

## A Modern Tragic Hero in Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*

**Bassmah AlTaher**

English Department

School of Basic Sciences and Humanities

German Jordanian University

Amman, Jordan

### **Abstract**

Eugene O'Neill's (1888 – 1953) play *The Hairy Ape* (1922) tackles a very important issue related to Capitalism and Industrialism that affected the United States of America at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this play we find an alienated protagonist of the low class who is perceived as a modern tragic hero of the century. What becomes of the ordinary man when everything around him is related to classicism and segregation, and the lost feeling of belonging when poverty flourishes is what O'Neill portrays vividly in the play. He is able to evoke sympathy with his protagonist, and raise serious questions in his death. This paper analyzes the protagonist from the angle of a modern tragic hero. Historical and theoretical background will be dealt throughout in order to comprehend the notion of heroism in a twentieth century era.

**Key Words:** alienation, capitalism, drama, tragic hero