

Long Day's Journey into Night

—Formation of the complexity of behavioral pattern resulting from the combination of social hierarchical layer and deep psychological layer—Part II

Kumi Ohno

In this manuscript, I have analyzed the behavioral pattern of each character and explored the roots of these attitudes from psychological factors to find out the historical impact on the cursed Tyrone family. I have researched the Irish history to dig into the family background of the author in order to understand the influence of social class layers on each of the family members. By studying the personalities and deep psychology of the characters and their inner conflicts, I have explored how and why the common roots branched out into diversified identities of the characters to find out the true meaning behind the play.

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II. Identity complexity resulting from social hierarchical layers

—Identity during the transition from Irish American to American—

(1) Mary's case: True Irish identity as Irish

As mentioned earlier in section I of this thesis, the situation set in this play is that a husband and wife are from different social classes and backgrounds. They were born and raised in a completely different world as evident from the conversation of the couple. It may sound like an ordinary husband/wife dialogue but their attitudes toward each other reflect their social layers. When viewed from the hierarchical layers, the husband's kind words of considerations towards his wife is expressed in his words, however, on the contrary, his wife quite frankly and openly speaks what and how she feels directly to him. Her attitude towards him is always from top to down.

Tyrone

You're a fine armful now, Mary, with those twenty pounds you've gained.

Mary

I've gotten too fat, you mean, dear. I really ought to reduce.

Tyrone

None of that, my lady! You're just right. We'll have no talk of reducing.

Is that why you ate so little breakfast?.

Mary

So little? I thought I ate a lot.

Tyrone

You didn't. Not as much as I'd like to see, anyway.

Mary

Oh you! You expect everyone to eat the enormous breakfast you do.
No one else in the world could without dying of indigestion.

(719)

Her attitude becomes real when she complains on his snoring like a foghorn and criticizes his thoughtless behavior cynically.

In Act Two, her glittering eyes shine more than the first Act and “strange abrupt change to a detached impersonal tone”.¹ Jamie tells his mother, “I’m not blind”.²

Mary

None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your true self forever.

(749)

The dialogue at the living room weakens the trust between the husband and wife weakens as the play progresses.

In Act Two, Scene Two, her restlessness and anxiety intensifies. She feels uncomfortable being with the family and she continues to talk as if no one is watching. As the story develops, she reveals her emotions straight-forwardedly. She accuses her husband with growing intensity.

Mary

It doesn't matter any more, but it's always seemed to me your father could afford to keep on buying property but never to give me a home.

(756)

Her tone pitches up to continue further with Edmund who suffers from tuberculosis that her morphine addiction was because of the doctor and that she does not trust all the physicians.

Mary

...And yet it was exactly the same type of cheap quack who first gave you the medicine—and you never knew what it was until too late! I hate doctors!

(757)

Tyrone

Mary! For God's sake, forget the past!

Mary

The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too. We all try to lie out of that but life won't let us. I blame only myself. I swore after Eugene died I would never have another baby. I was to blame for his death. If I hadn't left him with my mother to join you on the road, because you wrote telling me you missed me and were so lonely, Jamie would never have been allowed, when he still had measles, to go in the baby's room, (*her face hardening*) I've always believed Jamie did it on purpose. He was jealous of the baby. He hated him.....Above all, I shouldn't have let you insist I have another baby to take Eugene's place, because you thought that would make me forget his death.

(765)

As Tyrone pleads Mary to forget the past, she argues that past is already happened and cannot be changed. She tries to be her true self, once spotlighted and shined on the stage, by tracing back her past. However, the reminiscence of the past entails the cursed history of her life. In order to sustain the life in the real world, morphine was the only remedy she had. It was the magic powder that created her virtual reality, which is very similar to the pipe dreams of the characters in *Iceman*

Cometh, who live in the world of pipe dreams, they created. They see the delusional self in the virtual world which became the elixir of their lives.

Mary is not able to reply to the desperate wish of the family to recover from her drug abuse. She continues with her desperate hope:

Mary

...But some day, dear, I will find it again—some day when you're all well, and I see you healthy and happy and successful, and I don't have to feel guilty any more—some day when the Blessed Virgin Mary forgives me and gives me back the faith in Her love and pity I used to have in my convent days, and I can pray to Her again—when She sees no one in the world can believe in me even for a moment any more, then She will believe in me, and with Her help it will be so easy.

(770)

From the above lines, it is evident that she recalls the happy days of the past. Unfortunately, the only spell she can use to go back in the history book is morphine. She blames her husband for her present unhappiness. His background as black Irish is the real cause of her adversity.

In Act Three, she talks on the un-resistable lure of the drug to Cathleen.

Mary

It kills the pain. You go back until at last you are beyond its reach.
Only the past when you were happy is real.

(777)

The past is activated in her mind and gives a smile of a high school student at the Catholic school (nun's girl's school). When she talking on her past, she seems to be stable and relaxed, however, when she is in the real world, she is irritated and disapproves her sons and her husband. Her anxiety and complaints against other family members intensify.

In Act Three, there is a scene where she starts to insults the family background of her husband, "His people were the most ignorant kind of

poverty-stricken Irish.”³ He stands without knowing what to do, while controlling his anger. An aging and worn out, the old man looks defeated and tired.

In the final Act, the husband and the two sons just stand vacantly to watch the insanity of Mary. She appears with her wedding gown trailing. She looks around but she seems to be in a different world and walks like a sleep walker, passes at the back of the chair Jamie sits and behind Edmund. She goes to the left of the stage. Like a dreaming girl, she looks innocently younger:

Mary

...I told her I wanted to be a nun.... But Mother Elizabeth told me I must be more sure than that, even, that I must prove it wasn't simply my imagination...and then if after a year or two I still felt sure, I could come back to see her and we would talk it over again... I knew she heard my prayer and would always love me and see no harm ever came to me so long as I never lost my faith in her...That was in the winter of senior year. Then in the spring something happened to me. Yes, I remember. I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time

(827)

She enjoys the happy times of her past and delves into her past, the past she lived as an Irish. The root of her identity is her past.

(2) Tyrone's case

Identity from the viewpoint of Irish pride

Tyrone's father abandoned his family and alone returns to his home country to die which cornered the rest of the family. The family crisis almost starved the wife and children. Tyrone had to work at his childhood to sustain his family. He knows the true meaning of the hard money. His success in acting career gave him the opportunity to expand his potential as an actor. He had performed in the Shakespearean plays and was once a promised actor. However, when his *Monte Christo* became a box office block buster, he was able to escape from a rat race

and earn a big money each time he played. He continued his role as Monte Christo to accumulate his wealth but he no longer was able to play other roles. He regrets it from the depth of his heart. Though he is obsessed with money, he easily believes the words of real estate agent and spends his money investing on the property no one would and loses his assets. He is an earnest, warm-hearted person, maybe too generous, but all of these characteristics stem from the fear of living a life in poverty as evident from the phrase he always tells his children:

Tyrone

...A dollar was worth so much then.

(808)

Tyrone

The poor old ham! But the final curtain will be in the poorhouse just the same, and that's not comedy!

(794)

Tyrone's children are getting tired of their father's habit of inviting his friends to the shabby summer house. Edmund blames his father's stinginess for his mother's morphine addiction. Father-son argument can be seen in various scenes. :

Tyrone

I've spent thousands upon thousands in cures! A waste. What good have they done her? She always started again.

Edmund

...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, is it any wonder she didn't want to be cured. Jesus, when I think of it I hate your guts!

Tyrone

Edmund! How dare you talk to your father like that, you insolent young cub!

(803)

The conflict between the father who lived a life as an Irish immigrant and Irish American son is also one of the themes. Similar conflict exists between Tyrone and his first son, Jamie. Tyrone is a devout Catholic but his children are not:

Tyrone

You've both flouted the faith you were born and brought up in—the one true faith of the Catholic Church—and your denial has brought nothing but self-destruction!

(759)

This is also one of the main causes of father-son argument.

Tyrone has a strong pride as Irish Catholic. There is a scene in Act Two where Jamie blames his father for putting Edmund in a cheap sanatorium.

Jamie

...What I'm afraid of is, with your Irish bog-trotter idea that consumption is fatal, you'll figure it would be a waste of money to spend any more than you can help.

Tyrone

I have every hope Edmund will be cured. And keep your dirty tongue off Ireland! You're a fine one to sneer, with the map of it on your face!

(761)

Jamie attacks his father by saying criticizing the Irish. Tyrone counterattacks his son by pointing out Jamie's Irish appearance. These lines express a strong Irish ethnicity. Tyrone was a successful Irish man in America, however, his past efforts are not very much appreciated by his family. On the contrary, they criticize his victory. Although he is a

problematic person with in-adorable personalities, he has sustained his whole family with his wealth but in the play, all the hardships ended up in vain and he lives not so happy life. In the final scene, Tyrone looks back on his past life. His story telling to Edmund starts when he was playing cards. All of his sufferings and adverse life of his childhood after the family moved to the promising land is elaborately described. The audience sees and hears the history of the author in this scene. Next lines express the father's regrets.

Tyrone

Yes, maybe life overdid the lesson for me, and made a dollar worth too much, and the time came when that mistake ruined my career as a fine actor.

(809)

Tyrone, finally, is able to look back his history which was hidden deep inside his heart. In other words, the lines are the cry of the Irish immigrant in Tyrone.

(3) Jamie's case

Rebellion to the Irish suppression

Jamie resembles his father but not very handsome like Tyrone. His body is already affected by his indulged debauchery. He was once a brilliant young man in his school days, beloved and adorable boy. But the alcohol changed his life. He was expelled from most of the school he attended which forced him to lead a life of uncertainty. He is a little over 30, but he cannot or does not even try to find his own way of living. He still depends on his father and works in the Tyrone's theatre company as an actor, playing some subordinate roles or sometimes as a backstage crew, but he spends all the money he earned in drinking and women. He is the main source of worries to Tyrone and Edmund. Jamie, however, always criticizes his father's habit of inviting his friends.

In the play, his behaviors and attitudes show that he inherits many of his father's attributes. Tyrone complains about his first son to Edmund that Jamie's ambition is just alcohol and women.⁴

Jamie is a pain in the neck to the family but his concerns for his mother is stronger than Edmund. From his lines, “Where’s the hophead?”⁵ we know that his shock of knowing his mother’s drug addiction is immense. He does know how to express himself and he directs his shock against Tyrone and Edmund. However, deep inside his psyche, his affection towards his mother and brother is deeper than anyone else. Deeper the love towards Mary, the shock of her addiction is unbearable. However, Jamie always turns against his father, straightforwardly. Jamie and Tyrone, son and father, conflict appears on the stage from the beginning to end. He only reveals his true mind at the final scene, same as his father.

All the men in *Journey* try to understand each other by disclosing their true feelings. On the contrary, Mary never tells her deep hidden nature to other family members. She indulges herself into the realm of her past.

Drunken, as usual, Jamie returns and starts to reveal his true self to Edmund:

Jamie

...Never wanted you succeed and make me look even worse by comparison. Wanted you to fail. Always Jealous of you. Mama’s baby. Papa’s pet! ...I love you more than I hate you. ...I hate myself... ..The dead part of me hopes you won’t get well. Maybe he’s even glad the game has got Mama again! He wants company, he doesn’t want to be the only corpse around the house! ...Only don’t forget me.... So go and get well. Don’t die on me. You’re all I’ve got left. God bless you, Kid.

(820)

He approaches Edmund with serious look and continues to reveal his inner conflicts, then, he lies down.

Jamie was born and raised as the first son and as an Irish American. However, he rebels against the Irish ethnicity although he is not awoken as the American born native. He is the grass without root but he seems to seek the secured place more than anyone else. Alcohol and women

maybe the side effect.

To reply to his father's expectation means the suppression as an Irish. Jamie cannot answer to Tyrone. He feels alienated in the family. His deep emotions are evident from his Rosetti's poem:

"Look in my face. My name is Might-Have-Been;
I am also called No More, Too Late, Farewell."

(822)

The poem will be inscribed on his cemetery. In Act Four, he mirrors himself and finds out that the true victory over the Irish suppression is to be independent from his father but unfortunately he is unable to accomplish this. His complex feelings and inner conflicts edge him to suffer. This is similar to his father who was unable to melt in the American society.

(4) Edmund's case
From Irish American to American

1912 is the turning point of the author where he attempted suicide, experienced the first divorce, suffered from tuberculosis, spent in sanatorium and finally started his playwright career. From this point of view, Eugene O'Neill and Edmund cannot be compared. Although the play is regarded as autobiographical, the story of the play differs from the author's real life experience. For example, Edmund's tuberculosis happened in summer but Eugene was infected the disease after autumn. The author probably wanted to use synergy effect with Mary's morphine addiction.

Eugene O'Neill already left his first wife Catherine but in the play this is not mentioned. The reason is because his ex-wife and her child were still living at the time. He probably paid tribute to his former family. In the letter, O'Neill touched on the characters of the play, "trapped within each other by the past, each guilty and at the same time innocent, scorning, loving, pitying each other, understanding and yet not understanding at all, forgiving but still doomed never to be able to forget."⁶

In this period, O'Neill never had a positive feeling against Broadway. He criticized the plays performed were decadent and preferred small theatres. The author's health along with the devastating economic situation, the whole world was down in pessimism, though his passion to be a playwright never ceased.

The initial plays mainly focused on love and hatred of a family but when analyzing in depth, we can feel the Irish blood flowing into the drama. I remember his famous words in his letter:

I'm always acutely conscious of the Force behind – Fate, God, our biological past creating our present, whatever one calls it – Mystery certainly!⁷

The “force behind” is the word that represents Eugene O'Neill's view on life, but it is quite evident that the author was aware of his Irish bloodline.

All the family except Edmund inherited the Irish blood and suffered from being unable to melt in the American culture. All, but Edmund, hated, loved, pitied and tried to understand each other but fail. Tyrone, the father, Mary, the mother and Jamie, the brother disagree, disrespect and forgive each other. The cycle repeats in the play. They do not and cannot look into the mirror and know themselves, which disables them to understand the other family members. Edmund disagrees with his father, mother and brother but tried to understand them.

Edmund and mother, both suffer from the sickness. Many scenes in Act three involve Edmund and his mother. Mary does not want to believe her son's sickness, the same feeling against her addiction.

Edmund

Listen Mama!I've got to go to a sanatorium.

Mary

Go away? (*violently*) No! I won't have it!

Edmund

Mama! Don't! All this talk about loving me – and you won't even listen

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when I try to tell you how sick —

Mary

You're so like your father, dear. You love to make a scene out of nothing so you can be dramatic and tragic.

Edmund

It's pretty hard to take at times, having a dope fiend for a mother!

(787-788)

Mary does not accept Edmund's tuberculosis and she tries to stop him but Edmund cease her quite strongly, though he regrets and leaves the room.

After the scene, however, Mary blames herself and agrees about her morphine addiction.

Mary

...And it will be my fault. I should never have borne him. It would have been better for his sake. I could never hurt him then. He wouldn't have had to know his mother was a dope fiend — and hate her!

(790)

In Act three, Edmund argues with his mother while seeking the maternal love. He wants to depend on her motherly warmth but he cannot. His frustration is quite painfully expressed. However, the same feeling exist in Mary where she deeply loves his son but is unable to express her affection.

In Act Four, Edmund talks about his feelings against his mother.

Edmund

...The hardest thing to take is the blank wall she builds around her. Or it's more like a bank of fog in which she hides and loses herself. Deliberately, that's the hell of it! ... It's as if, in spite of loving us, she hated us!

(801)

From the lines above, we know Edmund has understood his mother's pain and agony more than anyone else in the family but he does not want to escape from his disease. He faces with his condition. Jamie's words reveal the truth about his brother in the scene where Tyrone blames Jamie for giving bad influence on Edmund.

Jamie

...His quietness fools people into thinking they can do what they like with him. But he's stubborn as hell inside and what he does is what he wants to do, and to hell with anyone else!

(733)

Jamie, in fact, understands Edmund more than anyone else. From the lines above, Edmund wishes strongly the recovery of her mother that he wants her to face her addiction.

Edmund

She'll be nothing but a ghost haunting the past by this time. Back before I was born.

(800)

However, the son's prayer from the depth of his hear does not reach his mother and Mary cannot reply to his call. She delves into her virtual reality of the past, never to return. The above lines are his desperate cry.

In Act four, Tyrone and Edmund confronts each other, face-to-face. Edmund blames his father for his obsession of money that caused Mary's morphine addiction. This may be interpreted as Edmund's rebellion against the Irish bloodline. Tyrone's hardships and adversity are never understood by his son, but the situation change when he shares his childhood experience they are more connected to each other than ever, which makes Edmund comfortable to talk on his memory.

Next lines of Edmund reflect the author's view on a human "fate" which is the quintessence of O'Neill's plays. The symbol of sea to represent an eternal life is effectively and poetically described which in

fact reflects the “Ego”.

Edmund

...I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself! ...It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish. As it is, I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death!

(811-812)

The words resemble the hardships of the author in his young age. He himself faced death and this experience enabled him to deepen his insight and found the answer to his question, something that transcends all ages, society, culture and mankind. This enlightenment enabled the author to lighten up his way as a playwright. The confrontation with his father which resulted in the mutual understanding signifies the harmonious fusion with the Irish ancestor.

Edmund is not influenced by the Mephistopheles smile of alcohol and women like his brother. He is not impacted by the Irish ethnicity, either. He continued to search for the secured land, always confronting with himself.

To Edmund, his peace land has always been America. As Eugene Jr, O'Neill's son, quotes, “The one thing that explains more than anything about me is the fact that I'm Irish , and, strangely enough, it is something that all the writers who have attempted to explain me and my work have overlooked.”⁸

O'Neill valued the Irish family origin as evident from this letter. Edmund attempts to harmonize with Irish which signifies the evolution of his identity. It is the fusion between Irish ethnicity and American society.

III. Conclusion

This play was written when the author was 50 years old. He started his play in the summer of 1939 and completed in September of 1940 but rewrote it before he sent it to his beloved wife, Carlotta in July of 1941.

In the epigraph, he mentions:

Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift, it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play—write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones.⁹

O'Neill in reminiscence of his prime point in life may have written the play. At the time, Carlotta recalls the unforgettable night with Eugene O'Neill when he was looking into the fireplace without a blink, he mentioned that he was thinking of the 4 haunted family who had suffered the hell. It was a strange experience, she remembers, the torturing pain he suffered while writing his autobiographical play. Whenever he came out of the study, he looks exhausted and worn out, sometimes crying with his eyes red. He looked 10 years older when he finished his work for the day.¹⁰ From her remembrance, we can suspect the efforts of O'Neill to write the truth about his family going back the time to their ancestors. Because the play is a personal reminiscence of the author's family history, he instructed not to release the play until 25 years after his death. But His wife, Carlotta contributed the play to Yale University. Later, Jose Quintero produced the play which resulted in his 4th Pulitzer Award.¹¹

After the conferring of the award, the play was released to the public and became the block buster which became one of the greatest play in the history of American theatre.

In Japan, the critics highly regarded the play when it was performed in 2000.¹² The structure of the play is based on the Classical unities. The play progresses from 8:30 am to midnight of the same day. The speeches, attitudes and behaviors of each character of the Tyrone family happens

in an ordinary day but the audience experience the day the author had spent which reflects the long history of O'Neill family who immigrated from Ireland.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the dichotomy of social layer that exist in Tyrone family contradicts and results in confrontation however at the basement there is a common element of Irish "pride".

The dichotomy of social layer (Black Irish and Lace Curtain Irish) at the abyss of the family evolves the complex psychological structure of the characters. I have analyzed the deep psychology of the characters through their lines and behavior. The difference in the social layer appears in their attitude and speeches through the collective sub-conscious and personal sub-conscious, especially the Irish ethnicity deep inside their subconscious surfaces on the stage through the dialogues, resulting in the complexity of their behavioral patterns. The self-denial and self-contradiction are repeatedly happening in each of the family. The diversified Irish identity is expressed through the characters. Mary's pain, Tyrone's regrets, Jamie's debauchery and Edmund's personality, all relates to the social class layer.

O'Neill's past plays experiments the expression of the personal unconscious, collective unconscious, conscious and super conscious of the characters using tragic, comedic expressions on the stage. However, in *Journey*, he placed the complex social class layer at the basement of the story and tried to show the inner structure of the deep psychology of the characters. The clarification of social layer was in fact the long journey to trace back the history of O'Neill himself. At the same time, it was the history that created the great playwright Eugene O'Neill.

Notes: This is the second half of my thesis on *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Please refer to the first part half of my paper for the full analysis of this play.

Footnotes

- 1 *Eugene O'Neill, Complete Plays 1932-1943* (The Library of America, 1988) *Long Day's Journey into Night*, p.747
- 2 *Ibid.*, p.750
- 3 *Ibid.*, p.782
- 4 *Ibid.*, p.795
- 5 *Ibid.*, p.818
- 6 Louis Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist* (London: Paul Elek, 1973) p. 509
- 7 Arthur Hobson Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day* (New York, 1945), Vol. II, p.199
- 8 Bowen, *The Black Irishman*, pp.64-65
- 9 *Eugene O'Neill, op.cit.*, p.714
- 10 Seymour Peck, *A Talk with Mrs. O'Neill*, pp.92-94
- 11 Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (New York : Harper & Row 1960) pp.861-863
- 12 2000年に新国立劇場で、栗山民也氏の演出・監督で上演された。

All the quoted lines in this thesis are from “*O'Neill: Complete Plays 1932–1943*” (The Library of America, 1988) *Long Day's Journey into Night*.