Japanese language itself also is a great obstacle in the way of mastering the technique of translation. What is hoped for is that an excellent model of translation may be found and read

over and over again to digest the English expressions or idioms. English idioms play a big role in conversational expressions. A fair number of examples illustrated in Section II of this article is well indicative of the fact that the idioms have been developed and incorporated into the lives of the English-speaking people.

The difficulty of the art of translation in fiction is keenly felt in a conversational dialogue, to say nothing of a narrative. Some examples abstracted from Prof. Seidensticker's translation of Japanese fiction are good evidences of his excellent ability, and a few more examples from my own translation of Shusei Tokuda's *Tadare (Sore Eye-Lids)*, noted as they appear by chapter, will also aid in making my point clear, although I don't mean to flatter myself with the thought that my translation is comparable to that of Prof. Seidensticker.