

CHAPTER III  
ANALYSIS ON  
*LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

*Long Day's Journey Into Night* is the story about some kind of rift in the family relationships; sons against father, mother against father, brother against brother, mother against son, and so forth. Without ever mentioning the word or related words, O'Neill conveys a feeling of the middle class family's frustrations, when expectations are somehow unfulfilled. As far as the writer's concerned, *Long Day's Journey* is exactly an endless day in the life of the Tyrone family and a painful journey of their attempt to find the truth about themselves and each other. Yet, their plight represents the sense of guilt, the defeat of hopes, the loss of true self, the unavoidable parent-child confrontations, and so forth.

In this chapter, the writer intends to discuss the setting, the characters, and the references to the past regarding the Tyrone family. Yet, in the next chapter, she will talk about the plot and the conflicts among the Tyrone family concerning with the conflict analysis on the central character. The play's setting is the living room of James Tyrone's summer home on a morning in August 1912. Here, the family gathers together to make an intimate conversation, however, the discussion has

changed into a very complicated topic. The family's discussion begins from breakfast time to bedtime around midnight.

The flow of time can be measured by the increasing darkness of the day and the thickening of the atmosphere; the sunlight becomes a faint haziness, thus, changes to an early dusk caused by the fog, and becomes the dark midnight with the wall of fog at its densest. However, the increasing darkness and the developing fog outside the house, punctuated by the moaning sound of foghorns, has completely developed an uneasy, unsettled, and unpleasant atmosphere. Yet, the fog, as mentioned before, is not merely an atmospheric condition; it gathers to its symbolic significance. The outside fog reflects the inner fog of the characters—Mary's drugged state of mind and the men's drunkenness. (The writer will relate the fog to Mary Tyrone's view of the world in the following chapter).

The living room of James Tyrone's summer home, in the writer's opinion, is completely ordinary. Only two details are worth to mention, that is the listing of books in the two bookcases and the two double doorways leading out of the room. However, this simple room has even added the gloomy atmosphere that has emerged from the start. The small bookcase contains novels by Balsac, Zola and Stendhal, works by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Marx, plays by Ibsen, Shaw and Strindberg, poetry by

Swinburne, Wilde and Dowson. The larger bookcase contains three sets of Shakespeare, historical works and miscellaneous volumes of old plays and poetry. When the father and son get into the discussion of the relative merits of various authors, the writer learns that the small bookcase contains the works which influence the son [Edmund Tyrone] and his thinking, and the larger bookcase contains volumes suitable to the father [James Tyrone] and his concerns and ideas.

As the play progresses, the writer sees that the father is much concerned with the past. The contrast in the literary tastes of the father and the son, thus, reflects the conflict in their ideas and attitudes. The duplicate sets of Shakespeare not only emphasize the value for which James Tyrone admires these works, but also indicate his belief that Shakespeare is the 'be-all and end-all' of literature. The historical works and volumes of old plays and poetry reflect the same thinking. Certainly the books which have influenced each are real manifestations of the conflict between Edmund and his father, or at least, they partially account for it.

More important than the bookcases are the two double doorways which lead into the living room. One of the doors opens into a front parlor which is rarely used and the other opens into a dark, windowless back parlor which represents a passageway to the dining room. Their conversations in the living room reveal much about

themselves and about each other, but always behind them is the darkness and unhappiness of the past. For a few moments, they come into the light and realize the truth about themselves and each other, but very soon they again attempt to hide.

The rarely-used front parlor seems to symbolize the happiness of the past. The only person who uses the parlor is the mother. When she comes back into the living room, she has completely lost contact with reality and imagines herself as a young girl again. In the writer's opinion, the depiction of the dark back parlor has represented the things of the past they are trying to forget, and the front parlor has represented the things of the past they are trying to remember.

The four characters which bringing out the conflicts include James Tyrone—the father, Mary Cavan Tyrone—the mother, James Tyrone, Jr. (Jamie)—the elder son, Edmund Tyrone—the younger son, but the center of writer's attention is Edmund Tyrone, a sensitive and perceptive youth. The story seems to be no more than a series of family discussions but it presents the events of the past that have produced the present. However, the family dialogues can be regarded as the confessions for all the Tyrones.

James Tyrone is sixty-five but looks ten years younger, he has no nerves and has never been really sick a day in his life. He is remarkably good looking with

the quality of an actor—the actor shows in all his unconscious habits of speech, movement, and gesture. He has a fine voice, of which he is proud.

The fact that James is sixty-five but looks ten years younger would indicate that the years had been good to him and his way of life had agreed with him. As a popular actor, a matinee idol, he evidently enjoyed the life in the theater. Because he has been successful, he has a pride in himself. But the writer notes that he is by nature and preference a simple, unpretentious man. His clothes are shabby and threadbare. He believes in wearing his clothes to the limit of usefulness is dressed for gardening and does not care how he looks. However, the description of James Tyrone's clothes shows the ideas of the father's inclination towards stinginess.

As the story progresses, the father reveals much about himself. His confession that the play which brought him such great financial success ruined him, could point to the causes of his miserliness. In fact, the writer could see that the father has terrible disappointment with the fact that he is not an actor on the first level as he wishes to be.

Mary Tyrone is fifty four, with a young graceful figure. She has a once-pretty, Irish face with sensitive lips. Her large and beautiful brown eyes appear black despite her paleness and her thick pure white hair. She

is extremely nervous and her once-beautiful hands are never still. That she is unable to control them will be a source of humiliation for her and awkwardness for those who look at her. She is dressed simply and her hair is attractively styled, and her voice is soft and attractive. But her most quality is the simple, unaffected charm of a shy convent-girl youthfulness she has never lost—an innate unworldly innocence.

Having been described as an attractive middle-aged woman, the writer would conclude that Mary has possibly endured few difficulties during her life—physical, mental, or financial. Her demeanor, speech, and dress are all appropriate to a woman who has a successful husband. She has, therefore, had the time and money necessary to enjoy the finer things in life. But, the writer is disconcerted by her present behavior. Her quality of 'unworldly innocence' is, however, ironic of a dope-fiend mother. As the story develops, the writer begins to realize that Mary's concern with the past seems to be in many ways directly and indirectly responsible for the present plight of the whole family.

Jamie Tyrone is thirty three. His face is good looking despite marks of dissipation. He resembles the father rather than the mother. He has fine brown eyes, their color midway between his father's lighter and his mother's darker ones. His aquiline nose, combined with his habitual expression of cynicism, gives his coun-

tenance a Mephistophelian cast. But he still has the Irish charm of the 'ne'er-do-well' who is attractive to women and popular with men.

Jamie's main interest in life of whores and whiskeys will, thus, reveal the 'marks of dissipation' he possesses. Jamie loves his brother Edmund, but he is responsible for initiating Edmund into a life of dissipation. However, the most revealing thing about their brotherhood is the ambivalent feelings Jamie has about Edmund. They have been very close but at the same time Jamie seems to be jealous of his younger brother.

Edmund Tyrone is ten years younger than his brother. He looks like both his parents, but is more like his mother. He has the big, dark eyes and hypersensitive mouth of the mother as well as her extreme nervous sensibility. From his appearance, he is plainly in bad health. The mother believes that it is only a summer cold, but Doctor Hardy has observed that he has got a consumption (tuberculosis). The doctors promise the father that he will be cured in six months or a year at most if he obeys orders at sanatorium. However, Edmund's tragic condition becomes the most important concern for the family despite the mother's drug addiction. They are all concerned about the possibility of an early death for him—tuberculosis is an often fatal disease.

Edmund Tyrone takes the writer's great sympathy, because he is tragic but he is able to fight back

against his condition. As the story develops, the writer sees that Edmund's distracted condition is entirely due to the mother's frailty, however, the addiction of his mother, the alcoholism of his brother, the domination of his father, and his tuberculosis all contribute to his anguished struggle for self-realization.



# **CHAPTER IV**

## **EDMUND'S PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUGGLE FOR SELF - REALIZATION**