



Dramatic Structure in Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night

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ABSTRACT

Dramatic structure, as outlined by Gustav Freytag, serves as a framework to organize the storyline, presenting the sequence and intensity of events in a narrative. This structure consists of five key stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement. Analyzing these stages in the play helps to uncover how the story is built and how the plot develops to engage the audience. This study aims to explore the dramatic structure in Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night using Freytag's Pyramid model. Using a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method, the study aims to identify the five stages of dramatic structure used in the play. This study identified five stages of dramatic structure: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement. The results showed that exposition introduces characters and Mary's vulnerability through their talk about her weight and breakfast. Rising Action dialogue between Mary and Tyrone builds tension and psychological conflict. Climax is when conflict peaks with truth about Edmund's illness revealed, family tension intensifies. Falling Action is where the characters' emotional reactions and dysfunctional coping following the climax. Denouement is in the last which is unresolved conflicts, despair, and breakdown in family communication. This study shows how the play's dramatic structure reveals character dynamics and deepens its tragic impact. This structure helps readers grasp the sequence and emotional intensity, marking the play as a key example of modern tragedy

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a reciprocal and transformative experience between text and reader, giving unique personal meaning to life (Fialho, 2021). Literature serves a multitude of purposes beyond mere storytelling or artistic display. At its core, literature is a powerful medium for preserving cultural heritage, transmitting values, and fostering empathy across generations and societies. Literature can be classified into several types, each with its own unique characteristics and forms. The three main genres are prose, poetry, and drama. Prose encompasses novels, short stories, and essays, characterized by their straightforward narrative style and focus on plot and character development. Poetry, on the other hand, is marked by its rhythmic and often metaphorical use of language, aiming to evoke emotions and provoke thought through carefully chosen words and structures. Drama, as a distinct genre, is designed to be performed on stage, utilizing dialogue and action to bring stories to life in front of an audience. Each type of literature not only entertains but also educates, inspires, and challenges readers to reflect on the complexities of human existence.

Its special fusion of live performance and narrative narration, drama occupies a unique and important place among the many literary genres. Because it incorporates a number of different elements, including dialogue, body language, facial expressions, makeup, costumes, stage design, lighting, and music, drama is a complex performing art form that ensures the audience understands the story and message (Amelia and Fatoni, 2025). The aspects that make up a work's entirety in drama include the movement found in dance, the language found in literary arts, and the visual creative aspect found in fine arts (Aryanti and Tjahyadi, 2023). Actors must completely inhabit their roles in drama in order to bring the story's psychological, social, and cultural elements to life. Drama fosters critical thinking, improves language skills, and promotes social-emotional growth by playing out realistic and frequently complex situations. According to studies, educational theater can actually help children develop their critical thinking abilities, such as observation, deduction, reliability assessment, and problem-solving (Kaiafa et al. 2020). It can also promote authentic language use and provide them with emotional and physical support. By experiencing scenarios from different points of view, it gives participants and learners the chance to build empathy, comprehend diverse opinions, and negotiate moral issues. Drama's immersive and interactive qualities make it a priceless teaching and communication tool that promotes teamwork, creativity, and a deeper understanding of social concerns and human experiences.

The fundamental components of a narrative framework are the dramatic components of exposition, rising action, climax, falling actions, and denouement, according to Gustav Freytag (1893). The model is frequently referred to as Freytag's Pyramid since Freytag also believes that these elements can be visually depicted as a pyramid. The Exposition, at the base of the pyramid, introduces the story's place, characters, and beginning circumstances in order to set the scene and allude to the main conflict. Next comes the Rising Action, which heightens the suspense and emotional investment of the narrative by posing challenges to the protagonist's objectives. The Climax, the pivotal moment where the conflict

reaches its height of intensity and the protagonist must make a choice that will shape the plot, is located at the top of the pyramid. Following the climax, the Falling Action takes place, illustrating the fallout from the climax and starting the conflict resolution process. Finally, the story concludes with the Denouement or resolution, which ties up loose ends and provides closure, whether happy or tragic. In fact, recent research by Cigerci and Yildirim (2023) found that when pre-service teachers applied Freytag's Pyramid in their digital storytelling activities, it significantly enhanced their ability to construct coherent narratives, while also fostering creative and critical thinking skills. Their findings affirm the continuing relevance and pedagogical value of Freytag's model in modern educational contexts.

Eugene O'Neill's masterwork of American drama, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, was first presented posthumously in 1956. The play explores the psychological intricacies and interpersonal tensions that characterize the Tyrone family's interactions, taking place in their summer home over the length of one August day in 1912. The characters James Tyrone, his wife Mary, and their sons Jamie and Edmund—each wrestle with personal demons such as addiction, illness, regret, and resentment. Mary's morphine addiction and denial, James's frugality and remorse over past choices, Jamie's cynicism and self-destructive behavior, and Edmund's struggle with tuberculosis and existential uncertainty create a tapestry of emotional conflict that is both intimate and universal. O'Neill's use of dialogue and setting crafts a claustrophobic atmosphere that reflects the characters' psychological imprisonment and cyclical patterns of blame and longing. The play's structure gradually reveals layers of pain and unresolved issues, inviting the audience to witness not only external confrontations but also the internal battles that define the family's tragic existence. Through its unflinching honesty and psychological nuance, *Long Day's Journey into Night* transcends its specific context to explore themes of suffering, forgiveness, and the search for hope amid despair, making it a timeless study of human fragility and resilience. One of the clearest examples of dramatic exposition in *Long Day's Journey into Night* appears right at the beginning of the play, where the stage directions introduce the Tyrone family's summer home on a single morning in August 1912.

Tyrone: **"You're a fine armful now, Mary, with those twenty pounds you've gamed."**

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

Tyrone: "None of that, my lady! You're just right. We'll have no talk of reducing. Is that why you ate so little breakfast?"

Mary: "I thought I ate a lot."

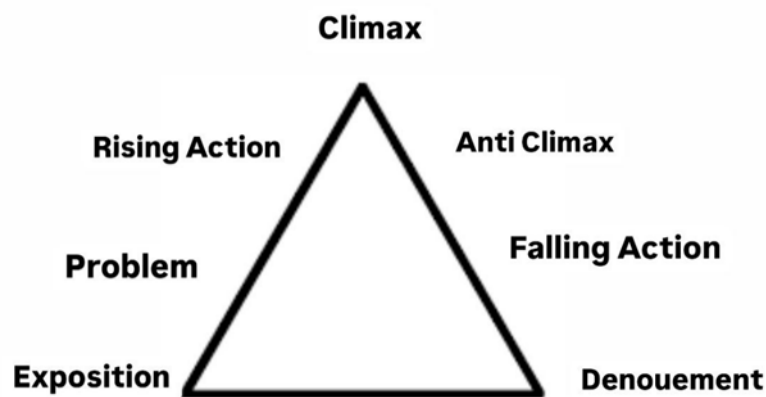
The opening interaction between Tyrone and Mary offers an early glimpse into the emotional and psychological dynamics within the Tyrone household. At this point in the play, their relationship appears affectionate on the surface, but underlying tension is evident. Tyrone expresses fondness through teasing, while Mary responds with a mix of humor and defensiveness. This subtle emotional push-and-pull suggests deeper issues between them concerns about health, self-image, and possibly unspoken struggles. The mood is intimate but uneasy,

giving the audience a sense that something is not quite right beneath the couple's seemingly lighthearted exchange. This moment helps establish the atmosphere of emotional fragility that defines their relationship throughout the play. **"You're a fine armful now, Mary, with those twenty pounds you've gained,"** Tyrone jokes, mixing affection with a touch of concern. Mary replies, **"I really ought to reduce,"** exposing a sense of insecurity about her appearance and possibly her well-being. These lines hint at Mary's fragile state, possibly connected to illness or addiction, and reflect an underlying emotional instability. As part of the play's exposition, this exchange introduces the central characters, their relationship, and the tension that quietly governs their interactions. Eugene O'Neill uses this moment to lay the emotional groundwork for the drama, foreshadowing deeper conflicts while establishing key themes such as denial, vulnerability, and psychological decline making this a subtle but powerful beginning to Long Day's Journey into Night.

Recent scholarly inquiries have examined dramatic structure across diverse literary and cultural contexts. Froehlich (2020) analyzed the dramatic structure of Shakespeare's plays through a linguistic lens, utilizing computational methods to track the use of vocatives and their relationship to narrative progression. This approach highlights the interplay between language choices and social dynamics in the development of dramatic structure. Iswanda and Sabri (2021) analyzed the dramatic structure of Gunung Sari Kembar, a traditional Javanese play performed through Wayang Topeng Jatiduwur. Their research demonstrates that the performance adheres to classical dramatic stages introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution while simultaneously embedding ritualistic and symbolic elements rooted in local traditions. This culturally grounded analysis offers a valuable perspective on how dramatic structures manifest within oral and performative traditions, integrating both universal narrative patterns and region-specific cultural expressions. Bird (2022) explored *Botchan* by Natsume Soseki and *Tom Brown's School Days* by Thomas Hughes, revealing how differing act structures three-act and four-act formats shape narrative tone and genre conventions within the school story genre. His study emphasizes how cultural context influences structural design and character development. El Bakal and Amesnaou (2023), for instance, conducted a comparative analysis of *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry and *Fences* by August Wilson using Freytag's Pyramid as a structural framework. Their findings indicate that, despite differences in scene and act composition, both plays share a common narrative structure characterized by multiple climactic moments rather than a singular climax. In a more focused analysis, Fitra et al. (2024) applied Freytag's five-part model to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, illustrating how structural divisions illuminate the play's tragic dimensions. While aligned with the theoretical approach of El Bakal and Amesnaou, Fitra et al.'s work differs by concentrating on a single text to examine the interconnection between structure and theme.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dramatic structure is a key component in understanding how a play is built and how its narrative creates emotional impact. As noted by Aristotle, one of the earliest figures to discuss dramatic form, structure plays a central role in achieving dramatic effects in a performance. Aristotle introduced the idea of a Five-Act Structure, which was later developed more fully by Gustav Freytag in 1863. To structure the plot, dramatic structure also helps deepen our understanding of character arcs and thematic development within a play. It acts as a theoretical lens through which we can analyze the craftsmanship behind theatrical works. According to Tarbiyah et al. (2024), the impact of dramatic literature is not confined to the written page; rather, its full power is realized through live performance. Freytag's model, outlines five distinct stages in the development of a drama: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement (Freytag, 1900).



Picture 1. Freytag's Pyramid

1. Exposition

In Freytag's five-part theatrical structure, exposition is the first stage and forms the basis of the entire story. The playwright provides the necessary background details at this point so that the audience can comprehend the narrative. This includes the starting scenario or conflict, the major characters, their relationships, and the setting. Exposition serves as a structural component that establishes the dramatic universe and orients the viewer to the circumstances in which the narrative will unfold, so laying the foundation for subsequent events. According to Freytag's thesis (1900), the exposition is essential to drawing the audience in right away and getting them ready for the journey through the story's later stages. In Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, the exposition is clearly presented in the early scenes of the drama, particularly in Act 1.

Example:

First Citizen: "Before we proceed any further, hear me speak"

All: "Speak, speak!"

First Citizen: "You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?"

All: "Resolved, resolved!"

Driven by a crisis of starvation and discontent over the unequal distribution of grain, the opening scene of *Coriolanus* depicts a tense social environment between the ordinary people and the patricians of Rome. The governing class, especially powerful military leader Caius Marcius, is perceived by the populace as having disregarded their rights. In addition to voicing their complaints, the populace in this situation views drastic measures as a means of protesting the unfairness they encounter. In addition to introducing the main character who will influence the plot, this scene emphasizes the social discontent and class inequality that serve as the basis for the play's main conflict. The primary character, the sociopolitical context, and the first conflict that sets off the plot are all introduced to the viewer at this point. This is evident in the line **"You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?"** which highlights the people's desperation and willingness to take radical action, marking this moment clearly as part of the exposition in Freytag's dramatic structure.

2. Rising Action

Rising action is the second stage in the dramatic structure that plays a vital role in developing the story's main conflict and increasing tension. During this stage, the plot begins to unfold through a series of events and decisions made by the characters, which create complications and obstacles that move the narrative forward. These events are carefully arranged to build suspense and emotional engagement, gradually raising the stakes and deepening the audience's investment in the outcome. As a key structural element, rising action not only expands on the initial conflict introduced in the exposition but also reveals more about the characters' motivations, relationships, and challenges they face. This stage creates a clear path toward the climax by intensifying the drama and preparing the audience for the pivotal moment in the story. In the context of dramatic theory, rising action is essential because it sustains the audience's interest, shapes the flow of the plot, and heightens the emotional impact of the unfolding events.

Example:

Herald : "Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight. Within Corioli gates: where he hath won, with fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these in honour follows Coriolanus.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!"

All : "Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!"

Coriolanus: **"No more of this; it does offend my heart:**

Pray now, no more."

Cominius: "Look, sir, your mother!"

In this part of *Coriolanus*, the atmosphere shifts from unrest to celebration as the city of Rome recognizes the heroic achievements of Caius Marcius in battle. Since he fought and won the battle by himself inside Corioli's walls, he is now referred to as "Coriolanus." The public's acclaim and the start of his exalted standing in Roman society are reflected in the Herald's statement and the cheers of the populace. Despite the grandeur, Coriolanus's uneasiness with praise is clear, indicating the beginnings of the internal strife and arrogance that will ultimately shape the story. The mention of his mother and his encounter with Cominius further highlight the increasing intricacy of his private and public lives.

The conflict that was presented in the exposition starts to take shape in this scene, which is representative of the growing action in Freytag's dramatic structure. A turning moment that both increases Coriolanus's political power and creates the conditions for future conflicts is the acknowledgment of his military prowess. The phrase "**Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!**" represents both his victory and the demands that Roman society made on him. His response, "**No more of this; it does offend my heart,**" foreshadows the internal and external tensions that will worsen as the story goes on and suggests his battle with humility and pride. Thus, this point increases character development and momentum, which is consistent with the rising action's purpose of making the story more complex and generating more dramatic interest.

3. *Climax*

The third stage of Freytag's dramatic structure, the climax, is where the story's emotional intensity reaches its peak. It is the point at which the battle takes a dramatic turn, frequently indicating whether the protagonist's objectives were accomplished or not. At this stage, the buildup from the rising action reaches its peak, and the consequences of previous decisions begin to unfold clearly. This part of the drama typically involves a major revelation, confrontation, or shift in power that drastically changes the direction of the story. It is usually placed at the center of the narrative and carries the weight of both what has happened and what is yet to come. The climax often showcases the character's inner transformation or downfall, making it a deeply psychological as well as dramatic moment. Structurally, the climax stands between the rising and falling action, connecting the momentum of conflict with its eventual resolution. The climax, to put it simply, is the emotional center of the play where the stakes are at their highest and the tension is at its peak.

Example:

Aufidius: "What is thy name?"

Coriolanus: "A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears And harsh in sound to thine."

Aufidius: "Say, what's thy name? Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face bears a command in 't. Though thy tackle's torn, thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?"

Coriolanus: "Prepare thy brow to frown. **Know'st thou me yet?**"

The climax of Coriolanus occurs when the protagonist, having been exiled from Rome, appears before his former enemy, Aufidius, to offer his service to the Volscians. This moment marks a critical turning point not only in the plot but also in Coriolanus's internal identity. Once a revered and unyielding Roman general, he now stands as a man stripped of honor, status, and homeland, forced to seek purpose and recognition among his past foes. His decision to align with the Volscians reflects the height of his personal conflict torn between his pride, his anger toward Rome, and his deep need for belonging and power. The scene is charged with emotional tension and layered motivations. Coriolanus is both vulnerable and defiant; he offers his strength to the enemy not out of submission, but as an assertion of his enduring value. Aufidius, though surprised, must now reconsider a man he once knew only as an adversary.

The confrontation holds the potential for alliance or further conflict, placing the fate of both men and of Rome itself on uncertain ground. This moment encapsulates the emotional and narrative peak of the play, where all previous tensions converge. This is evident in the line “**Know’st thou me yet?**” where Coriolanus challenges Aufidius not merely to recall his name, but to recognize his unchanged essence despite his fallen position. It is a demand for acknowledgment, respect, and perhaps vengeance. The intensity of this direct confrontation, filled with pride, defiance, and dramatic weight, perfectly embodies the climax stage in Freytag’s dramatic structure.

4. Falling Action

Falling action is the fourth stage in Freytag’s dramatic structure and follows immediately after the climax. It represents the gradual unraveling of the conflict as the consequences of the climax begin to take shape. This stage marks the downward trajectory of the narrative, where the tension starts to decline but the emotional weight remains significant. During the falling action, characters begin to react to the turning point that occurred in the climax, either facing the fallout of their actions or dealing with new complications that arise as a result. The falling action presents a series of emotionally charged moments that deepen the audience’s understanding of the character’s fate. In short, falling action is the stage where the dust begins to settle, yet the emotional consequences of the climax continue to unfold, guiding the story toward its end.

Example:

Volumnia: “For myself, son, I purpose not to wait on fortune till These wars determine: if I cannot persuade thee Rather to show a noble grace to both parts Then seek the end of one. Thou shalt no sooner March to assault thy country than to tread-- Trust to’t, thou shalt not--on thy mother’s womb, That brought thee to this world.”

Coriolanus: “O my mother, mother! O! **You have won a happy victory for Rome; But, for your son, believe it, O, believe it, most dangerously, you have with him prevailed,** If not most mortal to him.”

In this crucial scene from *Coriolanus*, Coriolanus’s mother, Volumnia, emotionally pleads with her son to change his mind about attacking Rome. Invoking the sacredness of her own body, which gave him life, she makes the ultimate mother plea to prevent him from committing an act of treachery that cannot be undone. Her words cut through Coriolanus’s resolute will, and he finally gives in to her entreaty, admitting that although she has rescued Rome, her victory might lead to his own demise. At this point, Coriolanus’s intense internal struggle between seeking personal retribution and fulfilling his filial responsibilities is revealed. This section is part of the falling action in Freytag’s dramatic structure. This marks the start of Coriolanus’s personal and exterior decline following the dramatic climax in which he turns against Rome. He must pay a personal price for stopping his attack, but it also neutralizes the immediate threat to Rome. The statement, “**You have won a happy victory for Rome... most dangerously, you have with him prevailed,**” shows that even though there is peace again, Coriolanus will suffer irrevocable political and emotional repercussions. With sacrifice and sad irony, this represents a turning point from growing conflict to an eventual resolution.

5. *Denouement*

Denouement is the final stage in the dramatic structure and occurs after the falling action. It serves as the resolution where all remaining tensions and conflicts are fully unraveled, and the story's loose ends are tied up. This stage provides clarity and closure, allowing the audience to understand the full consequences of the events that have unfolded. Unlike the intense emotions of the climax and falling action, the denouement brings a calmer, reflective tone, often revealing the long-term effects on the characters and the world they inhabit. It helps to restore a sense of order after the chaos, giving the narrative a satisfying conclusion. In short, denouement is the final wrapping up of the story, where everything is explained and the audience is left with a clear understanding of how the story ends.

Example:

Coriolanus: "Hear'st thou, Mars?"

Aufidius: "**Name not the god, thou boy of tears.**"

Coriolanus: "Ha?"

Aufidius: "No more."

The denouement of Coriolanus takes place after the protagonist agrees to make peace between the Volscians and Rome an act seen as betrayal by his new allies. Aufidius, once an enemy turned comrade, now feels dishonored by Coriolanus's decision and turns against him. The emotional weight of this scene lies in the breakdown of trust, pride, and identity. Coriolanus, who has spent the play torn between loyalty to his country and to his personal sense of honor, is confronted with the consequences of his choices. The moment signals the unraveling of the central conflict and the approach of Coriolanus's tragic end. This is captured in Aufidius's harsh words, "**Name not the god, thou boy of tears,**" which ridicule Coriolanus's moment of emotional weakness and strip him of the warrior identity he once held. The insult marks a turning point where Coriolanus is no longer seen as a heroic figure but as a man undone by conflicting loyalties an essential feature of the denouement in Freytag's dramatic structure.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses the qualitative descriptive method to examine the dramatic structure in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. In Accordance with Doyle et al. (2020), qualitative descriptive research aims to capture detailed characteristics of people, events, and settings as interpreted through a subjective lens. The primary data for this research are the play's script and dialogues which are serves as the foundation for identifying key structural elements. Freytag's Pyramid of Dramatic Structure, which has five stages exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement serves as the basis for the study. Selected scenes from the play are examined based on their relevance to these structural components, with secondary data as the additional support from five scholarly articles that provide critical insights into the play's themes and dramatic construction. Each dramatic phase is analyzed to reveal

how O'Neill builds emotional tension and develops character arcs, contributing to a deeper understanding of the play's overall impact.

RESULTS

Table 1. Description Summary

NO	DRAMATIC STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION SUMMARY
1	Exposition	Introduces characters and Mary's vulnerability through their talk about her weight and breakfast.
2	Rising Action	Dialogue between Mary and Tyrone builds tension and psychological conflict.
3	Climax	Conflict peaks with truth about Edmund's illness revealed, family tension intensifies.
4	Falling Action	Characters' emotional reactions and dysfunctional coping following the climax.
5	Denouement	Unresolved conflicts, despair, and breakdown in family communication.

DISCUSSION

Exposition

Tyrone: **"You're a fine armful now, Mary, with those twenty pounds you've gamed."**

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

Tyrone: "None of that, my lady! You're just right We'll have no talk of reducing. Is that why you ate so little breakfast?"

Mary: "I thought I ate a lot."

This simple dialogue reflects their intimacy, showing Tyrone's teasing yet caring attitude and Mary's gentle defensiveness. Through this interaction, the playwright introduces key emotional undercurrents, concern, care, vulnerability, that will be central to the play's unfolding drama. The way they speak to each other here gives the audience an early insight into their complex relationship, foreshadowing deeper conflicts and issues that will emerge as the story progresses. It sets a tone of quiet tension and emotional fragility, preparing us for the layered psychological drama of *Long Day's Journey into Night*. This exchange between Tyrone and Mary serves as an important part of the exposition, carefully revealing their relationship dynamics and hinting at underlying tensions. Tyrone's comment, **"You're a fine armful now, Mary, with those twenty pounds you've gamed,"** combines teasing with a touch of genuine concern, suggesting his awareness of Mary's changing physical condition. Mary's response, acknowledging that she has gained weight and feeling she "really ought to reduce," reveals her own self-consciousness and perhaps insecurity about her health and appearance. The followup about breakfast, where Tyrone questions why she ate so little and Mary insists she ate a lot, is more than just small talk; it subtly points to possible emotional or physical struggles that Mary is

experiencing, such as anxiety or illness, which affect her appetite and overall wellbeing.

Rising Action

Mary: "James, it's Edmund you ought to scold for not eating enough. He hardly touched anything except coffee. He needs to eat to keep up his strength. I keep telling him that but he says he simply has no appetite. Of course, there's nothing takes away your appetite like a bad summer cold."

Tyrone: "Yes, it's only natural. So don't let yourself get worried

Mary: "(quickly). Oh, I'm not. I know he'll be all right in a few days if he takes care of himself. (As if she wanted to dismiss the subject but can't.) But it does seem a shame he should have to be sick right now."

Tyrone: "Yes, it is bad luck. (He gives her a quick, worried look.) **But you mustn't let it upset you, Mary. Remember, you've got to take care of yourself, too.**"

Mary initiates the conversation by voicing her concern over Edmund's refusal to eat, stating that he only consumes coffee and lacks appetite. While such behavior may appear inconsequential in an ordinary familial setting, in this context, it serves as an early indication of a more profound and potentially distressing issue. Tyrone, in an attempt to alleviate Mary's anxiety, dismisses her concern by attributing Edmund's condition to a mere "bad summer cold." He advises her not to worry, signaling his reluctance to acknowledge the gravity of the situation. Mary, however, responds with urgency marked by the stage direction (quickly) which subtly reflects her inner turmoil. Her attempt to reassure both herself and Tyrone reveals that she is not at ease, and that beneath her composed surface lies a growing sense of unease. A particularly significant moment in this exchange is the stage direction, "As if she wanted to dismiss the subject but can't," which underscores Mary's psychological conflict. Although she strives to distance herself from the distressing topic, she is unable to suppress her fears entirely.

This internal struggle suggests an atmosphere of avoidance within the family, where members choose denial over direct confrontation. Such avoidance begins to build emotional tension and introduces the audience to an underlying conflict that has yet to be fully disclosed, thereby contributing to the forward movement of the plot. The dialogue between Mary and Tyrone in this excerpt illustrates the onset of the rising action within the dramatic structure. Tyrone's subsequent remark, "**You mustn't let it upset you, Mary. Remember, you've got to take care of yourself, too,**" while seemingly caring, further illustrates the family's tendency to evade uncomfortable truths. His brief, worried glance toward Mary adds a layer of emotional complexity, implying that he too is affected by the situation but prefers not to articulate his concerns explicitly. This is what marks this section as rising action.

Climax

Jamie: "(genuinely concerned) It's not just a cold he's got, the Kid is damned sick,"

Mary: "(turns resentful) **Why do you say that? It is just a cold! You always imagine things!** (Then, suspiciously) **What were you two arguing about? I heard you say something about a doctor...**"

Tyrone: "(to Jamie, warning) ...The one thing to avoid is saying anything that would get her more upset over Edmund,"

Jamie: "(shrugging) ...you can see she's deliberately fooling herself with that summer-cold talk. She knows better, (Finally, when the truth begins to emerge)"

Between Jamie, Mary, and Tyrone, the playwright carefully escalates tension. In this pivotal scene, the tension within the Tyrone family reaches its highest point. Jamie, deeply worried, tries to make the others acknowledge the seriousness of Edmund's illness, while Tyrone attempts to keep the situation calm and avoid upsetting Mary further. The atmosphere is charged with fear, denial, and frustration as the truth about Edmund's condition threatens to break through the family's long-standing patterns of avoidance. Amid this confrontation, Mary's reaction becomes the emotional centerpiece of the scene. She responds defensively and with growing suspicion, refusing to accept that anything is seriously wrong with Edmund and instead turning on Jamie and Tyrone for discussing the matter without her.

This sentence explains that this is the climax, as it marks the point where emotional stakes intensify and the central conflict comes to the surface, drawing the audience deeper into the Tyrone family's unravelling. She snaps, "**Why do you say that? It is just a cold! You always imagine things!**" Her reaction not only shows her fear but also her desperate attempt to preserve a version of reality she can emotionally handle. When Mary continues, "**What were you two arguing about? I heard you say something about a doctor...**" her suspicion and rising anxiety mark a turning point. This moment is critical: the veil begins to lift, and the protective illusions start to collapse. Through this layered, naturalistic dialogue, the playwright transitions from rising action into the early stages of the climax, where internal conflicts erupt and the family's long-buried fears and truths can no longer be contained.

Falling Action

Tyrone: "(with threatening anger). Listen to me! I've put up with a lot from you because from the mad things you've done at times I've thought you weren't quite right in your head."

Edmund: "(ashamed himself now). Forget it, Papa. I apologize, too. I had no right being nasty about nothing. I am a bit soused, I guess. I'll put out the damned light. (He starts to get up.)"

Tyrone: "No, stay where you are. Let it burn. (He stands up abruptly and a bit drunkenly - and begins turning on the three bulbs in the chandelier, with a childish, bitterly dramatic selfpity) We'll have them all on! Let them burn! To hell with them! The poorhouse is the end of the road, and it might as well be sooner as later! (He finishes turning on the lights.)"

Edmund: "(has watched this proceeding with an awakened sense of humour now he grins, teasing affectionately). **That's a grand curtain.** (He laughs.) You're a wonder, Papa."

Beginning with Tyrone's outburst of anger a direct expression of the tension that has built up over the course of the narrative. No longer restrained, the characters allow their long-suppressed emotions to surface, leading to painful but necessary confrontations. The tone of the dialogue shifts noticeably, moving from intense conflict to moments of emotional exhaustion and even flashes of dark humor, such as Edmund's attempt to lighten the mood and Tyrone's exaggerated self-pity. These tonal shifts reflect the characters' efforts to cope with their new reality, often in dysfunctional ways. At the same time, there is a bitter acceptance of fate, seen most clearly in Tyrone's outcry about the "poorhouse," which reveals a deeper recognition of the family's emotional and financial collapse.

This acknowledgment signals the diminishing of hope a defining trait of the falling action as the characters are forced to reckon with the consequences of their past choices. Amid the chaos, moments of clarity emerge, such as Edmund's sardonic comment, "**That's a grand curtain,**" which indicates a growing awareness of the tragic absurdity of their situation. This excerpt appears in Act Four, a section that clearly constitutes the "falling action" of the play. Following the emotional climax in Act Three, where the truth about Mary's addiction is revealed and the tense family dynamics reach a boiling point, Act Four illustrates the consequences of this revelation and how each character grapples with the existing reality. This sentence explains that this section represents the falling action, as the narrative shifts from the peak of conflict to a focus on the aftermath and the characters' attempts to process and respond to what has occurred.

Denouement

Tyrone: "(Suddenly rousing) What time is it?"

Mary: "I don't know. I didn't wind my watch after I took it off this afternoon. About twelve, I should think."

Tyrone: "(irritably) **Well, it won't be the first time,** will it or the thousandth? (Again she bursts out pleadingly) Oh, James, please! You don't understand! I'm so worried about Edmund! I'm so afraid he"

Tyrone: "I don't want to listen to your excuses, Mary."

Within this brief exchange, the contours of a grim resolution begin to emerge, intertwined with a deliberate refusal to offer traditional closure. This sense of stagnant despair solidifies a resolution of sorts, where the characters are trapped within the confines of their enduring problems, unable to break free from their destructive patterns. Juxtaposed against this backdrop of weary acceptance is Mary's raw and unresolved anxiety concerning Edmund, her desperate plea, "I'm so worried about Edmund!," hanging in the air without any reassuring answer. This deliberate lack of resolution regarding a central conflict hints at a potentially tragic trajectory, where anxieties are not assuaged but rather loom large, threatening to materialize into grim realities.

Further underscoring the tragic dimension is the palpable communication breakdown, epitomized by Tyrone's dismissive refusal to engage with Mary's "excuses." This resolute unwillingness to listen cements a resolution of isolation, trapping the characters within their own emotional silos, unable to bridge the chasm that separates them. In dramatic structure, the resolution (or denouement) is the final part of the narrative where the main conflicts are addressed, and the plot's loose ends are tied up. This moment illustrates the denouement of *Long Day's Journey into Night* because, although the play's central conflicts have been exposed, there is no true resolution only a deepening sense of despair and unresolved anxiety. Tyrone's opening lament, "**Well, it won't be the first time...**," resonates with a profound weariness, suggesting a soul worn down by the relentless repetition of conflict and disillusionment, a cyclical pattern that has seemingly become an unshakeable reality for these characters.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, analyzing *Long Day's Journey into Night* through Freytag's dramatic structure reveals how each stage shapes the emotional and thematic depth of the play. The exposition introduces the Tyrone family's fragile relationships and underlying anxieties, setting a tone of quiet tension and emotional fragility that foreshadows deeper conflicts. The rising action is marked by the escalation of psychological conflict, as the family's avoidance and denial over Edmund's health issues build suspense and emotional strain, signaling the emergence of more profound problems. The climax arrives when denial breaks down and painful truths are forced into the open, exposing the raw emotional stakes for each character and intensifying the sense of crisis within the family. In the falling action, the characters can no longer suppress their feelings, leading to emotional exhaustion, bitter acceptance, and moments of dark humor as they struggle to process the aftermath of the climax. Finally, the denouement leaves the Tyrone family and the audience in a state of unresolved tension and emotional isolation, as the narrative concludes with ongoing anxiety and a lack of closure. Each stage of the dramatic structure not only advances the plot but also deepens our understanding of the characters' vulnerabilities and the tragic cycle of suffering that defines their lives, making O'Neill's play a powerful exploration of familial dysfunction and human frailty.

FURTHER STUDY

Every research is subject to limitations; thus, you can explain them here and briefly provide suggestions to further investigations.

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