

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Literature is the human experience of life in the world of writing which reveals so many aspects of life, dealing with human thoughts, values, problems, and conflicts. It may talk about a real-life situation combined with imaginary one, but it prominently deals with worthy and meaningful or valuable experiences of human life. Furthermore, Robert G. Carlson identifies literature as "a means to transmit the loves and hates, the hopes and fears, ambitions and frustrations, the failures and triumphs, the questions, the problems, the experience of people confronting life." Thus, it can be said that literature's function is "to record man's struggle to live and from it certain recurrent themes and ideas emerge" (89).

The choice of literary field as the source of writing this thesis, however, is concerned with the function of literature as a means to understand some kind of emotions. By reading and understanding literature, the readers are able to relieve the pressure of emotions while they understand their love and hatred, hopes and fears, ambitions and frustrations, problems and conflicts, failures, and so forth.

In terms of literary field, this thesis analyzes Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, which takes the form of drama. Cleanth Brooks defines drama, then, as follow:

A drama is a dialogue spoken by the characters, with directions from the author telling what the characters do and perhaps how they speak their lines, and with directions (usually fairly brief) describing the background against which they perform their action. (432)

Drama is a peculiar literary form, which may be treated as literature to be read privately, or as theater, to be seen in public performance (Little 112). Compared to other literary forms, it has strong points since the author can present certain things more vividly and intensely. Obviously, the dramatic form allows the playwright to perform the conflict between individuals most directly and forcibly, and to make the conflict come to its climax, literally before the eyes of the spectators (Brooks 433).

But, if the playwright should give up his right to tell the audience directly what his characters are thinking or feeling, the writer would say that he may limit himself to one means of revelation. The audience can draw the knowledge of his characters' thoughts and feelings from what they say and do. So, there is the soliloquy in which the character speaks aloud to him-

self, exposing thus directly to the audience his thoughts. The essence of the dramatic form is to reveal the character's feelings to the audience not explicitly but implicitly through his conversation and behavior towards other characters. The most obvious feature of a good drama is the opposition of the various characters' purposes and desires which come into conflict with each other's (Brooks 432-33).

In types of drama, melodrama involves a matter of deep emotion; tears in praise of self-pity. E. M. Forster even says that "self-pity is 'a weapon in the struggle for existence', and is 'a very present help in time of trouble'" (qtd. in Bentley 198). In tragedy, though problems of character and of human fate are explored, the struggle may be as violent as that of melodrama. Other modes instead of melodrama and tragedy may involve less violent conflict, but the dramatic effect ultimately derives from conflict (Brooks 433).

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill (1888-1953), one of the greatest American playwrights, was the first American dramatist who writes tragedy consistently. Before O'Neill, most successful American plays tend to be melodramas or sentimental comedies ("O'Neill"). The life and the work of O'Neill provide the study of contrasts and conflicts. O'Neill often comments that man was "a victim of ironies of life and of himself" (qtd. in Gannon 5). The study of his work will immediately show that the

irony of which he writes and speaks is characteristic of his personal life and career.

Many critics said that O'Neill always presented the truth as he saw it and never compromised his convictions or his beliefs. He is a kind of idealist, since he wants the drama to express the realities of life. His following comment indicates the direction of his drama:

If a person is to get a meaning of life he must learn to like the facts about himself—ugly as they may seem to his sentimental vanity—before he can lay hold on the truth behind the facts; and the truth is never ugly. (qtd. in Gannon 10)

He would avoid sentimentality in his dramas, and this can be argued that it clearly reflected to his *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, a four-act play published after his death in 1956. Herein, O'Neill portrays the sorrow or suffering in the life of the middle class family with no sentimental impression, but realistic one. It is considered to be a magnificent and beautiful play by the critics.

In the writer's opinion, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is an excellent drama, since the characters' performances are able to arouse the readers' or the audiences' emotions. The struggle of the characters to achieve the essence of life is, in fact, not a part of the characters' life, but it is life itself. It is a psychological drama since "it places more than the usual

amount of emphasis on interior characterization and on motives, circumstances, and internal action which spring from and develop, external action" (Kenan). Eric Bentley adds in *The Life of the Drama* that "the modern psychological dramatist is less interested, ultimately, in the traits and idiosyncrasies he makes use of than in 'some essential' factor to which these traits and idiosyncrasies do not necessarily point" (56). What is finally effective about O'Neill's characterization of Edmund Tyrone is not any of the traits so ably presented in the first three acts, but rather, the agonizing revelation in the last act, to himself and Tyrone and the readers, that he shares the guilt which he had previously projected onto his father.

The writer chooses this play as the analysis of the thesis, because she wants to study the characters or figures which are admitting the facts about themselves, since they only find contrasts and conflicts in their family relationships. Furthermore, the writer finds the play's most important conflict development in the character of Edmund Tyrone, a sensitive young man and an aspiring poet. He suffers painfully but patiently because he is sensitive to the feelings of others and to his own feelings. Although he tries, he cannot close his eyes to what is happening to all of them. He eventually accepts the truth of his mother's late condition; she suffers from drug addiction instead of rheumatism. She

uses drugs to escape from reality which she regards as bad even worthless and return to the past which she always remember in such a foolish manner. He finally understands about the reasons for his father's miserly behavior, and endures the most for his brother Jamie's cynicism and alcoholism. However, Edmund Tyrone receives the writer's sympathetic attention, for the tragic holds Edmund's situation. His tubercular condition is the possibility of an early death for him, but he can face his own limitations with such a painful honesty.

Under the title of *Edmund's Psychological Struggle For Self-Realization: A Study of The Main Character's Conflict in Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the writer considers Edmund Tyrone as a center of the thesis analysis. The presence of this character grows much attention since he represents a sensitive, perceptive youth, but at the same time a depressed, morbid person and an alcoholic. He displays both hatred and love toward the other members of the family. Accordingly, the experience of him confronting life is a process of suffering psychological wounds in which he attains release and relief.

I.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Dealing with the preceding discussion, the writer wants to draw an attention to Edmund Tyrone's psychological development by suggesting some questions of:

1. What are the sources of Edmund's problems?
2. How does he overcome his problems?

I.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The writing of this thesis is meant:

1. to reveal the sources of Edmund's problems, and
2. to explore the ways Edmund takes to overcome the problems.

I.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

If the study should be a valuable contribution to the study of literature and other related studies about literature, the writer expects that people would continue the study. And, this study should be a valuable contribution to the literary department and literary students in Airlangga University.

I.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The thesis analysis is concerned with the four characters which throw themselves in their own world. They perform the common family's failing, since each of them displays the inability and unwillingness to communicate. But, the writer would limit and concentrate the analysis on Edmund Tyrone's conflict concerning with its cause and result he attains psychologically. Edmund Tyrone is a tragic protagonist who fights against his condition, but he can win because he is not a worm

ground under the heel of fate. Though he has some weaknesses, he is able to put up a fight and a good one.

To obtain this purpose, the writer would limit the focus of discussion on plot, setting and characters. She believes that those elements serve as the most prominent of the structure of the story in which they are interrelated to one another to create the whole impression.

I.6 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Concerning with the preceding discussion, the writer considers *Long Day's Journey Into Night* a tragic work, since it involves more severe conflict, yet its conclusion the problems of the character and the human fate do not end with a mere tragedy, when the main character died. Furthermore, the writer is interested in examining the intrinsic feature of the work, in this case, the conflicts among the characters which consequently produce the dramatic effect. At this point, she accords with an intrinsic study of the work of art, and suggests the Intrinsic Theory by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren which is natural and sensible to study literature. Hereto, Wellek and Warren said that "the study of literature should first and foremost concentrate on the actual work of art itself" (140).

Having stated previously, this thesis is concentrated to analyze the play's most important conflict development in the character of Edmund Tyrone to survive

the painful and disillusioning life, in fact, the nature of him has deeply been influenced by his family. He undergoes a psychological conflict of which he cherishes the illusion that the reality of life seems unbearable to him, and the fog may foreshadow a terrible disaster. In this case, the central crisis of Edmund's psychological development only derives from psychoanalytic theory. Therefore, the writer is interested in applying a psychoanalytic approach. She intends to interpret Edmund Tyrone from Sigmund Freud's point of view. This idea is a special interest to the writer, seeming to offer a key to the motives of fictitious characters.

I.7 METHOD OF THE STUDY

Writing this thesis is purely *library research*. Concerning with the thesis' problems, the writer considers *Long Day's Journey Into Night* as a main source of the analysis. Having read and reread the story a number of times, the writer attempts to understand its essence completely in accordance to her own interpretation. In writing this thesis, she will apply *descriptive analysis* supported by underlying references. The data are collected from books, articles, and other printed materials related to the background of Eugene O'Neill and his works, particularly *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. She writes some expressions and quotations that in case can be taken as a source to answer the statement of the problems.

1.8. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Conflict : a state of disagreement or argument between opposing groups or opposing ideas or principles; a struggle or a battle that grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces. There are four possible kinds of conflicts: man against himself, man against man, man against society, and man against nature or destiny.

Oedipal interest: the child's unconscious desire or interest to possess the opposite-sexed parent and at the same time dispose of the same-sexed parent.

Oedipus complex: the process during the phallic stage—the third stage of psychosexual development in which the sex organs become the primary focus of pleasure or gratification—in which the child desires sexual union with the opposite-sexed parent, feels threatened by the same-sexed parent, and eventually resolves the conflict by identifying with the same-sexed parent. The child experiences

erotic feelings toward the parent of the opposite sex and has feelings of hatred and jealousy toward the parent of the same sex.

Self-realization: (an experience of) understanding or believing of oneself; being or becoming conscious of (one's own strength and weakness)

Struggle : a great or determined effort within a person when trying to deal with a difficult problem or situation.

I.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis consists of five chapters that are analyzed respectively in turn afterwards. In the first chapter, *Introduction*, there are nine points in which each will be elaborated in details, that is the background of the study, statement of the problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical background, method of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis. The second chapter, *Theoretical Framework*, contains the scheme of approach and theory used in this discussion that have already listed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the writer wants to explain some reasons why this approach and theory are significant in the

analysis. The next two chapters much propose the analysis over the problems in which she writes some expressions and quotations to support the analysis. The last chapter represents the conclusion of what the whole analysis talks about.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK