

I. Futility of the Tyrone Family: An Introduction

Long Day's Journey into Night is O'Neill's one of the most famous plays. He chronicles the journey of the Tyrone family into a difficult internal strife and solitary self-pity in this play. The play begins in the Tyrone family house where the four family members use their problems to destroy one another. They all live their life by tormenting themselves and each other. All members in the family try to face the problems but fail to solve and make confessions of defeat, however, each confession invokes another one. They are in a chain of problems through which none of them can escape. All revolve around the cyclical wheels of blame and guilt that start to spin. So, they all shelter on narcotic drugs to heal their mental wounds and agonies. Their persistent struggle to succeed takes them to nowhere except in a roundabout of eternal conflict.

All characters in the play possess fault. James Tyrone, the father is an actor whose insensitive cheapness torments his family. He denies his alcoholism and drinks to forget his past career, mistakes and unhappiness. The mother, Mary is a morphine addict and is a dreamer who lives a life of denial. Her identity is based on lying and hiding her morphine addiction. She regrets over her marriage to James Tyrone. Their elder son, Jamie is an alcoholic and this is the part of his total alienation. He drinks to forget his personal and professional failures. James Tyrone, the father reminds him of his worthlessness. The other son Edmund is extremely sensitive and afraid of life. He wants to be a writer and wishes that he was a sailor. He has got tuberculosis and struggles with his illness with no achievement at all. Thus, everyone is useless as none of them can bring the family out from its troublesome existence through eternal struggle directed toward resolving family problems.

The Tyrone family is dysfunctional and trying to come out to grips with its

ambivalent emotions in the visage of serious familial problems, including drug addiction, moral degradation, deep-rooted fear, guilt and life threatening illness. It is a play written with the theme of alienation and emptiness caused by economic crisis, which has fragmented the unified family. It also investigates whether happiness of life depends on denial through consoling lies or confrontation with reality.

Eugene O'Neill, a leading twentieth century dramatist has been called the father of modern American drama. He is regarded as the major American playwright because of the influence of his works on the development of American theatre. His writings mainly focus on the conflict-filled dysfunctional American family. In one sense, his dramatic art is autobiographical, for it is directed toward the understanding of own life and inner self. He explores the scaring effects of his childhood. While doing so he presents his characters bent on self- destruction like in *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

O'Neill in the earlier phase of his play writing produced plays that were poetic in tone, some what melodramatic in substance and highly romantic. But he was no longer contented with romantic, poetic or tragic melodramatic trend. So, he took resort to Strindbergian nihilism and Freudianism as he was passionately dissatisfied with the then dramatic trend and was seeking for some reliable ground of theatrical artistry. His massive study of Freud, Jung and Adler paved way toward dramatizing the inner struggle and conflict that govern the search for existential meaning.

As a victim of nihilism O'Neill sees life without any consistency and good foundation. Human relationships are equally discordant for O'Neill. As an iconoclast of the theatre, he reacts in his own way to the dehumanization and spiritual vacuity of the modern wasteland. He finds human existence as the source of suffering. He is different from his contemporaries in play writing as they are reformatory and he is

rebellious. For his distinctive tendency John Gassner approves his pessimism as “salutary defiance of facile American optimism or existentialist truth” (5). As a pessimist, the abiding theme of his play is the tension between illusion and reality, fate and will, faith and skepticism. These tensions are always connected with his struggle against alienation. He catches the vital parts of human existence and gives a strange pattern. For this quality of O’Neill Alen Downer comments, “As a poet of the theatre he always seeks to transmute his angst, sense of personal agonies and desolation into some thing richly strange” (35). As a dramatist he believes that life is a continuous struggle and presents this notion in his plays. But he never focuses on the individual characteristics. He has a sense of human need. So, he analyses the social structure. While doing this he presents his characters against the background of cultural, biological and environmental heritage. There is no consistent ideological pattern in his drama rather many ideas or discussion of ideas at once that keep on changing play to play. They indicate chaos and helplessness, lies, feeling of void and mutual human destruction.

The characters of O’Neill are mostly found to be struggling for survival at the midst of family dispute and narcotic delusion. They suffer from the self-imposed torture like the Tyrone of *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. In the play the Tyrone family is fragmented as each of its members to some degree is alienated from the rest and move around confrontations in spite of the efforts to come out. Thus, their struggle is having no meaning and is futile.

This research work aims to justify the state of the Tyrone familial identity as an oppressor and victim in turn bringing the reference of American society; and the Tyrone’s struggle to sustain with some efforts to escape at the midst of family disputes aroused by addiction, alcoholism, diseases and negligence.

The play, *Long Day's Journey into Night* focuses on the decayed family of the Tyrone. Various internal and external factors have deteriorated the family, especially, Tyrone Jamie and Edmund's alcoholism, Tyrone's stinginess, Mary's addiction, Jamie and Edmunds's negligence. These factors in accumulation take them into an abyss of chaotic realization of more dreadful reality though they take refuge in drugs and alcohol to escape present. So, the family is fragmented and each individual is estranged. Why the bond of love among family members is destroyed? How do they struggle to exist? How do they fail to escape their troublesome existence in spite of their indulgence into drugs and how they fall victim of it? Are these only the responsible factors to 'oppress' and 'victimize' the family, or fate has some role? This dissertation will basically focus on family existence around the issues of confrontations; and their impacts for no positive achievements rather for a revolution in a roundabout studying the existence of American individual for nothing in a family and society.

In *Long Day's Journey into Night* O'Neill's autobiographical elements require more attention. But conditions of American individual in the family and society is also worthy to be explored. This dissertation employs the hypothesis that O'Neill depicts the Tyrones' efforts of escaping present degraded condition through addiction and alcohol reveling their failure and inner psychic depths revolving around the family disputes; that render them in a state of growing frustration and depression leading them to chaos. The issue will, in the research, be justified, applying absurdism as a theoretical tool to expose meaninglessness of individual trapped in the crisis of family affection.

To prove the hypothesis, the first emphasis has been given on the text itself. Besides, to interpret and analyze the play, to understand the absurdity of the Tyrone

family, available supportive materials have been consulted. Likewise, commentaries, articles and reviews to thematic aspects of the play, as secondary materials have also been incorporated. Library consultations and visiting to the authentic internet websites are other assets.

Moreover, this research work describes the consequences that arise in one's life when life saving mechanism is no longer capable of maintaining consistent pattern or structure citing the evidences from the Tyrone family life. It describes some major issues that have a role on the oppression and victimization of self. Their alienation is as E. Fromm says, "Man leads an alienated life when he doesn't experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts and their consequences have become his master, whom he obeys, or whom he even worships" (E. Fromm 120). So such types of theoretical guidelines are brought to study the Tyrone family of *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

The play written in 1940, for the 12th marriage anniversary of O'Neill with his third wife Charlotta, was published posthumously in 1956. It carries the manifestation of family tragedy, torture and suffering with which O'Neill was grown up. So, he wanted it to be published only after his death. His own words about the play 'written with tears and blood' in his letter to his wife written in 1941 show the exploration of his family suffering in the play. It has four acts and five scenes with a complex structure and emotional and conflicting themes. With its performances O'Neill earned his reputation as America's foremost playwright by turning personal misfortune into art that brought him posthumously fourth Pulitzer Prize in 1956. It impressed common readers, audiences and critics even the Nobel Prize winner T. S. Eliot. He finds it "One of the most frightening plays" (Foreword vii) he had ever seen. Through the performances of *Long Day's Journey into Night* O'Neill's other plays also gained

reputation ultimately opening a new way for the establishment of a theater for his honor.

Rather than organizing the play around plot or cohesive sequence of events, O'Neill illustrates the single day in which Mary Cavan Tyrone renews morphine habit and Edmund Tyrone learns that he has tuberculosis. Beyond these two plot points the four family members- Mary her husband James and their two adult sons, Edmund and Jamie- merely try to exist within the confines of their summer home without psychologically and physically destroying themselves and each other. O'Neill's remarkable feat in this play is that he allows the Tyrone to project great love for one another through a thick bag of self-hatred, poisonous resentment, drug addiction, guilt, and utter despair that threaten to suffocate them. The Tyrone family, which was once close, has deteriorated over the years with numerous problems like Mary's addiction to morphine, Tyrone's Jamie's and Edmund's alcoholism, Tyrone's stinginess and stubborn nature, the boy's rudeness and indifferent attitude towards work and money and many other factors. In fact, the play exposes the man's struggle of fate by the course of birth. In the play, the Tyrone family is haunted not by what is facing them, but by memories and constant reminders of what has been the downfall of the family for years. Their trials and tribulations are well documented by O'Neill through the proficient theme characterization, plot, setting, and style.

In *Long Day's Journey into Night* each Tyrone family member is undergoing a bitter revelation within the course of twenty- four hours. The four family members finally grasp the causes of their sorry lives through self-examination. They suffer from a personal confession as Jamie admits he would have enjoyed his life if he had continued pursuing acting rather than letting money rule his decisions. James reluctantly acknowledges that his childhood poverty led him to be a miser, "A dollar

was worth so much then. And once you have learned a lesson, it's hard to unlearn it" (148). Each character is drowning in weak-kneed means of escaping from reality. Morphine addiction, alcohol, self congratulatory delusion offer only temporary respite and simply exacerbate life's unpleasantness when the time takes them to face the cold light of day. The Tyrone family of the play symbolically represents the decaying American morals that make them a means of persecution of their own journeying towards the vagueness of whole life.

O'Neill having seen two World Wars explored the agony of war victims linking it to the fatal influence and existential struggle within the prevalent problems of society. O'Neill's early plays recognized Americans to the realistic techniques of great Europeans. Americans regarded realism as a concept that is sentimental and pathetic. By picking up American theater from the melodramatic trend O'Neill handed many trend setting plays that not only carry fatal impacts in human life but also the psychological exploration of human mind and implicit vagueness of existence.

Long Day's Journey into Night reveals the nature of its story in the title itself. All the characters in the play are making a journey towards darkness; their lives were once happy and good and have since become dismal and depressing. Every character has at least one specific problem that torments them through out their life. In writing this play, O'Neill attempted to pour something significant from his soul the bitterness, anger and frustration he felt in his family. O'Neill primarily envisions life as tragic and pessimistic. He believes that many internal and external forces direct life. His prediction of life rests on the assumption that life ultimately is destined to reach a chaotic, disorderly and problematic resolution through which neither one can come out nor can entertain.

Long Day's Journey into Night one of the most famous Pulitzer Prize winning plays in 1956 leaves grounds for multiple interpretations to many critics. Some have viewed this play having mystical applause. Others have viewed the play as a representation of reality in a great extent. Many have interpreted it as a play having human fear and horror. Commenting on the issues presented on the play Gerald Wales says, "The play is one of the most frightening family plays since *Oedipus Rex*" (399). Some other renowned critics have studied it with naturalistic insight. While others' focus is on existential and phenomenological perspectives. Analyzing its excellence, famous critic Harold Bloom in Foreword to *Long Day's Journey into Night* says:

By common consent, *Long Day's Journey into Night* is O'Neill's masterpiece. Since O'Neill, rather than Williams or Miller or Albee, is recognized as our leading dramatist, *Long Day's Journey into Night* must be the best play in our more than two centuries as a nation. One rereads it therefore with awe and certain apprehension, but with considerable puzzlement also. (Foreword xii)

Bloom specifies the play best because it carries diverse range of themes that have complex knitting. His observation motivated many critics to make some comments over the play from different perspectives. Since many critics have looked the play through diverse analytical insights, no extensive survey has been done on the Tyrone's familial identity as an oppressor and victim bringing the guidelines of absurdity. So this dissertation focuses on the existential, especially, absurd issues of the Tyrone's in *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

To locate the absurd instance on action of characters, the theoretical observation is absurd. The first chapter, therefore, gives general introduction and observes the past studies of the play. In the second chapter, absurdism as the

theoretical tool is widely discussed. The third chapter has been devoted to analyze the text with high focus on absurdity if the Tyrone family situation. And the findings of the study and conclusion have been given in the fourth chapter.

The study has some limitations. It does not discuss the language and theatrical devices of the play nor does look at the playwright's in depth biography and his works as well. The study takes shape through textual analysis. The focus has been given on the analysis of the Tyrone family of the play.

Literature Review

Eugene O'Neill's *Long Days' Journey into Night* has become the focus of discussion among many critics because of the exploration of human nature that digs up the unfathomable parts of the human psyche. The play sheds light on how the integrated family has become fragmented and disjointed due to poverty, which turns each family member into an alienated and solitary creature. As the play has received comments from different critics it will be fruitful to cite the relevant views.

O'Neill's depiction of the Tyrone family is highly appreciated by many critics in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. While observing the theme of the play, Gerald Weales in his essay "American Drama since World War II" says:

The play is simply the depiction of the Tyrone family- the mother's addition, the father's avarice, Jamie's alcoholism, Edmund's tuberculosis and the slow descent of the four of them crying shame and asking forgiveness, into the particular night . . . the abrasive interrelationship in which the love and guilt of each one helps to destroy all the others. (82)

Here, Gerald Weales has exposed family members as indulging in addiction, alcoholism and the life – threatening illness of tuberculosis. The mother gets addicted

to morphine because she is very unhappy. Tyrone is constantly blamed for his own stinginess, which may have led to Mary's morphine addiction when he refused to pay for a good doctor to treat the pain caused by childbirth. She has entirely been alienated throughout the play from her family members. She, on the other hand, is never able to let go of her past ambition, either to be nun or a professional pianist or admit to the painful truth of the present, the truth that she is addicted to morphine and her youngest son has tuberculosis because of the father's irresponsibility towards the family. He is stingy and stubborn in nature, tries to guide his family through economic control. Edmund, the younger son, has tuberculosis but the father does not play attention to his problems. Instead of taking him to the hospital, he rather prefers to invest on land and the estate. He has no fear of his son's health rather the fear of poverty and worships success. The father himself becomes an alcoholic for he sees Jamie and Edmund, his sons' failure.

Similarly, another noted critic Henry Hewes reviews the Tyrone's family life and finds it failing. He, in his essay "The Long Day's Journey into Night" in *O' Neill and His Play*, comments:

Each of the quartet advances from morning's surface jocularity into evening's soul-shaking revelations of self-truth. Each tries to blame others for his or her failures. Mary Tyrone takes to narcotic with excuses of her sons' health, her husband's unwillingness to spend money . . . her morphine after a difficult childbirth, and his failures to supply his family a decent home life . . . that incurable self-centeredness is the heart of this famous actor's trouble. As for the two sons, Edmund confesses that only on certain occasions at sea did he ever feel . . . pitiful, greedy fears and hopes and dream. He will always

be a stronger who never feels at home . . . who must always be a little in love with death! The other, Jamie at the height of drunkenness reveals that while he loves his brother he also has the subconscious wish to destroy him. (217-218)

This unified family has broken down and degenerated due to the father's inability to bring family love, cure, treatment and a decent home life. This collective family has been torn by individualistic tendencies due to uncertainty of life, despair and shattered dreams. There is jealousy and hatred within the family that destroy other members like the hatred of Jamie towards Edmund.

Another critic Harold Clurman points out the suffering of the family. He finds the family totally corrupt. In his essay "Long Day's Journey into Night" in *Eugene O'Neill and His Play*, analyzes this play in terms of corrupt familial identity that bring about moral degradation. Thus, he remarks:

All characters suffer it in one from another and a corresponding sense that the guilt feeling is in itself a sin or at least a fatal blemish accompanies constant alternation of moods. Every character speaks in two voices, two moods- one of rage, the other of apology. This produces a kind of moral schizophrenia. (215-216)

Anyway, he means to say that all the family members experience a sense of self-imposed guilty feeling, which leads them into a state of confusion. The journey of the life of each character in the play is at once linear and circular. As the play moves along the descending line –morning to night, night to dark, sunshine to fog, possibility to despair- the actions comes full circle; this is the process the four principal have gone through before. The cyclical sense of the play is enforced by the pattern of emotional involvement among the four Tyrone who obviously love each other even

more than they hate one another. With each of them, love leads to suspension, hate, cruelty, guilty, protectiveness, love and this again leads to . . . This is how all the characters of the play are entrapped within and outside of themselves. Each of them has been alienated from the rest and faces the uncertainties of life, terror and horror.

Moreover, themes of the play are excessively analyzed. Regarding its theme Harold Blooms, in his “foreword” to Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey into Night* illustrates the pitiable and miserable plight of family members stricken by unhealed pathos hidden deeply beneath each of the family members, says, “The helplessness of the family love to sustain, let alone heal, the wounds of marriage, of parenthood and of sonship, have never been so remorselessly portrayed, and with a force of gesture too painful ever to be forgotten by any of us” (xii). It is the revelation of the fact that no family member remains untouched by the sorrow that paralyzes the family. The play shows helplessness and lovelessness of family members. The wounds of marriage the members have inflicted upon one another mark them pass a hopeless life of alienation sometimes collectively and sometimes individually.

Likewise, individual characters are also brought into fore to make some analytical remarks on the play. Joseph Wood Krutch, in his book *The American Drama since 1918*, comments on the father’s character:

The actor father is a congenital bohemian talented but unstable and without self- knowledge or artistic integrity. He is lavish with his boon companions and reckless in making foolish investments, but niggardly with his family incapable of understanding that wives and children need some kind of stability in their lives. (333)

It shows the father’s irresponsibility and misunderstanding towards his family. The father is very miserly and self- centered in nature. He does not pay money for good

doctors for treatment of his wife after delivery nor does he spend on his son who suffers from tuberculosis. Instead he desires to invest on land and estates. He tries to hold his family under his control not by understanding their wishes or intension and helping them attain a successful career, but imposes work ethics on them. His foolish nature further helps to deteriorate the united family.

In a similar way, autobiographical elements get much emphasis in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Gary Seibert, in his article "O'Neill: The Tragic and The Comic" attempts to reveal the autobiographical elements of the play. Thus, Gary opines:

In writing the play, O'Neill attempted to exorcise from his soul the bitterness, anger and hatred he felt for his family. In the course of the play, the plays' idealistic hero, Edmund, a writer like O'Neill, is diagnosed with tuberculosis, a disease that killed his mother and father. The core of the play's . . . and mother's reaction to this discovery. Just as the fog rolls in over . . . poison of resentment and hatred engulfs this family, condemned to be forever locked in the embrace of resentment, denial and revenge. (64)

It brings forth the love and hate relationship, anger and jealousy, attitude of denial and revengeful feeling and the illusive temperature of each family member, which have dismantled the family bond and unity.

Gerald Weales finds the play representative of the post-war scenario. He calls this play the best reflection of the then age and time of the American 'victimization' from self in 1930s and 1940s. So, he says, "None of the post war works of the other playwright from the 1920s and 1930s approximates the power of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and most of it is less impressive than the plays by which those dramatists earned their reputation in earlier decades" (399).

In fact, *Long Day's Journey into Night* reflects the impression of the 1930s and 1940s. The great economic collapse and terrible casualties brought by Second World War in the entire socio-economic life of Americans. This play presents the uncertainties of life. There seems little doubt about what is going to happen. This Tyrone family has been fragmented due to commercial crisis, lack of fulfillment of the needs and wishes of every member in the family and loss of hope and confidence among themselves.

This is how different critics have given their perspectives in different ways. Unlike them, being a bit different, this dissertation aims to study the text from the perspective of familial identity as an oppressor and victim based on meaningless and absurd struggle of American individual.

II. Absurdism and Meaninglessness of Human Condition

Absurdism is a philosophical movement that states that an effort of humanity to find meaning in the universe ultimately fails. It proclaims that no meaning exists, at least in relation to humanity. It is related to existentialism though should not be confused with it. It, as a belief system, developed along with existentialist movement in the aftermath of World War II as the then social scenario contributed for the breeding and growing grounds of absurdist views in western academia.

Existentialism giving grounds for absurdism regards human predicament as an isolated existent in the universe, which does not possess inherent truth-value or meaning. To exist means to face the uncertainties of the world and commit oneself passionately to a way by distinguishing one from another. So, it negates the coherence and order of life instead advocates disorder and chaos aroused by self imposed trouble and torture. Humanity, in it, is found to be a matter of quest with fruitless resolution. It follows existentialist view that human beings are subjects in an indifferent, objective, often ambiguous and 'absurd' universe, in which meaning is not provided by the natural order, but rather can be created, however, provisionally and unstably, by human beings actions and interpretations.

Absurdism regards human beings historically attempting to find meaning in their life even after realizing the meaninglessness of their efforts. For some, traditionally, this search follows one of two paths: either concluding that life is meaningless and that what we have is the here- and- now; or filling the void with purpose set forth by a higher power that is probably God or adherence to religion. Absurdism, in this sense, admits its parenthood with existentialism as it borrows the basic components from existentialism and brings about some innovative concepts to be applied in the theoretical grounds.

Absurdism believes that human existence is basically absurd. We cannot explain why things are as they are and why not otherwise. This weakness is inherent in the nature of things that they convey no definite knowledge in relation to humanity that carries absolute, trustworthy and regaining value. Human beings search for belief that is reasonable and plausible in fundamentally absurd world and the plight of individuals who must take their own meaning is highly marked in absurdism. The world is viewed as an incomprehensible place; and humans here are the actors and viewers of the self made play. In this course of movement humanity rather than reaching a true destination drowns in a chaotic repetitious and void trap of struggle. As Steven Drukman in his article “Absurd Again” says, “These days ‘absurd’ is more often used synonymously with ridiculous” (78), the world seems to be ridiculous as humans are mockingly indulged in repetitive task assigned for them, however, carry no specific significance and benefits for their welfares. And writers adopt these perceptions widely for the post war literary and theoretical discourses.

Being existentialism’s bedfellow, absurdism proclaims that human existence is floating in a space of disharmony having no intelligence to cope with the time. So it assumes that human existence itself is out of place because it has no ultimate meaning of the accidental universe except silence. Despite various efforts of creating and imagining modifications in meaning ultimately failed human existence comes at hand. This absurdity is not the intellectual perception of disharmony but the existential collapse of human sense of order as nothing has proper place. Human life cannot be shaped or rearranged beyond absurd pattern.

Absurdism roots back to the beginning of twentieth century but got its full impetus in the World War II specifically with the publication of *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). Literary discourses in this period carried a charge of absurdity in contents and

treatment as they primarily expressed great pessimism over the adverse consequences of war. The war torn human sentiments could escape none of the jails of 'absurd' existence during war and its aftermath. The depressed and frustrated condition of individual revolving around the roundabout of struggle became the prime body of literary and theoretical atmosphere. Absurdity particularly got expressed in the plays and theater of 1950s and 1960s starting from the beginning of II World War. Martin Esslin thus, defines absurd in this context:

'Absurd' originally means 'out of harmony', in a musical context, hence its dictionary definition: with out of harmony with reason or propriety; incongruous, unreasonable, illogical'. In common usage, 'absurd' may simply mean 'ridiculous', but this is not the sense in which Camus uses the word, and in which it is used when we speak of the Theatre of the Absurd. (23)

Absurd in this sense is having no order in advance and carries no special significance of any thing special, which has logical importance. It rather explores the senselessness of the world and as a whole humanity. Esslin quotes Kafka and Ionesco saying "absurd is that which is devoid of purpose . . . cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (23). Thus, this is a metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition. And this is the major theme of many leading playwrights and writers of the time. Absurdity came to be seen in prose and became vibrant in drama as theatre of the absurd became a part of 'anti-literary' movement of our time, which has found its expression in abstract painting, with its rejection of 'literary' elements in pictures; or in 'new-novel' in France, with its reliance on description of objects and its rejection of empathy and anthropomorphism.

Absurdism at any way exposes the existential absurdity that is a permanent dimension of human existence even though we may seldom notice it. This possesses every nook and corner of our existence. Therefore human exists in the world that is beyond his wish and can entertain no fruitful living. The world does not have any meaning, value or truth. M. H. Abrahams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* comments on the absurd views of Camus and Sartre:

. . . Albert Camus to view a human being as an isolated existent who is cast into an alien universe, to conceive the universe as possessing no inherent truth, value, or meaning, and to represent human life- in its fruitless search for purpose and meaning, as it moves from the nothingness whence it came toward nothingness where it must end as an existence which is both anguished and absurd. (1)

Camus sees the condition of modern man similar to that of Corinthian King Sisyphus. Sisyphus is the martyr and teacher to all modern men who suffer eternal torture heroically because of his disobedience to God and his passion of life. Camus states, "This universe henceforth without a master seems neither sterile nor futile" (70). So, Camus proclaims human existence absurd because he realizes that the speculative system of past which neither provides any reliable guidance for life nor guarantees any foundation of human values. Camus, in his essay presents a character Sisyphus who makes choices for himself rejecting the command of God. So, he falls victim of this disobedience and in the repetitive act of rolling the rock up to the mountain, has the feeling of absurdity. But still Camus prevents us to assume that he is unhappy:

I leave the Sisyphus at the foot of mountain; one always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches a higher fidelity that negates the God and raises the rocks. He too concludes that all is well. The

universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy. (70)

So emphasizing absurdity, Camus points that when man needs to confront with the unreasonable silence of the world, man realizes absurdity in life, which is not in 'man' nor in the 'world' but in their presence together. For man, this world where he has been living all his life, at the time of self-awareness, is awkward, foreign and indifferent. Then, in such a situation, every object around him, which he had been so much familiar with for long, becomes mysterious. Then the things lose the meanings and the values that we have attached them earlier appear foreign, strange and irreducible to us. Camus argues that his strangeness of the world is absurd. He further insists that man finally encounters himself, his own body, his own consciousness, and his own existence and finally concludes 'it is absurd'. So, Camus encourages all to become bold to face the absurdity of life that has many challenges as Sisyphus faced.

Thus, in this 'absurd' universe human beings should not seek meaning rather create meaning through their own action. At the state of anxiety and alienation, one becomes conscious of his absurd existence. No matter his awareness makes any sense or not but at the moment of meaninglessness, futility, dread and boredom, one realizes the true absurd existence. So, Camus says:

If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? The workman of today works everyday in his life at the same tasks and his fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moment when it becomes conscious. (68)

Camus regards each human being protesting against the dictatorial power of God as Sisyphus has done. In the protest each individual by getting involved into self imposed torture protests the superiority of the God. This is regarded as the heroic deed of an alienated individual. Each individual is estranged from the rest and gets involved in the regular and routine task to which s/he is assigned. This is how he finds each individual engaged in Sisyphus like absurdity. Sisyphus rolls the rock to the top of the hill in a hope of succeeding but finds in the same position when he leaves the rock and sees. Human's efforts to succeed in life are also allegorized by Camus depicting the character Sisyphus.

Camus, being one of the pioneers of exposing absurdity, gives a way to come into terms with absurd condition of human beings. The post-War dramatists later on primarily utilize it. Camus' thinking upon the absurdity of human existence influences many writers of his period including Beckett. Sisyphus, the archetype of the 'absurd hero' represents human condition as a whole, according to Camus. Making everything in the world absurd, god ran away, and as the universe is godless, everything is permitted. But ultimate emergence of absurdity in each attempt of rolling the boulder up the hill necessarily causes 'nausea' in us. The absurdist believes that for a life of reasonable expectation, one must think it essential to have cognizance of absurdity. Without this recognition we will be prone to spend our life in dogma and illusion. Despite the bitterness of the knowledge of this absurdity, it proves to be the only "assessment which will accurately define man's power of perception, action, and accomplishment" (Oliver 14). Ellmann and Feidelson note that Camus sees the affiliation of individual's worth only through the acceptance of absurdity, repudiating the illusion of hope and ultimate hope and ultimate meaning which enables the individual to recognize the peculiar meaning of his very condition (806). In a hopeless

and meaningless state, the individual is liberated to make a commitment but his liberation only affirms the continual revolt against absurdity like Sisyphus (806). Camus trusted on the defiance of Godly power. The dilemma and the inevitable paradox has been clarified by Beckett in his dialogue with Duthuit, “The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express” (Esslin 17). This is the condition of modern man. One is obliged to act when he cannot act. Camus acknowledging this explores the weird situation of man:

The mind’s first step is to distinguish what is true from what is false. However, as soon as thought reflects on itself, what it first discovers is a contradiction . . . to will is to stir up paradoxes. Everything is ordered in such a way as to bring into being that poisoned peace produced by thoughtlessness, lack of heart, or fatal renunciations . . . this world in absurd But despite so many pretentious centuries and over the heads of so many eloquent and persuasive men, I know that is false . . . this world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world. (*The Fact of Absurdity* 824-827)

In the face of absurdity, we have assumed our existence. The dramatization of the angst of human misery in art is manifested in many plays like *Caligula* and *Endgame*. The world seems to be unfathomable and unreasonable in which each individual is drawn. In an effort of finding out truth man confronts contradiction.

As many dramatists came in to terms with this absurd condition of individual and started exposing the absurdity of human in their plays absurdism became a

companion term of the theatre of the absurd. This refers to the works of a group of European and American dramatists writing plays in the 1950s and 1960s. Critic Martin Esslin, who identifies the common features of new style of drama that seem to ignore theoretical conventions, coins the term 'Theatre of the Absurd'. Characterized by a departure from realistic characters and situations, the plays offer no clear notion of the time or place in which the action occurs. Characters are often nameless and seem interchangeable. Events are completely outside the realm of rational motivation and may have nightmarish quality commonly associated with Surrealism (a post-World War I movement that features dream sequences and images from unconscious often sexual in nature). The dialogue and incidents may appear to the audience completely nonsensical, even farcical. However, in depth explore the themes of loneliness and isolation of failure of individuals to connect with others in any meaningful ways, and of the senselessness and absurdity of life and death. So true absurdity of human condition and theoretical bases of absurdism are carried further in the theatre of the absurd

The origins of the theatre of the absurd are rooted in the avant-garde experiments in art of the 1920s and 1930s. At the same time, it was undoubtedly influenced by the traumatic experience of the horrors of the Second World War, which showed the total impermanence of any values shook the validity of any conventions and highlighted the precariousness of human life and its fundamental meaninglessness and arbitrariness. The trauma of living from 1945 under threat of nuclear annihilation also seems to have been an important factor in the rise of the new theatre. Theatre of the absurd plays stresses the illogical or irrational aspect of experience, usually to show the pointlessness of modern life. The playwrights of this genre view the existentialist philosophers, Jean – Paul Sartre and Albert Camus who

describe a mad, insane and irrational world beyond man's rational understanding. Similarly, the horrible events of post World War II gave birth to two-monster totalitarianism of fascism and communism, disillusionment with scientific progress, and the regression of mankind to barbarism and terrorism. The 'absurd' plays are filled with weird situations, bizarre characters, and irrational experiences of the time. Martin Esslin regards that the same condition of humanity that is trapped in void of time without having any choice except to obey are best grasped by the absurd play. He writes in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*:

We cannot look for the germs of current phenomenon like The Theatre of the Absurd without first having defined its nature sufficiently to be able to discern from which the recurring elements that combine and recombine in the kaleidoscopic patterns of changing tastes and outlooks it is made up. Avant-garde movements are hardly ever entirely novel and unprecedented. The Theatre of the Absurd is a return to old, even archaic, traditions. Its novelty lies in the somewhat unusual combination of such antecedents, and a survey of all these will show that what may strike the unprepared spectator as iconoclastic and incomprehensible innovation is in fact merely an expansion, revaluation, and development of procedures that are familiar and completely acceptable in only slightly different context. (327)

Esslin takes the newness of the absurdity in the plays only the differentiation of context. Therefore, it can be said that absurdism in any way is attached to existentialism. But it is obvious that it is the theory, which could best advocate the futility of human existence. In this sense absurdism is a concept that came into force with some older conceptions bringing about some new innovative theoretical bases

that can be applied for addressing the true sentiments of socio cultural environment. Being an anti-realistic breakthrough absurdism occupies greater space in Post-War American discourses. Absurdism in its true sense exposes the absurdity of human life.

The existentialists' term absurd is philosophically applied to expose the situation of the modern man, a stranger in an inhuman world. Such situation of human destination is presented on the stage in the theatre of absurd. However, there is not a certain school of the playwrights that formalized a common doctrine of principles and artistic accords, which formally belongs to the movement. But some dramatists as Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, Genet and Adamov have accepted or created the world without guiding symmetry where god does not exist nor any world order or system. Consequently human existence is reduced to a meaningless morass of confusion. Solely, the theatre of the absurd stresses man's role as a psychological out cast within the universe. Martin Esslin in his book the *Theatre of the Absurd* defines the plays of the absurd, as those that shared a presentation of man's metaphysical absurdity in aberrant dramatic style that mirrored the situation.

Existentialist philosophers like Sartre and Camus have applied the same doctrine for different purposes and reasons than that of absurd dramatists. They view man as 'tragic heroic' figure, struggling nobly against an unknowable universe that seeks the meaning of his life over the situation, which is hostile, and out of harmony. Though existentialists' point of view may be philosophically revolutionary the fundamentals of dramatic construction: setting, plot, characterization and dialogue in their works belong to the conventional theatre. Having applied the same philosophical outlook the absurd dramatists follow the philosophers to some extent but they are considered more revolutionary in terms of structural techniques and formal devices that they have introduced in their works rejecting the conventional rules and devices.

Another difference between the philosophers and dramatists is that the dramatists do not view man as 'tragic heroic' figure but a 'comic pathetic' victim in their plays.

Victor Cahn suggests that man in an absurd universe is seen as little more than clown, bumbling and fumbling his way through the incomprehensible maze that is existence to both the amusement and pity of the artist observer and the audience. Inherent in the absurd consciousness is the chaos of life, the lack of order, symmetry and purpose that is properly expressed through dramatic structure also devoid of order, symmetry and purpose. The 'form' is the 'content' and 'content form' or medium itself is expressed in absurd universe to dramatize the orderless and purposeless consciousness or content in the play, the absurdist implies the orderless structure as medium in it. The text is considered as a metaphorical expression of the life in the 'absurd theatre'. Life does not have a certain frame to the end from the beginning. Likewise, an absurd play is devoid of any systematic structure and linear plot. It denies the application of the sequential plot, dialogue, action and thought, and realistic characters and setting of the conventional theatre in it. An absurd playwright thus, rejects the fourth wall convention of the traditional theatre and denies any possibility of the order and purpose in the absurd universe.

The writer expresses his thoughts and feelings through a series of free-floating images in an absurd text. Though they seem disconnected offer absurdity in concrete form by concentrating on certain objects, whose incomprehensibility and intractability prove overwhelming to the audience. Another aspect of absurd text is its peculiar use of language. The writers, especially dramatists, distrust language. The characters in the text cannot fully express what they actually want to convey or communicate, and they do not seem to understand properly what others have said. Victor Cahn considers that this pattern of language use is a formal device to enhance the effects as he views

“ . . . when speech is useless and communications impossible, the loneliness of the individual is increased. The world is cluttered with words, yet each man is imprisoned within his own thought” (40). Thus language separates each man from other in the absurd world because it is a ‘centralistic’ force rather than the cohesive force, which isolates each man in a vacuum of words.

The characters appeared in an absurd texts are generally nameless. Jill Levenson suggests, “ These strange anonymous characters without history or social milieu are stunningly sympathetic, vulnerable with their naked humanity” (39). Mankind is seen as hopeless clown who has undergone the uncertain destiny enduring physical infirmity, hunger assault, loneliness, impotence and the bitter sense of void in his universe. The absurd plays stress solely on man’s role as a psychological outcast from human society. The characters are aware of their pain and doom, but are not capable to eradicate or improve their pathetic situation. Humanity is presented at its lower level, but what’s horrendous in the absurd universe around them without any regularity and gravity in the complete form of chaos. The absurd characters challenge in this absurdity with their full energy but in vain, they fail again and again until they are exhausted. The main issue in almost absurd play is the exploration of irrational world. As Jill Levenson points out, “How can a man live reasonably in a world that makes no sense?” (40). To show the ‘arbitrariness’, unpredictability and confusion of human life, the dramatists correlate these themes to the plot of text which is also ‘non-linear’ and disjointed in its structure, at the same time the experimental heading of theatrical situation rejects the conventional thought and pattern in an absurd play. Another characteristic that generally absurd play marks is that of the non-specific time and place of its action. Hugh Kenner terms it as “nowhere no when” (27) spatial temporal location of the text. Duckworth suggests that such non-specific setting

enables to isolate his characters from any social reality that might deflect attention from generalized human situation he is portraying.

The plays break all the conventional pattern of presentation and experiments with the theme of absurdity in radically absurd way from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1948), one of the representative plays of the absurd theatre has neither action nor plot nor any logical dialogue. The play is a powerful presentation of the timeless circular and barren human world. It opens with Estragen saying "nothing to be done" (1) and ends with similar expressions. The action remains ignored till the last, quite contrary to dramatic conventions. The disillusionment of modern man about meaninglessness of his own existence became vibrant in all the works that have certain affiliation with the theatre of the absurd. The playwrights showed man as deformed figure in the hand of contemporary life, and their writings are a kind of protest against resentful life. Any protest writing has a seed of suggestions for a bitter situation. They explore the illogical and purposeless nature of existence often violent, grotesque, and outrageously funny. The main concern of the major writers of the absurd is to project on the stage a personal, concrete image of situation that epitomizes man's fundamental helplessness in contradictory and alienating universe. Sometimes, social criticism is embedded in these authors' works, but this is less important than their portrayal of human reaction to the essential realities: death, self, time, loneliness, communication, and freedom.

Absurdism seems to have been a reaction to the disappearance of religious dimension from contemporary life. It can be seen as an attempt to restore the importance of myth and ritual to our age, by making man aware of the ultimate realities of his condition, by instilling in him again the lost sense of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish. It hopes to achieve this by shocking man out of an existence

that has become trite, mechanical and complacent. It is felt that there is mystical experience in confronting the limits of human condition.

As a result, absurd texts bring highly innovative form, directly aiming to startle the viewers shaking them out of this comfortable conventional life of everyday concerns. In the meaningless and Godless Post-Second World War world, it was no longer possible to keep using such traditional art forms and standards that had ceased being convincing and lost their validity. They subvert logic and relish the unexpected and logically impossible. In being illogical, absurdism is anti-realist: it negates rationalism because it feels that rationalist thought, like language, only deals with the superficial aspects of things. Nonsense, on the other hand opens up a glimpse of the infinite. It offers intoxicating freedom brings one into contact with the essence of life and is a source of marvelous comedy. Dramatic conflicts, clashes of personalities and powers belong to a world where a rigid, accepted hierarchy of values forms a permanent establishment. Such conflicts, however, lose their meaning in a situation where the establishment and outward reality have become meaningless. However frantically characters perform and this only underlies the fact that nothing happens to change existence. Absurd plays communicate an atmosphere, an existence of archetypal human situations.

Theatre of the absurd exposes individual alienation, anguish, anxieties and absurdity. The individual world is shown to have drawn in spiritual crisis and deadness of modern absurd world. Man either in-group or in alone cannot feel secure, happy and satisfied. Man is experiencing lack of faith, humanity, brotherhood and companionship. The existence of people has fallen into crisis. Man comes to be a meaningless speck in the vast universe. Each individual becomes insignificant in the hand of absurd universe.

Thus, total human absurdity is exposed in the Post-War plays. The plays deal with the themes of absurdity of human existence in the universe. Anxiety and anguish are pervasive to expose nothingness of existence not only of individual but also of the world itself. The essence of anything goes in vain. There is nothing that guides the existence of world not merely of an individual. Many Post- War plays could truly capture these themes and paved way for the emergence of new trend. This new trend in the theatre became significant with the name of the theatre of the absurd. People are, thus, feeling alienation and anguish with the rapid development of mechanics. The importance of people has fallen into crisis. There develops new perspectives to seek human existence; the quest of independence, self-determination and individualism. Gradual development of science and technology are revolutionary political projects, conformism of mass societies and social liberalization dominated the individual fate by bureaucratic commercial and political superstructures. Therefore, a man comes to be a meaningless speck in the vast universe. The individual becomes insignificant in comparison to the machine in the family, society, state and in the universe.

American society in the twentieth century lost its values deviating into disintegration of each individual with sense of loss. It was turning point in American society towards an undesired direction. Once it was the home of idealism and centrality and order but now the old assumptions are gone, there is nothing to replace, however. Still American dream remains in American psyche as 'collective unconscious' to use the terms of Carl Gustav Jung. This dream remains, however, always abstract and never actualized, ever present and never fulfilled, possessing the true essence of absurdism. American society moves towards inconsistency because of the impact of the individualism and society's material orientation. Materially and

culturally American mentality could not grasp the grand success and thus remained forever unsatisfied. The pain of this failure is recurrent in American people and that is why American society is dominated by frustration, depression and fragmentation. Dealing with this situation E. A. Robinson uses twentieth century fears and problems. The Robinson's belief is that man's fate is wrapped in 'the black and of the night'. He shows characters lost in their lives with awful chaos. Now each individual must stand alone and face the tideless floods of nothingness (death). There is an existential threat in modern life- Is life still worth living? Aloneness and nothingness are the predicaments of modern life.

The same kind of dilemma and dissatisfaction with existence and absurdity of it is reflected by Eugene O'Neill in the Tyrone family of *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Each of them struggles for prosperous life in vain. It is the Tyrone family's quest for happiness, which is a vital part of the American dream- and which terminates in the nightmarish disillusionment of impossibility of achieving it. Each character's existential quest for happiness consequently leads them towards complete disintegration and nothingness. The Great Depression of 1929, the capitalistic exploitation and consequences of world wars leads the Tyrone family and entire society towards disharmony, chaos, uncertainty and nothingness. And thus, slowly and gradually the people and society, like each character of Tyrone family, distort towards individualistic form, celebrating alien world with nostalgia for old life and dream of achieving true fruitful goal, however ultimately zero comes at hand. O'Neill arrests this perplexed and absurd modernity experimenting with life in *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

III. Familial Identity: An Oppressor and Victim in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*

Familial identity in *Long Day's Journey into Night* is related to the situation of the Tyrone family having many conflicts of interest among the family members. The Tyrone family seems to be happy, as it does not have large number of family members. However, the family situation on the surface is found to be happy. Its familial identity is of addiction, alcohol and conflicts. Thus, it lacks human sentiments, spirituality and emotional attachment among family members. The entire family is drowning in a shadow of complete distrust and doubt over one another. As the family is disorganized in this way, it naturally fails to perform its function as a united one. Sense of individualism, generation gap, mental clashes within the family members and understandings are some major conditions and symptoms of family disintegration and futility of existence. The futile existence is the outcome of the failure among the family members to achieve 'happiness' and 'satisfaction' of any kind. There is no good family relationship between husband and wife, parents and children and as whole family members. It leads to family discord, divorce and deviation eroding family bond and unity in advance.

The family is the central point where multiple values, hopes and responsibilities converge. Happiness and prosperity prevail if everyone behaves correctly. There comes the family misery and disharmony when the sentiment, love and affection among the family members are broken. So, each individual fails to achieve something through perpetual struggle. A family loses its strength if an individual doesn't fulfill family obligation drowning oneself in severe mental conflicts aroused by failure in acquiring any fruitful resolution despite prolonged struggle. The Tyrone family is also drowning in such type of familial feuds

and sense of defeat though it does not withdraw itself from struggle that gives no success.

In depiction of the Tyrone family all the characters have severe faults and all are capable of great cruelty. This family is slowly decaying because it is trapped in mutual suspicion and disbelief. From the very beginning of the play, it is observed that James Tyrone, the father has extreme desire to invest on land and state though he is not expert in buying and selling of the land. He has a ready-made dream of attaining prosperous life and securing future through the investment on land, industry and business even though it is beyond his mental, physical and economic capacity. In this interest of James none of the other family member is convinced and commits support rather blames him of becoming irresponsible towards home and family:

TYRONE: I wouldn't say that, Mary. After all he was one who advised me to buy that place on Chestnut Street and I made quick turnover on it for a fine profit.

MARY: I know the famous stroke of good luck. I'm sure McGuire never has dreamed- never mind, James. I know it's a waste of breath trying to convince you. You are not a real estate speculator.

TYRONE: I've no such idea. But land is land and it's safer than the stocks and bonds of Wall Street Swindlers. But let's not argue about business this early morning. (I. 15)

Here, American dream is guiding Tyrone. But he cannot attain what he has dreamt through out his life. His field of interest is seen to be nonsensical because he has no experience over it. Through out his life he has been trying to have a prosperous life but he is always in the same want. Though could not make his dream true does not get tired of achieving it. This is due to the unfriendly nature of the other family members.

He is here guided by profit motive that he wants frequently. He is isolated from the rest of the family members as nobody gives importance to his plan. His wife Mary ignoring this shifts her concern and attracts his concern towards Edmund's illness, 'Consumption' to which James Tyrone is quite dissimilar and negligent. This shows the communication is broken down among the family members.

Edmund is suffering from cold and cough for a week. Though he knows Edmund is ill, he ignores it and insists Mary to pay heed over her health rather than worrying about Edmund. So, each individual has different field of interest and they have no co-ordination that fragments and leads each one in frustration and depression gradually. But every one has his/her own way of resistance.

Jamie, the elder son also worries to see Edmund's health deteriorating and doubts it as a fatal disease. So, he accuses his father who doesn't care to call an expert doctor. Jamie finds the doctor quack and complains with his father for not consulting a good professional and qualified doctor:

JAMIE: Poor kid! God damned it! It might never have happened if you sent him to a real doctor, which has first got sick.

TYRONE: What's the matter with Hardy? He's always been our doctor up here.

JAMIE: Every thing is the matter with him! Even this hick burg he's rated third class! He's cheap old quack!

TYRONE: That's right! Run him down! Run down everybody!

Everyone is a fake to you! (I. 30)

The antagonism without any fruitful suggestion is extreme in this play. Both Jamie and Tyrone suspect that Edmund has consumption (TB) but the father is not concerned about bringing qualified doctor for treatment. On the other hand, Jamie

rather than consulting a qualified doctor for brother's treatment blames his father for his inability. This exposes the irresponsible nature of both for family. Both, the son, Jamie and the father, Tyrone argue over the appropriateness of Edmund's doctor, Doc. Hardy, who charges too little for his services. The father benefits from it rather than the son. He accuses him of getting cheap doctor without quality and reliable services. It is because he is a penny-pincher and charges less than a dollar that makes him think he is a fine doctor. They have different logics to impose. They pick out their arguments for nothing because they can impress no one. Still they do not stop arguing. This is the nature of struggle. Though they know that their quarrel does bring no change in their life they do not stop. But he blames his father for his failure. He says, "I never wanted to be an actor. You forced me on the stage" (I. 32). This shows his inability of making good choice. He has a will to be something but is condemned to be an actor. He cannot disclose what he wants to be, as he has no better choice. Things in his life occur in a meaningless way, he cannot control them rather becomes a meaningless speck in turn.

Similarly, another son, Edmund also cannot control the events that occur in his life and makes him a useless individual. He, most of the times, remains alone. He wants to escape from the company of others. He says, "I feel rotten" (I. 44) when Mary inquires about the cause of his loneliness. He finds his existence futile that is of no use and is decayed. He lives in the house with other members but feels not his own. In the same way Mary is alienated. She also does not feel the home as her own. She says, "I never felt it was my home. It was wrong from the start" (I. 45). This indicates her life to be chaotic from the beginning and she has struggled with this through out. Such much of loneliness is created by the severe faults of the members of the family. They all have severe faults, cruelties and deception. So, the family is

decaying and all are living helpless lives waiting the dreadful future brought by the self. In between and among the disputes, accusations and mistreatments that occur in the family, love and hate relationship is apparently dominant. But the same love leads to suspicion, crime, cruelties, betrayal, pathos and again nonsense love. The chain of their love and hate relationship is both linear and circular.

The family loses its strength, as each individual does not fulfill family obligations sinking one in severe mental conflicts. These conflicts are aroused by the failure to acquire any fruitful resolution despite prolonged struggle. Thus, mutual affection and obligation are though, inseparable in the family become vague and each one indulges in a conflict. At the same time anger, rage, jealousy, resentment, hate and permanent failure are disintegrative forces that lead the individual to the deeper mental struggle, doom and destruction. Sense of mutual belonging and degree of intimacy become completely shattered. So it fails to achieve ultimate goal of success, peace and prosperity.

Mary reveals the pitiable condition of her family. She has passed her life without any friend and family attachment. She has specific idea about what 'home' is. But loneliness has taught her a bad lesson to remain always alone. So, she tries to avoid company of others and tells Edmund to go out, "You go out. I'm alone. I've always been alone" (I. 47). Her feeling of homelessness and helplessness frequently haunts her psyche. She is always with her husband and sons but feels alienated and empty. So, she is detached from family love, harmony and togetherness. She is trapped within the suffocated and resigned world of the Tyrone family.

As each one is alienated from the rest, communication has broken down within the family. Though they are in continuous bargaining of each other's fault, continuous lie and hiding from the true identity becomes one major feature of the

Tyrone family. Mary refuses to reveal the truth of her addiction. By lying and hiding her habit of morphine addiction Mary tortures herself. This self-imposed torture is her rebellion against the troublesome life that she has been living with. She wants to remain in this situation of herself. So, she pours her anger towards the continuous inspection of the other family members towards her addiction and says, “It makes it so much harder, living in this atmosphere of constant suspicions, knowing everyone is spying on one, and none of you believe on me, or trust me” (I. 47). The plight or position of Mary at home is completely degraded and frustrated but she does not realize that her refusal to reveal her secret over the family is responsible to cause her remain sad. She realizing their approach towards finding out her addiction appeals, “Stop suspecting me! Please, dear! You hurt me!” (I. 49). Still she does not reveal her addiction but hides. Jamie, on the other hand, is in constant suspicion and Mary gets afraid of that:

MARY: Why do you stare like that?

JAMIE: You know.

MARY: I don't know.

JAMIE: Oh, for God's sake, do you think you can fool me, Mama? I'm not blind. (II. i. 70)

They don't have good communication. Both of them do not reveal what they are referring to. Mary is haunted by inspection and pretends to have known nothing. Jamie horrifies her bringing the reference of god. The whole events revolve around the same subjects. They have nothing new to talk about. Jamie many times comments over Mary's condition but Tyrone is unaware of that. Jamie reveals, “She'll listen but she won't listen. She'll be here but she won't be here . . .” (II. i. 76). Jamie exposes the absurd condition of Mary. The self-contradictory remark of Jamie best reflects the

darker side of Mary's family life. Mary's state here is marked to be stable and beyond any consciousness as she is found to be absent in her presence. But Tyrone finds it to be nothing to get worried and says, ". . . every day from now on, there'll be the same drifting away from us until by the end of each night" (II. i. 76).

Mary, in her extreme frustration, indulges in the appreciation of her past life and regrets for present on which she does not like to live. She implies her morphine addiction through her story of the past life, which Tyrone wants her not to talk so frequently. But Mary time and again swings back and forth always bringing the reference of past. So, she shelters into morphine, as it continuous to kill all her mental tensions, wounds and worries. But this is only an assumption because she is drowning into a dark corner of life. In the remembrance of the past, Tyrone interrupts her and tries to take away her from the trap of past but cannot. He says, "Mary, forget the past." But Mary insists, "Why? How can I? 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 on myself" (II. i. 82). This is the real situation of all the Tyrone not merely of Mary. From the very past they have tried to get success but remain in the same despite constant struggle. This shows how they have been trapped in their nonsense life without having any outlet or choice to do. Mary insists that she cannot dissociate herself from the past because it is her present painful truth. This is the cyclical nature of Tyrone's life. They are always haunted by the past. What is present is the outcome or circumstances of the past. Here, she further suggests the repetitive nature of life in the Tyrone family. The events of the past are continually repeated in the present, just as the events of each individual day are repeated in a cyclical fashion based on alcoholism and morphine. Tyrone tries to bring Mary from the remembrance of past though he himself is not out of that. He also tries to find out her addiction but cannot:

TYRONE: Mary!

MARY: Yes, dear? What is it?

TYRONE: Nothing

MARY: You're welcome to come up and watch me if you're so suspicious.

TYRONE: As if that could do any good! You would only postpone it.

And I'm not a jailor. This is not a prison. (II. ii. 90)

Again the cyclical wheels of the Tyrone family turn back to Mary's addiction.

Tyrone's repetitive concern over Mary parallels the repetitive human actions. They are aware of their struggle and indulge in narcotics to resist this absurdity by repeating the same futile actions as Sisyphus. The family in true sense has nothing more to deal with except addiction and alcoholism bringing about family torture. So, they repetitively talk about addiction. This is the repetitious journey of the Tyrone to nowhere. They start with addiction and alcoholism and end in the same.

No major event takes the family into a progressive path in the play. The family neither controls nor surrenders to the situation. If minor conflicts are taken out from the play there are no events as such. The conflicts never resolve in the Tyrone family. So, the repetitive conflict symbolizes the absurdity of human condition, meaninglessness of the Tyrone's labor and futility of their courage and determination. Monolithic determination to conquer every familial conflict by heroism and courage become futile. The struggle to achieve meaning by pain, labor and suffering and by inducing new values, morality and ethics shows that Tyrone's disparate desire to achieve meaning in life for existence. All members have a motive to torture self and other in any way. Since they lack common assumption and values cannot trust one another. Though they outwardly seen together, talk to one another and sometimes

express love inwardly feel isolated and alienated. Lack of cooperation and understanding is present from the beginning to the end of the play. Every one is obsessed with his own brand of ambition and carries own values morality for himself/herself. One hardly gets any support, as he never supports to others. So, each member feels detached and the environment cannot give him or her any solace. Every one feels relax not with the fellow members but with addiction and alcoholism. And the dilemma occurs whether religion and faith can improve human condition or not. In this context they again confront each other. Tyrone reveals his continuous religious belief and prays:

TYRONE: Its true I'm bad Catholic in the observance, god forgive.

But I believe . . . but every night and morning of my life I get on my knees and pray.

EDMUND: Did you pray for Mama?

TYRONE: I did. I've prayed to God these many years for her.

EDMUND: Then Nietzsche must be right. [He quotes from Thus Spake Zarathustra.] "God is dead: of his pity for man hath God died." (II. ii. 95)

Tyrone's struggle to cure Mary goes in vain. Despite his pray, the disease cannot be healed and she is the addict now. Edmund proclaims the godlessness of the world quoting the lines of Nietzsche. This shows that faith and religion are not guiding the world. Thus, everyone is condemned to pass a disorderly life. Tyrone's continuous pray does bring no any solace in life. So, they are passing a dreadful life torturing themselves.

Mary is the central concern of all members in the family and also the cause of everyone's frustration. Tyrone indicating Mary's addiction and loneliness says, "Its

you who are leaving us Mary” (II. ii. 98). But Mary does not sense anything special in this remark and replies in a quite dissimilar way, “I? That’s a silly thing to say, James. How could I leave? There is nowhere I can go. Who would I go to see? I’ve no friends” (II. ii. 98). Language does not properly function here. Mary takes the matter simply. But Tyrone implies her addiction and loneliness that Mary could not understand. She is, therefore, totally alienated within the family. She seems totally sad in comparison to other members though they are not least. She seems equally hateful, frustrated and alienated from the rest of the family members. She can’t escape from such family wounds and tortures.

The love and hate relationship among the family members emerge simultaneously through out the play. She says. “And I love you dear, in spite of everything” (III. 115). This acceptance of worthless life is certainly a note of rejection of absurdity. She has no choice except to involve in the love that she does not want in true sense. It refers to her moment of unhappiness with the Tyrone family for all the years of her married life. And her inevitability to escape from that family is exposed. She is in a trap of time that she cannot escape despite her prolonged wants. Her love for him is not emotional or spiritual but rather mechanical. That proves she is in a nonsense struggle. She hates his habit of drinking too much, wasting time in brothels, cheap hotels, whisky and whores. She denounces his irresponsible manner of living. As she gets nothing from Tyrone, she most often appears under the influence of drugs and in a confused state of mind. She resists her suffering and opposes it by deliberately repeating the task of taking drugs. Her desire of becoming a pious nun and a concert pianist turns her towards suffering. Tyrone tries to bring out her from the memory of past. He appeals, “forget the past” (III. 116). But her past fantasy, better moments and realities of life comes forth being very alive and active in such a

way, she mourns, “No, Dear but I forgive” (III. 116). Her confession justifies that she can never be detached from the past but trying to forgive.

Due to the detachment of the family, James Tyrone has also been sad, bewildered and broken through out the play. When all the family members have existed with conflicting of ideas and are involved in drugs and alcoholism, they argue desperately time and again accusing one another. To console himself Edmund opines, “. . . It’s the hour to be drunken! Be drunken, neither of you would be nor be martyred slaves of time be drunken continually. With wine, with poetry or with virtues, as you will” (IV. 135). This is another example of resistance. Edmund repetitively drinks and suffers. To avoid suffering he deliberately drinks. It is the celebration of pain engulfed by poverty, starvation, economic crises and difficulties of the time itself. This drunkenness is not simply the cause of their willingness to be drunk but time has brought them in this mode of life that they need to be drunk. It is inevitable to them. As Sisyphus resisted god by giving continuity to his repetitive action Tyrone also resist by drinking heroically bearing pain, threat, humiliation brought by the self. They are time and again but never surrender rather cope with situation with their repetitive drinking and fighting.

To suppress their pain, worry and vain struggle that gives no success each Tyrone shelters in drug induced oblivion but the same comes to be a devil for them; and each family member deepens into more disorderly, meaningless and chaotic struggling life that leads them to nowhere except towards doomed, dark and perilous existential and impotent family situation. Thus, the family falls victim of the same drug charged identity.

The conflict in the family also comes forth with the concept of intellectualism, religion and spiritual faith. Edmund prefers German philosopher Nietzsche and

French poet Baudelaire whereas the father prefers Shakespeare. He wants to make him an actor but he desires to be an artist/writer. The parents do have the faith and religious notion of Catholicism and they have a fear of God. On the other hand, the sons appear skeptical and believe in Nietzsche's existential philosophy "God is dead". Within this depression and frustration Tyrone has strong notion of God and tries to persuade his sons but fails. For Tyrone, to remain in the Godless universe is like being in a state of madness. He argues, "To deny God means to deny sanity" (IV. 136). In such a way, every character makes his/her individual ideology, morality and ethic by using his/her freedom of choice but their logic, rationality and choices cannot lead to their aim of power. So every one becomes conscious on worthless struggle and gives continuity to the futile act because they are compelled for their existence. So, family bond collapses and each Tyrone falls victim of it.

On the other hand, Mary's presence brings the man together though they are not willing. O'Neill further heightens the effect of Mary's presence to other Tyrones. They are threatened for her arrival and resist this by pretending to play:

EDMUND: She is coming downstairs.

TYRONE: We'll play our game. Pretend not to notice . . .

EDMUND: I don't see her. She must have started down and turned back.

TYRONE: Thank God.

EDMUND: Yes, it's pretty horrible to see her the way she must be now. . . . Or it's more like a bank of fog in which she hides and loses herself. (IV.141-142)

Mary's ghost horrifies all the Tyrones. They pretend to have known nothing about her. They always hide their concern over her. There is a tremendous sense of relief,

for the family members as they are able to speak to each other in terms that they may not otherwise have done in her presence, such is her profound influence on them. At the same time, there is a tremendous sense of dread and guilt associated with her constant presence. Edmund gropes for words to describe her presence, “Yes, she moves above and beyond us, a ghost hunting the past, and here we sit pretending to forget, but straining our ears listening for the slightest sound . . . dreary tears of trollop spattering in a puddle of stale beer on a honky-tonk table top!” (IV. 150).

Moreover, the important segment of the conflict in the play is also between brothers-Jamie and Tyrone. Due to this kind of conflicting nature and jealousy to each other they both can't progress much. Both of them have been the failures in making their career in the course of the play. They are facing the same situation and difficulties caused by the family and society. They don't want to see another's achievement and progress. Jamie has been a bad influence on Edmund and he says he does it on purpose. James admits that he has always been jealous of Edmund and he wants Edmund fail. He sets a bad example intentionally and tries to bring Edmund down. He warns Edmund saying, “I'll do my damndest to make you fail” (IV. 169). It reveals that all the members in the family have a sense of guilt and revenge. The darker aspects of the human psyche hate, jealousy, greed, lust, anxiety and resentment engulf them. They themselves are responsible for loosening family bond, love and sentiments. The break down of family is due to constant fighting and misunderstandings. The root cause of the family breakdown is the father's stinginess and stubbornness as Mary and the sons blame again and again. His mistreatment of the family is the cause of failure.

Jamie's jealousy is excessive but he reveals that when everything is beyond recovery. But his jealousy leads him towards nowhere except to darkness:

JAIME: Nix, Kid! You listen! Did it on purpose to make a bum of you.

Or part of me did. A big part That hates life. My putting you wise so you'd learn from my mistakes. Believed that myself at times, but it's a fake Made get ting drunk romantic Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama's baby, Papa's pet. And it was your being born that started Mama on dope. I know that's not your fault, but all the same, God damn you; I can't help hating your guts. (IV. 169)

Such much of jealousy is too much, that Jamie himself in want of making Edmund failure drowns his life into never recoverable failure. He forgets his condition in want of making other fail. For this no one has played any role but himself. So, he also tortures himself for nothing to acquire. This is his sadist nature. On the other hand, Edmund accuses his father of inviting morphine addiction in Mary:

EDMUND: . . . you have never given her anything that would help her want to stay of it . . . while you keep buying more property, mine, or a silver mine or any kind of get rich- quick swindle. You have dragged her around on the road, seas on 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! . . . I think of it I hate your guts. (IV. 144)

This is Edmund's accusation on his father's attitude towards his mother and family. This tendency of the father to invest more on land, estate and mines and less on the family has made everybody sad and hopeless. Mary's marital life remains miserable and pathetic forever. Her wishes never get priority due to her husband. Her frequent attempts to have a happy and decent family life, family harmony and prosperity, love, care and good treatment of children go in vain. Neither has she good relation with her

husband nor her two sons. She is always kept under suspicion and horror all the time. She does not see her position in the family so she starts taking drugs more to kill all her mental wounds and agonies. She is very much in despair in the hellish life of Tyrone family. She is totally empty, frustrated and aloof from the rest of the family members. Her nostalgia makes her suffer much. So, with extreme excitement and the intoxication of the heavy dose of morphine, she gets salvation forgetting her family, familial, bonds, relationships, and boundaries; and exposes her desire to be nun. She deepens herself into drugs and feels lonely, alienated and isolated forever. When Edmund finally reveals, "Mama, it is not summer cold! I have got consumption!" (IV. 177), she does not show her response of love and sympathy because she thinks she is no more his mother now. She has become a nun by going back to her past. She says, "No! You must not try to touch me; you must not try to hold me, it isn't right, when I'm hoping to be a nun" (IV. 177). By the end of the play Tyrone's earlier belief upon life has reduced to the acceptance of meaningless and worthless existence in which self is the creator and destroyer. They all see no important role to play and no chance for them to induce for the maintenance of integrated family life. They are irritated with their life so nothing comes within their control even in their conscious struggle. Every thing escapes from their hand but they neither can escape nor can surrender.

In this way, the family is decayed and disintegrated since everybody lays the blames on other and elsewhere. Everyone in the family is bewildered, helpless and motionless. The play occupies no special events that can really bring any development in the sequence of events. The family is seen to be tragic from the beginning and remains the same at the end also. The characters seem to have some intellectual excellence but behave as if they have all gone mad. The more they want to escape from the bitter present the more they drown in the trap of struggling familial

identity. There are no visible external sources to victimize the family bringing into this much of degraded state except their own behaviors that are implicitly pervasive.

In fact, only an artist of O'Neill's extraordinary skill and perception can draw the curtain on the secret of his own family to make every Americans peer into own with full tears, pain and suffering. He in true sense exposes the American familial identity drowning in a confusion brought by self-imposed torture intentionally or unintentionally. In doing this O'Neill has dealt the issue of Tyrone family giving it an identity of alcoholic, intoxicated, corrupted and quarrelsome family. These all means, through which, Tyrone family tries to forget and suppress the depressed condition of the self but drowns much in its abyss and become a victim though none of them can escape as no one gets an outlet rather goes on leading the same chaotic life. Therefore, O'Neill by presenting the Tyrones' oppression and victimization shows us how individual resists the meaningless life by indulging into repetitive task.

IV. Conclusion

O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* portrays the futile existential struggle of the Tyrone family. The dysfunctional and exhausted family tries to affirm its existence through constant fighting, addiction and alcoholism. But finally its heroic struggle, unbearable suffering and inexpressible pain end at the personal failure and realization of the absurdity by the family members in their life. Their quest for reaching better height in family and society remains unfulfilled. So, ultimately they realize the futility of their endeavor and admit absurdity in their life.

The depressed Tyrone family members take refuge in narcotic drug and alcohol to heal their mental wounds and agonies. They also endure the physical pain and psychological harassment brought by the other family members. None of them has spiritual and moral trust to other members and family values. So, they resist the pain of failure and protest against it through indulgence in alcohol and drugs. The family suffers because its members constantly revisit the old fights and opens old wounds left by the past which they are neither able to forget nor forgive. Mary most specifically cannot forget the past. Her remark "past is the present and it is the future too" (II. i. 82) reflects the cyclical nature of their existence and human situation.

The play, *Long Day's Journey into Night* is not only a journey forward in time but also backward in the past. It exposes that the Tyrones are bound to past, which they neither can forget so the family is sliding into despair. All members suffer from anxiety, alienation, horror, frustration and repetition of actions (conflicts) in their family life but still they keep on struggling to ensure their identity, position and existence through out their life regardless of past and present.

Long Day's Journey into Night is an astute look into what goes on in the privacy of a family faced with problems of differing nature and degree. The hero's

journey in this play takes place within one household and directly affects the four members of the family. It is written with such force that it is no less powerful than the struggles of divinity and nobility found in theatrical works that have gone before. Perhaps the most compelling thing about *Long Day's Journey into Night* is, in fact, that it takes place within a single house. As the family's problems become more apparent to the characters' anger and frustration at each other grows more and more intense. All the while the day literally journeys into night as a fog rolls in along with the darkness of the setting sun, creating a feeling of increasing tension and confusion. These simple yet ingenious devices serve the play on many levels and speak to not only O'Neill's understanding of the darker sides of the everyday human struggle for meaning in the face of life that has not turned its face how one hopes.

O'Neill exposes a family where familial codes of conduct have been dropping because the family is already sick due to unhappiness and disloyalty among the family members. Frequent attempts are made to establish a healthy family but all become futile. It is due to the failure of human rationality and in aggregate humanity. To cope with the family problems each family member gets trapped in familial feuds and narcotics. It is the familial and social irrationality that encircles each family member in a routine of eating, drinking and quarrelling. So, each member, here, is valueless creature. Because of self-erasing and self-contradictory existence of modern individuals and their intense desire to attain the soothing ideal of innocent past, and at the same time the limitations set by reality, happiness becomes unattainable; and individual existence itself is fragmented between the two. So, all attempts to establish harmony and integration in the family lead to inevitable disintegration and frustration. The main cause of failure in their attempt is the wrong and hellish habitat of their mental and physical framework. All characters drop their responsibilities because one

fails to be reliable support in the attainment of other's happiness despite intentional but wrongly placed attempts.

Tyrones' familial identity is marked by doomed, destructive, individualistic and perplexed family situation in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. It portrays the fallen family where all members seem to be seeking meaning of life but nothing comes at hand. They all are frustrated fragmented and alienated from the rest. No one seems happy with his/her life. So, every one puts the blame on others. It depicts the fall of the family as well as the individual's mental retardation due to falling existential struggle, lack of cooperation, coordination and mutual responsibility. So, their familial identity has master and slave quality both. Morphine addiction, alcoholism and stinginess are some characteristics of family members that oppress the self in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. On the other hand, their journey towards more chaotic path shown by these oppressive qualities victimizes them. Thus, each individual self or as a whole familial identity marked by alcohol, morphine, stingy and stubborn nature companies them and victimizes in turn.

Thus, this study has looked at *Long Day's Journey into Night* as a dramatization of the Tyrones' absurdity in which all the family members are chained together by guilt, resentment, recrimination and love; and all turn to being victim and persecutor, aggressor and protector.

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