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Ans to the qus no-2

Symbolism in Desire Under the Elms  
The drama Desire Under the Elms by Eugene O'Neill is a tragedy that is full of symbolism. The themes of the drama are brought about through the use of symbols that exist within various elements of the play, especially in the setting and the plot. Such themes include a power struggle among the major characters, human greed and humanity being controlled by the fates. Ultimately, however,

symbols such as the elm trees, the farm, the parlor and the baby help characterize the protagonists, provide tone, explain the conflict and expose the characters weakness as humans who fall to their emotions. The first major symbols, described in the introduction of the setting, are the two massive elm trees. These trees are symbolic of the two dead wives of Cabot. Their omnipresent location looms over the house signifying that the deaths of

the two women still affect the lives of those living in the house. O'Neill himself describes ~~the~~ elms as, 'oppressively over the house like exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands and hair on its roof, and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and rot on the shingles. Aside from establishing a conflict for the characters of dealing with accepting the loss of the wives, the elm trees

establish a gloomy tone right from the play's commencement.

Eben mourns his mother throughout the play and is sour towards

cabot for working her to death.

His objective of inheriting his mother's farm, and his internal

struggle of whether to be

with Abbie are influenced by

whether he feels his mother's

presence in the house. His primary

objective is to win back his

mother's farm and he become

blinded by his ambitions, so much that he is quick to accuse Abbie, the woman he loves, of plotting to steal his mother's farm. Similarly, Cabot is affected by the memory of his dead wives. A central theme of the drama is being powerless to the fates and for Cabot, his fate is the product of killing his first two wives. There is an element of karma in the conclusion of the drama, in which

Cabot reflects on his loneliness however, it was his own doing that caused him his loneliness. Aside from the elms, the farm itself is a symbol of security and possession. The struggle over ownership of the farm is the most prominent conflict in the play. For Cabot, the farm symbolizes his supremacy and life's purpose. It is very significant that he controls the farm, for it means that he controls the lives of those who live on it.

To Cabot, as long as he is in possession of the farm, there will be people around working on it and waiting to inherit it. It is also ~~sybolic~~ symbolic of his legacy, and what he worked in his life for. The farm symbolizes his sense of ignorance, for never changing his way of life. It reflects his primitiveness, or his lack of wanting change and for making his life and the lives of those working on



the farm stagnant. His control of the farm is significant, as it means no one else, like Abbie and Eben, has control of their own fate. For Eben, the farm is symbolic of the ~~love~~ love of his mother and of getting what is rightfully theirs. Therefore, it is ultimately a symbol of Eben's pride and independence. The last major symbol in the drama is Abbie and Eben's baby. It is symbolic of the love of Eben and Abbie. Theirs was a love that could

never live, a love that was doomed to end. The baby is a tangible representation of what was theirs. Just as their love could not grow in the traditional sense of a relationship: for example, no courting, no marriage or no public affection, the baby could not grow to its full potential.

Therefore, the baby was merely an object to the three characters. The baby, for Cabot, represents his heir and the means by which his legacy and name would carry on after his death. For Abbie, the

baby was symbolic of her hold over Eben. Because it was Eben's child, she had a physical way to prove that Eben did love her. The symbols of the two elm trees, the farm, ~~the~~ parlor and the baby all help to establish that Abbie, Cabot, and Eben strive to have ownership and control of the things and people in their lives. However, their lives are ultimately controlled ~~ed~~ by their fate and their power struggles are deemed futile.