

UNREQUITED LOVE AS A CLASSICAL TOPOS IN EUGENE O'NEILL'S  
*BEYOND THE HORIZON*<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** Many of Eugene O'Neill's characters deal with the complications of love. That is, declarations of love are not necessarily reciprocated. When this is the case, the lovers suffer unrequited love, which has been a frequent topos in classical as well as modern texts. Unrequited love encompasses three stages: the rejection, betrayal, or death of the beloved; the lover's frustration; and finally, his or her reaction to the issue. This article, after presenting a short history of this topos, examined in a selection of classical texts, attempts to study the role it plays in Eugene O'Neill's tragedy *Beyond the Horizon* (1918). It is argued that unrequited love as it appears in this play reflects the classical stages of the topos. O'Neill's characters, like Virgilian lovers, are moderate, patient and reserved in face of their one-sided love. Like Virgil's Gallus, they consider escape to be the only remedy for their suffering. In the play, Andrew can overcome the hardships of an unrequited love through distance, while Robert's family duties prevent him from doing so, which renders him lovesick and eventually causes his death.

**KEYWORDS:** Eugene O'Neill, Classical Topoi, Rejection, Unrequited Love, Classical Literature.

EL AMOR NO CORRESPONDIDO COMO TÓPICO CLÁSICO EN *MÁS ALLÁ DEL HORIZONTE* DE EUGENE O'NEILL

**RESUMEN:** Muchos de los personajes de Eugene O'Neill lidian con las complicaciones del amor. Una declaración de amor no necesariamente recibe la aceptación del amado. En estos casos, los amantes experimentan un amor no correspondido, lo que se ha manifestado como tópico literario en textos clásicos y modernos. El amor no correspondido comprende tres fases, que incluyen el rechazo, la traición o la muerte de la persona amada; la frustración del amante; así como su reacción ante la situación. Tras presentar una breve historia de este tópico en una selección de textos clásicos, se estudia su manifestación en la tragedia *Más allá del horizonte* (1918) de Eugene O'Neill. Se argumenta que la elaboración del amor no correspondido en esta obra sigue las etapas del tópico clásico. Los personajes de O'Neill, como los amantes virgilianos, son moderados, pacientes y reservados frente a su amor desdichado. Al igual que el Galo de Virgilio, consideran la huida como el único remedio contra el dolor. Andrew es capaz de superar las penurias de un amor no correspondido a través de la distancia, mientras que las obligaciones familiares de Robert no se lo permiten; esto provoca su mal de amores y desencadena su muerte.

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PALABRAS CLAVE: Eugene O'Neill, tópicos literarios, rechazo, amor no correspondido, literatura clásica.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, real and fictional love stories have proved to us that confessions of love do not guarantee their acceptance. Lovers may feel frustrated over an unrequited love, which occurs when the beloved demonstrates disdain towards a lover's advances, or when he/she «transgresses the due fidelity» (Laguna Mariscal, 2011a: 61). Although the reasons for the rejection, as well as the lovers' reactions, are varied, all these stories share a sense of devastation for the lovers.

Eugene O'Neill's characters are not exempt from the complications of love, as he is a playwright who has dealt with love's adversities in several plays.<sup>2</sup> In some, such as *Anna Christie* (1918) and *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), a temporary rejection of love is suffered, while in some others, such as *Beyond the Horizon* (1918) and *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), the lovers face permanent rejections (Nazemi, 2022a: 100).<sup>3</sup> Among O'Neill's tragedies, *Beyond the Horizon* (1918) deals with this topos more extensively (see Dowling, 2009: 451). In this play, the characters are constantly struggling in their emotional relationships. Andrew experiences unrequited love when Ruth, the girl he loves, agrees to marry his brother. After a month of marriage, Ruth, who had previously declared her love to Robert, regrets it and falls in love with Andrew, who is now away. Out of anger, she confesses this change of feelings to her husband, who suffers pain and frustration until the end of his life. Moreover, before Ruth finds a chance to declare her love to Andrew, she discovers that he does not love her anymore. At this moment, she also faces the hardship of rejected love. Consequently, in each act of the tragedy, O'Neill demonstrates the reactions of one character facing an unreciprocated love. However, the repercussions of this motif in the life of Robert and Andrew are more accentuated by the playwright, as Ruth is ultimately capable of winning over her love at the end of the story. Nevertheless, as Dowling observes, «the draw of sex and the power of jealousy impel both brothers to enact a destructive role reversal that ends, fatally, in emotional bankruptcy for Andrew and poverty-stricken death for Robert» (2009: 69).

In this article, we intend to analyse the development of unrequited love as a classical topos in Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* (1918).<sup>4</sup> Since one of the characteristics of a literary topos is its recurrence in the history of literature (Laguna Mariscal, 1999: 201), we begin our discussion with a short introduction to a small number of significant classical works that have dealt with this topos. Then, a descriptive analysis of O'Neill's tragedy and its version of unrequited love is presented, followed by an

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<sup>2</sup> This is partly a reflection of O'Neill's personal experiences. See Black (1999: 202).

<sup>3</sup> In *Desire Under the Elms*, Eben suspects the sincerity of Abbie's love when he discovers that she has denounced him as an aggressor to her husband. As a result, Eben experiences a crisis believing that his beloved has betrayed his love and trust. This generates a temporary feeling of devastation. In *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Lavinia rejects Peter's marriage proposal. Being aware of Lavinia's false excuses, Peter insists on his proposal until the end of the trilogy, when he finally discovers the truth about Lavinia's past. Feeling cheated, he eventually abandons her (see Nazemi, 2022a: 100). Similarly, in *Anna Christie*, Anna's rejection of Burke's proposal causes the experience of an unrequited love in the suitor.

<sup>4</sup> Guerreau-Jalabert (1992: 438) considers unrequited love a motif. However, in a recently published study, Nazemi, Maleki and Laguna Mariscal distinguish some of the characteristics of topoi from similar terms in literary criticism. According to this study, topoi constitute a similar level of concretion to motifs, but what distinguishes them is their development from classical literature (2022: 196-197). See also Nazemi (2022b).

examination of the parallel structures in the development of the topos in this play and some classical texts.

#### UNREQUITED LOVE AS A TOPOS

A topos is defined as a textual segment which exposes an idea of intermediate semantic concretion, expressed through a particular structure and literary form, and which develops through literary history. Topoi always carry an underlying ideology and possess a rhetorical function (Laguna Mariscal, 1999: 201 and 2014a: 27–30).<sup>5</sup> Unrequited love is a common literary topos in classical literature and involves either the rejection of an expression of love<sup>6</sup> or a lack of fidelity.<sup>7</sup> In terms of content, it is neither as general as a theme or subject (such as love or rejection) nor as specific as a sub-motif (in terms of meaning). The table below illustrates the semantic content of unrequited love as a topos:

Level	Literary Terms	Example
General	Theme	Love, hatred, pride, betrayal, rejection, etc.
Medium	Motif / Topos	Unrequited love
Specific	Sub-motifs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expression of love</li> <li>– Rejection</li> <li>– Manifestation of frustration and melancholy</li> <li>– Reactions of the lover / consequences of unrequited love</li> </ul>

Table 1. The semantic content of unrequited love

The ideology behind this topos lays in the assumption that the expression of love can never guarantee its approval. This literary topos follows three emotional stages (Nazemi, 2022a: 100):

1. The beloved's rejection of the lover's proposal, his/her betrayal in the relationship, or death before the consummation of love.
2. The lover's shock and frustration.
3. His/her decision to react to the situation.

The reaction of the jilted lover can take many different forms, including insults, cries,<sup>8</sup> persecutions, physical violence, madness, illness, suicide, murder, escape or abandonment. In classical texts, there are many excuses used to justify the rejection, such as disgust, modesty, religious reasons, fear, and headache among the others (Librán

<sup>5</sup> Escobar (2000) presents another elaborate definition of topoi from a linguistic point of view. In another study, we demonstrated the fact that although Escobar and Laguna Mariscal define a topos from different perspectives, they refer to the same concepts of literary criticism, so their ideas can be harmonized (see Nazemi, 2022c: 175-176).

<sup>6</sup> Librán Moreno dedicates a complete entry to the history of rejection as a classical motif. According to her, love's rejection can be defined as the beloved's resistance to courtship by preventing the lover from making his/her pleas. The lover, as a revenge, may then persecute or punish the loved one (2011c: 353).

<sup>7</sup> Laguna Mariscal cites several examples from Catullus, Propertius and Horace who demonstrate lack of fidelity as a cause of unrequited love (2011a: 61).

<sup>8</sup> Moreno Soldevila cites different examples from classical texts where the infidelity of the beloved or the lover's experience of unrequited love make the lover sad and cry (2011: 242).

Moreno, 2011c: 353). Particularly, in Petrarchan poetry, unrequited love usually stems from the arrogance or disdain of the beloved (Laguna Mariscal, 2011a: 62).

There are many examples that exemplify the popularity of this topos in classical literature.<sup>9</sup> Virgil's *Eclogues* include several cases of complaints by lovers whose declarations of love are not corresponded. In Eclogue II, Corydon laments her frustrations over a one-sided love for Alexis, who prefers a rich suitor. Similarly, Eclogue VIII represents the different reactions of two lovers, who suffer from an unrequited love. In Eclogue X, Gallus chooses to run away and become a shepherd to mourn his unreciprocated love.

The topos occurs frequently in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* too. On various occasions, Apollo falls in love with different nymphs such as Daphne and Coronis, while they do not love him back. In book I, Daphne rejects Phoebus, who continues to pursue her<sup>10</sup> and repeat his sentiments, while she evades him. Not being able to give in to Phoebus's erotic pleas, Daphne asks her father to transform her into a laurel tree.

Another example in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is the story of Helios, who falls in love with Leucothoe and abandons Clytie. Therefore, the lover feels resentful to the unfaithful partner and takes revenge by reporting the affair to Leucothoe's father, who then buries his own daughter alive.

Ille ferox inmansuetusque precantem  
tendentemque manus ad lumina Solis et «ille  
vim tulit invitae» dicentem defodit alta  
crudus humo, tumulumque super gravis addit harenae.  
Dissipat hunc radiis Hyperione natus iterque  
dat tibi, qua possis defossos promere vultus.  
Nec tu iam poteris enectum pondere terrae  
tollere, nympha, caput corpusque exsanguie iacebas.  
Nil illo fertur volucrum moderator equorum  
post Phaethonteos vidisse dolentius ignes. (1892: 4.237-246)

Then Clytie was jealous, for she loved  
The Sun beyond all measure. Spurred with anger  
Against that paramour, she published wide  
The tale of shame and, as it spread, made sure  
Her father knew. Brutal and merciless,  
Despite her prayers, although she stretched her hands  
Towards the Sun and cried «He ravished me  
Against my will», her father buried her  
Deep in the earth and on her heaped a mound  
Of heavy sad. (2008: 4.237-246)

Similarly, in book 13, Galatea prefers Acis to Polyphemus. The jealous lover cannot bear his rejection and kills his rival. In this case, the lover chooses murder as a reaction to soothe his anger and frustration.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a short history of this topos in classical Latin literature see Laguna Mariscal (2011b: 101).

<sup>10</sup> Persecution of the fleeing beloved is a frequent theme in Greco-Latin literature (Librán Moreno, 2011c: 353).

<sup>11</sup> Murder for love is another recurrent motif in classical literature (see Librán Moreno, 2011b). It has developed in O'Neill's drama as well. Passionate lovers in O'Neill's plays do not hesitate to eliminate the obstacles of their affair even at the cost of murdering a family member. See Nazemi (2022c: 180-184).

cum ferus ignaros nec quicquam tale timentes  
me videt atque Acin «video» que exclamat «et ista  
ultima sit, faciam, veneris concordia vestrae!»  
Tantaque vox, quantam Cyclops iratus habere  
debut, illa fuit: clamore perhorruit Aetne.  
Ast ego vicino pavefacta sub aequore mergor,  
terga fugae dederat conversa Symaethius heros  
et «fer opem, Galatea, precor, mihi! ferte, parentes»  
dixerat «et vestris periturum admittite regnis!». (1892: XIII.873–881)

Such was his vain lament; then up he rose  
(I saw it all) as a fierce thwarted bull  
Roams through the woodlands and familiar fields,  
And, spying in his rage Acis and me,  
All unaware and fearing no such fate,  
Shouted «I see you; now I shall make sure  
That loving fond embrace shall be your last».  
Loud as an angry Cyclops ought to shout  
He shouted; Etna shuddered at the din. (2008: XIII.873–881)

The topos features in classical Roman tragedies. In Seneca's *Phaedra*, Hippolytus rejects his mother-in-law's incestuous pleas, considers it a shameful advance, and reproaches her (II. 684-689). He then flees to the forests to escape his mother-in-law's evil intentions. The nurse then suggests that Phaedra take revenge on him by accusing him of adultery:

Deprensa culpa est. anime, quid segnis stupes?  
regeramus ipsi crimen atque ultro impiam  
Venerem arguamus: scelere velandum est scelus:  
tutissimum est inferre, cum timeas, gradum. (1921: 719-722)

This crime  
We must throw back upon the man himself,  
And charge him with a guilty love, ourselves.  
Sin must be hid by sin. (1907: II.719-722)

After following her advice, Phaedra commits suicide and presents the royal sword as a proof of Hippolytus's adultery before her death (III.898-900). Her suicide makes Theseus believe in her words and curse the innocent son. At the end of the story, Hippolytus is condemned to death (III. 998), which serves as punishment for his rejection of the lover.<sup>12</sup>

These examples demonstrate the recurrence of unrequited love in classical literature. The table below summarizes the ways in which unrequited love could be considered a classical literary topos:

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<sup>12</sup> In Euripides and Seneca's retelling of the story of Phaedra, unrequited love is the consequence of an impossible, incestuous, and sacrilegious love (Traver Vera, 2011b: 401).

Characteristics of a topos	Unrequited love
<b>Conceptual content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– More specific than a theme</li> <li>– Incorporates various sub-motives</li> <li>– Possesses an underlying ideology</li> </ul>
<b>Literary form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Encompasses three chronological phases</li> </ul>
<b>Historical tradition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Shows recurrence in classical literature (works by Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, etc.)</li> <li>– Develops in modern culture (O'Neill's drama as an example)</li> </ul>

Table 2. Unrequited love as a literary topos

There are many more examples in classical antiquity that illustrate the important position of unrequited love, the enumeration of which is beyond the scope of this study. Now it is necessary to look at O'Neill's modern play and consider if the usage of this topos follows the traditional structure. This question is relevant since O'Neill is famous for his attempts to adapt classical literature to a modern American setting. *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931) and *Desire Under the Elms* (1924) are the most evident examples of how O'Neill recontextualized Greek tragedy.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, while *Beyond the Horizon* is considered the first representation of O'Neill's interest in Greek Tragedy (Black, 2004: 168), it is not taken by the critics as an imitation of any particular classical myth or tragedy. In this study, we do not contend that O'Neill's reception of a classical topos in *Beyond the Horizon* was deliberate either. Rather, we seek to show the development of a classical topos, which could be the result of a natural literary procedure (see Nazemi and Laguna Mariscal, 2022b: 400). Consequently, the objective is to compare the «parallel structures» in the representation of a classical topos in classical and modern texts (see Nazemi, 2022c: 178).

#### UNREQUITED LOVE IN *BEYOND THE HORIZON* (1918)

*Beyond the Horizon* is a tragedy which explores the impact of unrequited love in the lives of different characters. Each character responds to it in his or her own way. Here we will examine the two main manifestations of this topos in the lives of Andrew and Robert, following the plot of the story.

##### *Andrew's One-Way Love for Ruth*

The play begins with Robert's last day at home before he accompanies his uncle on a long sea voyage. The journey is expected to last for three years. Everything seems to be all set until the moment Ruth and Robert see each other again. Ruth has been a childhood friend of Robert and his brother, and spent a lot of time with them. She asks

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<sup>13</sup> There are many studies on O'Neill's reception of Greek Tragedy in *Desire Under the Elms* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*. See, for example, Racey (1962: 43-44), Burian (1997: 254-256), Khare (1998: 339-374), and Black (2004: 174-178), and Alexander (2007: 33-37), Maleki, Nazemi and Laguna Mariscal (2020: 127-129), Liapis (2021: 49-50), Nazemi and Laguna Mariscal (2022a).

Robert about the reasons for his trip. Although he finds it difficult to separate from home and family (1988: I.i.579), he mentions two main reasons for his departure: first, he yearns to explore nature beyond what he can see at home. As a «young, highly emotional, intellectual dreamer» (Dowling, 2009: 71) and a man of literature and poetry, he does not enjoy practical matters like farming or business, and is not looking for financial opportunities from this trip either; what he wants is to explore and enjoy nature for its own sake, a dream he has always had since childhood (O'Neill, 1988: I.i.580).

As a second reason, he admits that he loves Ruth, but that he never dared to express himself because he thought she loved Andrew. He mentions this now on the last day before his trip because he is not afraid of any consequences such as Ruth's anger or rejection. To avoid this, he has already planned his departure:

ROBERT— I wasn't going to tell you, but I feel I have to. It can't matter now that I'm going so far away, and for so long—perhaps forever. I've loved you all these years, but the realization never came 'til I agreed to go away with Uncle Dick. Then I thought of leaving you, and the pain of that thought revealed to me in a flash—that I loved you, had loved you as long as I could remember. (*He gently pulls one of Ruth's hands away from her face*) You mustn't mind my telling you this, Ruth. I realize how impossible it all is—and I understand; for the revelation of my own love seemed to open my eyes to the love of others. I saw Andy's love for you—and I knew that you must love him. (I.i.582)

To his surprise, Ruth states that she has always loved him too and asks him to stay. The couple then decides to inform their families about their plan to marry.

Once Andrew is informed of Robert's affair with Ruth, his symptoms of suffering from unrequited love manifest. He is «dumb looking as if he'd lost his best friend» (I.ii.588), having «*a repressed expression of pain on his face*» (I.ii.590), constantly trying to avoid eye contact with the family (I.ii.587; I.ii.592). On the one hand, he loves his brother, and on the other, he feels deeply disappointed because he used to think that he had Ruth's love. This is when the first manifestation of unrequited love appears.

Ruth's confession of love to Robert and not him makes Andrew leave immediately in order to be away from Ruth and forget her (I.ii.594). This decision is not easy to accomplish because he faces his family's strong disagreement. Andrew's father believes that he is, in fact, escaping from unreciprocated love:

MAYO— (*shaking his finger at ANDY, in a cold rage*) You know I'm speakin' truth—that's why you're afraid to argy! You lie when you say you want to go 'way—and see thin's! You ain't got no likin' in the world to go. I've watched you grow up, and I know your ways, and they're my ways. You're runnin' against your own nature, and you're goin' to be a'mighty sorry for it if you do. 'S if I didn't know your real reason for runnin' away! And runnin' away's the only words to fit it. You're runnin' away 'cause you're put out and riled 'cause your own brother's got Ruth 'stead o' you, and——(I.ii.596)

At first, Andrew tries to deny this, but he finally admits to his brother that he cannot stay and watch Ruth and Robert together, when he actually had hopes about her:

ANDREW. You know better than to ask that. You know why. (*Fiercely*) I can wish you and Ruth all the good luck in the world, and I do, and I mean it; but you can't expect me to stay around here and watch you two together, day after day—and me alone. I couldn't stand it—not after all the plans I'd made to happen on this place thinking—— (*his voice breaks*) thinking she cared for me. (I.ii.599)

Thus, his solution to cure his pain is to escape the environment where the girl resides in and not to see her anymore. In other words, he runs away from the situation, takes refuge to nature, and tries to forget the loved one:

ANDREW. (fiercely) I've got to go—to get away! I've got to, I tell you. I'd go crazy here, bein' reminded every second of the day what a fool I'd made of myself. I've got to get away and try and forget, if I can. And I'd hate the farm if I stayed, hate it for bringin' things back. I couldn't take interest in the work any more, work with no purpose in sight. Can't you see what a hell it'd be? You love her too, Rob. Put yourself in my place, and remember I haven't stopped loving her, and couldn't if I was to stay. Would that be fair to you or to her? Put yourself in my place. (*He shakes his brother fiercely by the shoulder*) What'd you do then? Tell me the truth! You love her. What'd you do? (I.ii.600)

Andrew's attitude is dynamic because instead of lamenting for the rejection or exacting revenge on the beloved, he chooses to entertain himself through the exploration of the world. In this way, he also shows respect for his brother's decision to marry Ruth. Escape serves as a remedy for Andrew's pain.

A similar reaction to an unrequited love occurs in classical sources. Virgil, for instance, narrates the story of «Gallus's anxious love» (2001: X.6) for Lycoris in Eclogue X. According to this tale, Gallus is suffering from unrequited love because Lycoris prefers another person (X.22-23). He feels depressed (X.10-15), but in order to «cure» his «madness»<sup>14</sup> (X.60), he decides to go away to the laps of nature:<sup>15</sup>

Ibo, et, Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita versu  
carmina, pastoris Siculi modulabor avena.  
certum est in silvis, inter spelaea ferarum  
malle pati, tenerisque meos incidere amores  
arboribus; crescent illae, crescetis, amores. (1900: X.50-54)

I'll go and play my songs composed in Chalcidian metre,  
on a Sicilian shepherds pipe. I'd rather, for sure,  
suffer, among the wild creatures' dens,  
in the woods, and carve my passion on tender trees.  
They'll grow, and you my passions will also grow. (2001: X.50-54)

A similar situation is experienced by Sincero in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (1480). According to this story, Sincero's disenchantment forces him to leave and go to the remote region of Arcadia in order to find peace (see Hoffmeister, 1989: 18-19 and Clark, 2015: 250). The difference between Gallus and Andrew is that Gallus believes his love will grow even if he is away (X.54), while Andrew has a more practical approach to life and hopes to forget about Ruth and find life opportunities.

The development of Andrew's unrequited love for Ruth follows the structure of the topos in classical texts. Andrew's efforts to win Ruth fail when he realizes that she

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<sup>14</sup> In classical Greek and Roman literature, madness is inherent in love. Consequently, the terms «fury» and «passionate love» can be used interchangeably (Laguna Mariscal, 2011c: 367). See also Thornton (1997: 19-23).

<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Ovid dedicated a complete book, *Remedia Amoris*, to providing advice for overcoming an unrequited love. The solutions suggested in his book include travelling (1907: 213-248) and «bucolic pursuits» (169-212) (see Grafton, Most and Settis, 2010: 668 and Socas, 2011).

loves Robert. He feels deeply frustrated and decides to soothe his pain by travelling. His attitude is similar to Virgil's characters such as Corydon or Gallus, who never declare their love directly to the beloved, but are frustrated when they discover the loved one's preference for another person. Andrew is still more conservative than the Virgilian lovers because he never laments the loss of the beloved. Instead, he accepts his fate and chooses Gallus's solution of distance to cure his pain. This suggests that the modern character is capable of relativizing life more cleverly than the classical counterparts.

The reference to Virgil's *Eclogues* or Sannazaro's *Arcadia* does not imply that O'Neill sought to adapt their representation of unrequited love in his plays. Rather, the emphasis is on the ways in which O'Neill's story could be compared to classical texts which share the same syntax of a single literary topos. This adheres to the objectives of comparative literature studies as evolution, development and parallel structures are the focus of attention (see Nazemi, 2022c: 188).

### *Robert's Unreciprocated Love for Ruth*

The play continues with the second act which shows the life of the Mayo family three years later. Mr. Mayo has passed away, and the rest of the family is having a hard time due to Robert's incapability to manage the farm. There is no glance of love in the life of the couple, but indifference, anger, and hatred. Robert returns home late after a long day of hard work. His wife is tired of doing the household chores. Robert's late arrival, his financial failure, and the accumulation of domestic tasks make Ruth feel overwhelmed. In the meanwhile, Ben, Robert's worker, comes and informs the couple about his decision to resign, basically because Robert's failure has made everyone make fun of Ben. This triggers an argument between the couple.

Ruth reproaches Robert for his incompetence in managing the farm and compares him to Andrew, who was capable of doing the tasks efficiently: «*(resentfully)* Andy's not like you. He likes the farm» (II.i.614). Throughout this act, Ruth's keeping and repeated reading of Andrew's letters, her defence of Andrew in her conversations with Robert and her appreciation of Andrew's strength and capability foreshadow her final confession (II.i.609-615). She is so defensive about Andrew that she cannot stand Robert's criticism:

RUTH. *(her repressed voice trembling)* You needn't make fun of Andy.

ROBERT. When I think—but what's the use? You know I wasn't making fun of Andy personally, but his attitude toward things is——

RUTH. *(her eyes flashing—bursting into uncontrollable rage)* You was too making fun of him! And I ain't going to stand for it! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! *(ROBERT stares at her in amazement. She continues furiously)* A fine one to talk about anyone else—after the way you've ruined everything with your lazy loafing!—and the stupid way you do things! (II.i.615)

On one occasion when she is arguing with Robert about his incompetence in managing life, she reveals her resentment:

I s'pose you think I ought to be *proud* to be your wife—a poor, ignorant thing like me! *(Fiercely)* But I'm not. I hate it! I hate the sight of you. Oh, if I'd only known! If I hadn't been such a fool to listen to your cheap, silly, poetry talk that you learned out of books! If I could have seen how you were in your true self—like you are now—I'd have killed

myself before I'd have married you! I was sorry for it before we'd been together a month. I knew what you were really like—when it was too late. (II.ii.616)

The discussion does not end in the expression of hatred and reaches darker moments when Ruth confesses that she is, in fact, in love with Andrew and still holds out hopes for being united with him:

RUTH. You were saying you'd go out on the road if it wasn't for me. Well, you can go, and the sooner the better! I don't care! I'll be glad to get rid of you! The farm'll be better off too. There's been a curse on it ever since you took hold. So go! Go and be a tramp like you've always wanted. It's all you're good for. I can get along without you, don't you worry. (*Exulting fiercely*) Andy's coming back, don't forget that! He'll attend to things like they should be. He'll show what a man can do! I don't need you. Andy's coming!

ROBERT. (*they are both standing. ROBERT grabs her by the shoulders and glares into her eyes*) What do you mean? (*He shakes her violently*) What are you thinking of? What's in your evil mind, you—you— (*His voice is a harsh shout*).

RUTH. (*in a defiant scream*) Yes I do mean it! I'd say it if you was to kill me! I do love Andy. I do! I do! I always loved him. (*Exultantly*) And he loves me! He loves me! I know he does. He always did! And you know he did, too! So go! Go if you want to! (II.ii.616)

Once again, another character faces the shocking moment of an unrequited love. Robert's reaction is to insult the unfaithful wife by uttering «You—you slut!» (II.ii.616) and everything ends here. Surprisingly, the couple never discusses this anymore throughout the play.

In the second act, Robert experiences the frustrations of an unrequited love. We find him alone and absorbed in thoughts with his face «pale and haggard» having an expression of «utter despondency» (II.ii.617). Similar to the first scene of the play, when he was getting ready for his departure before having declared his love to Ruth, Robert is gazing at the horizon and thinking of going away: «Robert is discovered sitting on the boulder, his chin resting on his hands, staring out toward the horizon seaward. His face is pale and haggard, his expression one of utter despondency» (II.ii.623). Like Andrew in the first act and Gallus in Virgil's Eclogue X, Robert thinks of escape as a remedy for his problem, but since he is the only man of the family and feels responsible for the protection of his wife and child, he does not feel free to pursue this dream (II.ii.623). He even mentions this thought to his daughter, who strongly disagrees with him (II.ii.618). This forces Robert to stay.

After the quarrel between the couple and upon Andrew's return, Ruth changes as well. While previously she used to neglect her appearance, now she is seen «dressed in white» showing that «she has been fixing up. She looks pretty, flushed and full of life», the sight of which darkens Robert's face «with pain» (II.ii.623). Robert looks at his wife «with a grim, sober expression» (II.ii.630), never complaining or reproaching her. Interestingly, although Robert is aware of his wife's resentment towards him, he never stops caring about her. Even when Andrew confesses to his brother that he no longer loves Ruth, Robert asks him not to mention this to her so as not to render her frustrated: «Perhaps—for her sake—you'd better not tell her» (II.ii.623). Thus, once again, a modern Virgilian lover appears in this play, one who does not hurt the beloved after her faithless attitude, laments her loss and endures distress alone.

Later in the play, unrequited love takes the form of lovesickness<sup>16</sup> in Robert's life. In act three, he is found terribly ill after five years of Andrew's second departure.

*A moment later Robert appears in the doorway, leaning weakly against it for support. His hair is long and unkempt, his face and body emaciated. There are bright patches of crimson over his cheek bones and his eyes are burning with fever. He is dressed in corduroy pants, a flannel shirt, and wears worn carpet slippers on his bare feet. (III.i.631-632)*

His contemptuous remarks about Andrew to Ruth suggest that he is still suffering from Ruth's bitter confession (III.i.634-635).

In the final act, Andrew also confirms this, when he discovers the truth about Ruth's love. He states, «No wonder he's dying!» (III.i.649), acknowledging that Robert's unrequited love for Ruth impels him to an unbearable situation. We find a similar image in the representation of unrequited love in Virgil's *Eclogues*, where Corydon laments the rejection of the beloved and foresees that this will cause his death: «Have you no pity? you'll drive me to my death» (1895: 2.8). Robert finally dies after a period of illness. However, before death, he finds the chance to meet Andrew and ask him an important request that proves the authenticity of his love: to marry Ruth after his death.<sup>17</sup>

ROBERT. Remember, Andy, Ruth has suffered double her share. (*His voice faltering with weakness*) Only through contact with suffering, Andy, will you—awaken. Listen. You must marry Ruth—afterwards. (III.i.647)

What we see in Robert's life is what characterizes classical elegiac poets, who «fall into the nets of love and sing the sorrows of an illness» (Traver Vera, 2011a: 261). With love, Robert faces economic misfortunes as well as physical and mental illnesses.<sup>18</sup> The play ends with Robert's peaceful death<sup>19</sup> and the unveiling of the truth.<sup>20</sup> His illness is a consequence of the emotional pain he experiences with Ruth's confession of hatred. As Librán Moreno states, «Love is a fatal wound, a deadly disease that pierces and

<sup>16</sup> For a history of lovesickness as a motif in classical texts see Traver Vera (2011a).

<sup>17</sup> O'Neill's characters in different plays show a similar attitude by proving their love before death. In *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Adam Brant helps Christine murder Ezra before he is killed by Orin. Similarly, although we never see the death of Eben and Abbie in *Desire Under the Elms*, it is expected that both will be prosecuted for their incestuous affair and infanticide. In this tragedy, before the couple is arrested by the sheriff, Abbie has been able to prove her love to Eben.

<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Traver Vera argues that, for Lucretius, a lover experiences insanity, misfortunes, physical and mental illnesses as well as economic loss (see Traver Vera, 2011a: 260). For a history of lovesickness in classical literature see Cabello Pino (2018).

<sup>19</sup> Love and death establish an inseparable relationship in classical literature (Laguna Mariscal, 2014b). Accordingly, the most frequent response to unrequited love or betrayal in classical texts is to wish for death (Librán Moreno, 2011b: 289). In book IV of *Aeneid*, not being able to tolerate the beloved's abandonment, Dido commits suicide (Virgil, 1910: IV. 704-10. See Navarro Antolín, 1997: 44, Librán Moreno, 2011d: 406 and Traver Vera, 2011a: 261).

<sup>20</sup> As in Greek Tragedy, O'Neill's plays end after the truth is revealed. To name a few examples, in *Anna Christie*, Anna's dark past is revealed to Burke and her father; in *Desire Under the Elms*, Eben and Abbie's secret affair is disclosed to everybody; in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, Lavinia confesses the truth at the end of the play cycle. What differs is the fact that in Greek Tragedy gods determine the life of the characters, which is missing in modern drama.

ulcerates the hearts of lovers» (2011b: 289).<sup>21</sup> The pain of unrequited love causes Robert's physical and mental illness, which further results in death.

One last thing in the development of unreciprocated love in Robert's life is important, and it is the fact that he always thinks of distance as the only treatment for his pains. At the beginning of the play, he is determined to leave due to his unrequited love for Ruth. When he wins her love, he stays. Once again, when he faces her resentment, he thinks of departure. Throughout the second and third acts and after Ruth's confession of the truth, Robert is always found looking at the horizon (II.ii.617 and III.i.637). Before his death, he contemplates on leaving and starting a new life with Ruth (III.i.635), and he finally dies while gazing at the horizon. He himself confirms this in the last moments of his life: «The doctor told me to go to the far-off places—and I'd be cured. He was right. That was always the cure for me. It's too late—for this life—but——» (III.ii.652). This is similar to the attitude of a Virgilian lover, who instead of exacting revenge on the beloved, runs away to find peace.

#### CONCLUSION

In the present study, after a short introduction to the appearance of unrequited love in Virgil's *Eclogues*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Seneca's *Phaedra*, the development of this topos in Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* (1918) has been examined. It was argued that O'Neill's tragedy follows the classical structure of the topos: the unfulfillment of the love relationship, the ensuing melancholy, and the reaction of the lover. The two male protagonists in *Beyond the Horizon*, Andrew and Robert, consider a similar solution to their problem, namely, to escape by travelling. This makes their story similar to Gallus's decision due to his unrequited love for Lycoris in Virgil's *Eclogues*. While Andrew manages to overcome his melancholy with this solution, Robert's family obligations obstruct his plan. As a consequence, he stays, suffers lovesickness and finally dies. Finally, by examining the parallel structures in the treatment of this topos in different texts, the polygenetic development of a classical topos in Western literature has been traced and analysed.

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<sup>21</sup> Librán Moreno refers to the relationship between unrequited love and pain in the context of a poem written by Catullus. Accordingly, the feeling of the misfortune caused by an unrequited love is like bringing thorns permanently nailed to the soul (2011a: 115). Traver Vera also discusses and exemplifies the paradoxical nature of love for its inclusion of pain and pleasure (2011a: 259).

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