

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the critical theories regarding the interpretation of the work of art and explores the arguments from psychologist and contemporary critics elucidating the behavior of the characters in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. It will be suggested that the discussion over related topic of objectivity in literary criticism has been supported by the arguments by Rene Wellek and M. H. Abrams. By using the term "the intrinsic study of literature" Wellek wants to deal with the work of literature independently of "extrinsic" factors (139-58). Yet, Abrams applies the critical term 'objective theory of art' to hold the view that "the literary work is most significant an object in itself, independent of the facts of its composition, the actuality it imitates, its author's stated intention, or the effect it produces on its audience" (qtd. in Kenan 305).

Considering with the emphasis on conflict analysis of the protagonist inner self, the general approach adopted here is that of using psychoanalysis as a means of supporting the interpretation and analysis of the character's motives and mental states. Thus, the writer emphasizes that Freud's theory would provide detailed and relevant analysis to the motives, circumstances, and

internal action which develop external action. This chapter then goes on to provide the critical commentaries, analysis, and writings of thesis in confirming and attesting the insights of O'Neill's characterization and interpretations of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

## II.1 RELATED THEORIES

Dealing with the aspects of the intrinsic study of literature, the writer should first and foremost suggest the discussion of the play's organization, that is plot, including the development of the conflicts, people who bring out the conflicts (characters), and the background of place, objects, and culture (setting) in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

According to Edgar V. Roberts in *Writing Themes About Literature*, plot is "a plan or a groundwork of human motivations, with the actions resulting from believable and realistic human responses" (51). Once an author has established a narrative or sequential order, however, a sequence must be integrated with human motivation. Sequential order is important not because one thing happens *after* another, but because it happens *because of* another. It is human response, interaction, causation, and conflict that make a plot out of a series of actions (Roberts 51-52).

In this thesis analysis, the writer wants to trace the beginnings of Edmund's development—the process of suffering psychological wounds because of his tuberculosis, the condition of the mother's going deeper into her dope dream and the Tyrone men's advanced state of drunkenness—until he finally reaches a moment of frank confession. Once he gains insight into his family's past experiences and feelings, he relates these more completely to his ongoing difficulties.

The most significant element of plot is *conflict*. In fact, it is "the essence of plot" because in conflict, "human energy is brought out to the highest degree" (Roberts 52). In drama, the dramatic effect ultimately derives from conflict, because opposing forces arouse curiosity, cause doubt (about the outcome), and create tension. The establishment of tension thus attracts the reader's interest towards the story of the play. Concerning with the development of suspense, conflict finally reaches a climax—a major crisis or turning point in the whole action of a plot—at which the essential decision made which results in the action concluding one way or the other. Thus, suspense continues from the point of climax to the end of the plot. The resolution is the rounding-off of the action, or the conclusion of the conflict (Little 84-85).

*Character* in literature is "an extended verbal representation of a human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech, and behavior" (Roberts 65). Through dialogue, action, and commentary, an author suggests the details about the characters' traits, thus, the readers can analyze and develop conclusions about their qualities and strengths.

In *Approach to Literature*, Graham Little defines "depth of characterization to the degree of richness or completeness of presentation of character" (91). A deep portrayal takes into account the complications of human mind and personality. One of the most important features of deep-character portrayal is the presentation of development and change, especially as a result of the changing personal relationships (Little 91). Furthermore, E. M. Forster defines two kinds of literary characters, that is "round" and "flat" (qtd. in Roberts 65).

A round character is one of the major figures in literature who profits from experience and undergoes a change or development. Round characters are relatively fully developed. For this reason they are considered protagonists, which are central to the actions, move against antagonists, and exhibit the same qualities of living and adapting characters. Since round characters undergo change or growth, and they are both individual and unpredictable, they are dynamic. Obviously, round

characters are central to serious literature, for they are the focal points of conflict and interest. They may lead no more than ordinary lives, and they may face no more than the common problems of living, but they are real and human because they grow and develop as they win or lose their struggles (Roberts 66).

In contrast to the round character, the flat character does not grow, no matter what the circumstances. Flat characters are not individual, but rather useful, and usually minor. They end where they begin, because they are static, not dynamic (Roberts 66).

In *Long Day's Journey*, Edmund Tyrone is dynamic, round character since he undergoes change or growth. The writer learns that he is quiet, sensitive person, but she also learns that his home life has been blighted and disappointed. Finally, however, after submitting patiently to his father and the family, he has a conscience about what has happened. He is able to protest or able to understand. He does not quietly accept what has come to pass.

*Setting* is "the natural, manufactured, and cultural environment in which characters live and move, including all the artifacts they use in their lives." Setting in literature is important because literary characters, like human beings generally, do not exist in isolation. Just as they interact with other characters in the process of becoming human, they gain identity because of

their cultural and political ideas, their jobs, their possessions, and the locations where they work and love (Roberts 75).

At a certain point, the setting of a work might reach the level of symbolism in which the author employs a detail of setting to stand for a condition of life (Roberts 76). The fog in *Long Day's Journey* is such a symbol. The outside fog reflects the inner fog of the characters—the mother's drugged state of mind and the men's drunkenness. In the last act, Edmund says that fog, a darkening of the light or a thickening of the atmosphere, serves as a connector between life and death (see Chapter IV, pp. 65). Setting also helps to create *atmosphere* or *mood* (Roberts 78). So, the readers will agree that a description of darker colors in this play will contribute to a mood of unhappiness or gloom.

### II.1.1 INTRINSIC THEORY

Rene Wellek argues in his book that "the natural and sensible starting point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves" (139). After all, only the works themselves justify our interest in the life of an author, in his social environment and the whole process of literature (Wellek 139).

From Wellek's starting point, the writer undertakes to explore the main problems of thesis analysis from the

standpoint of the intrinsic concern for literature. Thus far, the theory conceives the literary genre as a grouping of literary works based upon both outer form (specific meter or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose—more crudely, subject and audience). Principally this theory classifies literature and literary history not by time or place (period or national language) but by specifically literary types of organization or structure (Wellek and Warren 235-241). However, Plato and Aristotle had already distinguished "imaginative literature" according to "manner of imitation" (or "representation"):

Lyric poetry is the poet's own person; in epic poetry (or a novel) the poet partly speaks in his own person as narrator, and partly makes his characters speak in direct discourse (mixed narrative); in drama, the poet disappears behind his cast of characters. (qtd. in Wellek and Warren 237)

On the other hand, M. H. Abrams describes a type of theory in which "its practical application gets down to deal with the work of art itself" (26). The theory principally regards the work of literature independently of all the external points of reference, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being. This theory analyzes a work of literature as a unity constituted by its parts in their internal relations (Abrams 26).

Another attempt at the analysis of an art form which is "both objective and comprehensive" occurs in Aristotle's theory. Abrams has chosen to discuss Aristotle's procedure on the basis of "its flexibility" which has assimilated "the external elements into attributes of the work proper" (27). In fact, the tragic work itself can be now analyzed formally as a self-determining of the whole parts, or a unity in which the component incidents are integrated by the internal relations. However, this point of view has been comparatively rare in literary criticism (Abrams 26-27).

#### II.1.2 PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

In the light of psychological knowledge, the writer is able to examine the behavior of the characters in a novel or a drama. If the characters' behavior confirms what she knows about the subtle details of human mind, she can use modern theories as a means of interpreting the work of literature. In *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the writer has observed, for an instance, that Edmund Tyrone behaves according to a pattern which Freud discovered to be characteristic of certain kinds of individuals acting in certain kinds of circumstances. It means that the psychoanalytic knowledge about the nature of mind can be applied to an elucidation of the behavior of the characters in the play.



The argument from psychoanalysis is here directed, however, to help the writer to read the play aright, because it can completely demonstrate that "the work which is difficult and apparently confused is in truth a profound study of certain aspects of human character" (Daiches 344). Therefore, it can confirm the writer's opinion or interpretation about Edmund Tyrone's state of mind and personality when the life for him is disillusioning.

#### II.1.2.1 SIGMUND FREUD'S THEORY OF OEDIPUS COMPLEX

Sigmund Freud believes that the myth of Oedipus expresses a profound insight into an important stage in the psychological development of human beings. He suggests that all sons go through a phase in their childhood when they desire to kill their fathers and marry their mothers. This desire is *unconscious*, and marks an early stage in the child's development towards adult sexuality (qtd. in Selden 81). The typical male child does not, of course, actually kill his father nor does he have sexual intercourse with his mother, but Freudians believe that he does have the unconscious wish to do both (Hjelle 99).

What persuades the boy-child to abandon his incestuous desire for the mother is the father's threat of "castration". This threat need not necessarily be spoken; but the boy begins to imagine this as a punishment

which might be directed against himself. He thus represses his incestuous desire in anxious resignation, adjusts himself to the "reality principle", submits to the father, detaches himself from the mother, and comforts himself with the unconscious consolation that his father symbolizes a place, a possibility, which he himself will be able to realize in the future. If he is not a patriarch now, he will be later. The boy makes peace with his father, identifies with him, and is thus introduced into the symbolic role of manhood. Succeeding in dealing with his Oedipus complex, he has driven his forbidden desire underground, repressed it into the place Freud calls the unconscious. As a man in the making, the boy will now grow up within the image of becoming a gendered subject, and practices which his society happens to define as "masculine". He will one day become a father himself, thus sustaining this society by contributing to the business of sexual reproduction. His earlier diffuse libido has become organized through the Oedipus complex in a way which centers it upon genital sexuality. If the boy is unable successfully to overcome the Oedipus complex, he may be sexually incapacitated for such a role: he may privilege the image of his mother above all other women, which for Freud may lead to homosexuality; or the recognition that women are 'castrated' may have traumatized him so deeply that he is unable to enjoy satisfying sexual relation-

ships with them (qtd. in Eagleton 155).

Freud believes, then, in the psychoanalytic process, the Oedipal conflict is relieved through *transference* whereby the analysis becomes the opportunity to re-work the original crisis, this time with clinical insight (qtd. in Makaryk 164). Transference, thus, reflects the patient's need to find a love object so that repressed love feelings might be expressed. The analyst serves as a substitute love object in such a setting. Transference may reveal itself in direct verbal communication, free association, or the content of dreams (Hjelle 123).

The relevance of Freud's theory of Oedipus Complex to Edmund Tyrone, the center of the character analysis, is fairly obvious. It has been noticed that Edmund, like all mature males, must have passed through the Oedipal phase and effectively repressed his Oedipal desires, because he has encountered morality, conscience, law and all forms of social and religious authority. However, the repressed desires remain latent, they can be brought to the surface again if a crisis occurs in Edmund's life.

In Edmund's case, the writer's interpretation of the father-son relationship may reveal that Edmund both loves and hates his father a great deal. Deeply resenting his father's relationship with his mother, considering that Edmund has unconscious repressed feelings of

rivalry toward his father, he continually and deliberately hurts his father or annoys him. Since Edmund recognizes that his father domineers over his mother and the family, he bitterly hates his father's determination. Moreover, he blames his father's stinginess for her addiction. As an example in *Long Day's Journey*, Edmund may be showing his anger and hatred towards his father if he says something like the following:

Because you've never given her anything that would help her to stay off it! No home except this summer dump in a place she hates and you've refused even to spend money to make this look decent, while you keep buying more property, and playing sucker for every con man with gold mine, or a silver mine, or any kind of get-rich-quick swindle! You've dragged her around on the road, season after season, on one-night stands, with no one, she could talk to, waiting night after night in dirty hotel rooms for you to come back with a bun on after the bars closed! Christ, it is any wonder she didn't want to be cured. Jesus, when I think of it I hate your guts! (141)

On a deeper level, Edmund is emotionally reacting to Tyrone as he formerly felt toward him in childhood (the Oedipal theme again). More precisely, Edmund feels threatened by his father, since he wishes to oust his father and possess his mother. But also loving his

father, Edmund feels guilty and thus deeply represses this wish. After all, he genuinely sympathized with his father, because he finds himself connects with his father's fear, anxiety, and hopelessness. (When the father admits that the play which made him financially ruined him, importantly, Edmund comments that now he knows the father a lot better).

Compared to Edmund, Jamie, the eldest son, who is pampered by his mother and despised by his father, feels extremely threatened by his father, in fact, his Oedipal conflict is never relieved. Since the mother has drawn away from him (because of her condition), he tragically realizes that he has lost his secure center of his shiftless life. His companionship with the younger Edmund reflects his need to find a love object in order that repressed love feelings might be expressed. The two brothers share whiskey and women, and Jamie has had a very great influence (mostly bad) on his younger brother. Actually, he purposely tries to make a bum out of Edmund in order to make himself look better. His love for the mother and his need for her affection provides his jealousy of the younger Edmund, 'Mama's baby', as Jamie calls him. This jealousy causes Jamie to corrupt his brother.

However, the writer witnesses that Jamie's Oedipus complex is not so successfully overcome that he preserves an unhealthy love for the mother and finds tran-

sition to a heterosexual love difficulty. In this connection, his interest in prostitutes is the substitute for his Oedipal interest in his mother. (His choice of Fat Violet to sleep with rather than the other prostitutes at Mamie Burns' place makes it clear).

## II.2 RELATED STUDIES OF OTHER WORKS ABOUT *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

Eugene O'Neill is considered one of the America's greatest playwrights. From the time he first began seriously to write for the theater, critics, commentators, and psychologists had much discussed and evaluated O'Neill and his works. They commented continually on his concern with tragedy and the tragic. Certainly, it was O'Neill's tragic vision that sparked the critics' interest in evaluating his 45 plays, including *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1956). From its publication up to the present, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* has invited new interpretations and insights. There are many critical commentaries, writings of thesis or introductory about the play, in fact, the writer considers that *Long Day's Journey* would be still interesting to analyze. She wants to suggest the discussion in this thesis from the point of: Edmund Tyrone's psychological struggle for self-realization. It is a study of the human relationships which are destructive under pressure of the

traumatic recent past. Yet, *Long Day's Journey* is not merely revealing a love-hate family relationship, or an opposition of wills, and so forth. It adopts further a complex problem of human nature under pressure, which is concerned with discovering a way in which the human spirit could survive the painful and disillusioning life. At this point, this thesis analysis is intended to help the readers to view human nature under pressure in the light of psychoanalysis.

John Henry Raleigh, in his essay "O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and New England Irish-Catholicism" printed by *The Partisan Review*, has commented that "O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey* is his finest play (and tragedy) as well as perhaps the finest play (and tragedy) ever written on this continent." It does not have much competition, to be sure, but whatever competition it may have—*Winterset*, *Death of a Salesman*, O'Neill's own tragedies, and the like—is so completely outdistanced that there is no point in making comparisons and contrasts. *Long Day's Journey* stands by itself. All the power in characterization and the compassion for humanity that everyone knew O'Neill always had and which always showed itself comes out clearly, cleanly, and unambiguously in *Long Day's Journey* (124-41). Thus, Harold Clurman in his commentary on *Long Day's Journey* repeats many of the comments previously about O'Neill and his writing ability. He speaks of this play as being

a "painfully autobiographical work" and then adds, "The accusation of his own guilt and obsessive desire to purge himself of it through blame nags at him; hence the repetitiousness, often wearisome to the reader (or the spectator) but organic to the author." He seems to question of whether or not the play is "great" or even "good" (qtd. in Gannon 73).

One of the most clearly expressed commentaries on O'Neill and his plays was written by Frederic I. Carpenter. He makes a number of perceptive comments, but when he attempts to deal with *Long Day's Journey* he appears hesitant. He too stresses the autobiographical elements: "*Long Day's Journey* describes the mid-world of middle class family life, and its greatness in its simple domestication both of tragic emotion and of human insight." Another commentator who evaluated the play in terms of the lives it portrayed was Peter Bugel: "The greatness of the play is that it succeeds where they failed in granting atonement for all their real and imagined grievances" (qtd. in Gannon 73-74).

Probably, one of the finest and most perceptive reviews written by John Chapman, he tells why he thinks *Long Day's Journey* is a magnificent and beautiful play. He dismisses the autobiographical element by saying it could have been written about anybody else. He calls the play "one of the great dramas of any time" and calls attention to the "profound compassion of the writing"



and the "great depths of O'Neill's sympathy." He continues, "As they tell of themselves, each in a long monologue, these people become larger than their own small lives; they become humanity, looking for something but not knowing exactly what it is looking for" (qtd. in Gannon 74).

# **CHAPTER III**

## **ANALISIS ON *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT***