CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

A literary work cannot be separated from the writer. Since literature is the picture of the real life, we can know more about a writer’s life from his or her literary work. Some writers express their feeling, ideas and experiences in their work that the reader can relate it to their life.

*Long Day’s Journey into Night* is one of literary works that deals with the life of the writer. It is a four act play by Eugene O’Neill that completed in 1940. This play is about the Tyrone family that lives in a summer rent house and quarrel with each other. The family continuously revisits their old fights and opens their old wounds from the past then blames another. James Tyrone as the head of the family is constantly blamed for his own stinginess which may have led his wife, Mary, to morphine addiction when he refused to pay for a good doctor to treat her pain that caused by childbirth. Mary, on the other hand, is never able to let go the past or admit to the painful truth of the present, the truth that she is addicted to morphine and her youngest son, Edmund has tuberculosis. They all argue over Tyrone’s sons, Jamie and Edmund's failure to become success as their father has always hoped they would become.

Most of the plot of the play is repetitious. Each of Tyrone gives their arguments about one another and that occurs numerous times throughout the four acts and five scenes. All acts are set in the living room, where James Tyrone, Mary Tyrone, Jamie Tyrone and Edmund Tyrone meet and talk to each other.
*Long Day’s Journey into Night* deals with the autobiography of Eugene O’Neill as the writer. In *Tragic Drama and Modern Society*, John Orr states that *Long Day’s Journey into Night* is specifically based on O’Neill’s family and includes no one else (1981:189). Perkins in *The American Tradition in Literature Tenth Edition* (2002:1047) also state that in 1941 O’Neill had written a play on his family which proved to be a masterpiece, *Long Day’s Journey into Night* (1956). It is an overwhelming tragedy based on the playwright’s impression of the drama of love, madness and death played out between his frail parents.

Those two statements indicate that Eugene O’Neill wrote *Long Day’s Journey into Night* based on his family and his experiences as well. Eugene O’Neill’s play *Long Day’s Journey into Night* is one of autobiographical play due to the use of the playwright’s personal life and his family as well.

The autobiography of Eugene O’Neill in *Long Day’s Journey into Night* can be studied by using the biographical approach. Hartoko in *Pemandu di Dunia Sastra* (1986:26) defines biographical approach as the study of literature which describes the life of the author, gives information about his personal development and his work. Biographical approach is an approach to literature that tries to see the author’s real experience in his or her work. Biographical approach use information about an author’s life background in understanding and analyzing his or her work.

*Long Day’s Journey into Night* is at the highest point of a long among great plays by Eugene O’Neill. It was never performed during Eugene O’Neill’s lifetime. On his twelfth wedding anniversary with his third wife, Charlotta Monterey, O’Neill gave her the script of this play with note to his wife. This play
represents how O’Neill in making peace with his troubled past and understanding his family and himself. (Quoted from http://www.gradesaver.com/long-days-journey-into-night/study-guide/about/).

According to the explanation above, I am interested to analyze Long Day’s Journey into Night. This is because Long Day’s Journey into Night can be used to study the autobiography of Eugene O’Neill. There are similarities between Eugene O’Neill’s life background and Tyrone’s family personal experience in the play. James Tyrone, Mary Tyrone, Jamie Tyrone and Edmund Tyrone reflect Eugene O’Neill’s family in his real life. Long Day’s Journey into Night is an interesting as well as the life of Eugene O’Neill himself.

1.1 The Problem of Study

John Gassner in Best American Plays Fourth Series – 1951-1957 (1958:134) states that In 1940, O’Neill composed the autobiographical play Long Day’s Journey Into Night, which he kept from both playgoers and readers during his life time. This play also uses the autobiographical data of O’Neill himself. Based on the statement above, I formulate the problem of this study are:

1. Is it true that Long Day’s Journey into Night as the autobiographical play by Eugene O’Neill?
2. How is the autobiography of Eugene O’Neill reflected in Long Day’s Journey into Night?
1.2 The Objective of Study

Related to the problem of study, the objectives of this study are:

1. To prove that *Long Day’s Journey into Night* is the autobiographical play by Eugene O’Neill.
2. To show how *Long Day’s Journey into Night* reflect Eugene O’Neill’s autobiography.

1.3 The Scope of Study

In this thesis, the scope of study is limited and focused on the life background of four main characters in the play. They are James Tyrone, Mary Cavan Tyrone, Jamie Tyrone and Edmund Tyrone. Each of the characters reflects O’Neill’s father, mother, his elder brother and himself. The autobiography of Eugene O’Neill in *Long Day’s Journey into Night* includes his family background and their personal experiences.

1.4 The Significance of Study

Hopefully this study can expand the reader’s knowledge about the biographical approach. This study expected to contribute something useful to the readers who want to understand and appreciate literature in general and the works of Eugene O’Neill in particular. It is also expected that the readers will know about Eugene O’Neill’s real life.
1.5 The Review of Related Literature

I found some books which I used as sources of the data and information to support my thesis. These sources in finding the data and information are:


1.6 The Theoretical Approach

I use biographical approach in doing this study. According to Wilfred Guerin in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature: Fourth Edition*, biographical approach can be defined as the approach that see a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as a reflection of the author’s life and times or the life and times of the characters in the work (Quoted from http://english23045.tripod.com/english234.html).
Biographical approach might be helpful in analyzing a literary work and conveniently to analyze the author’s own experience or his own life. In studying or appreciating a literary work by conducting the biographical approach, we will automatically deal with the biography of an author.

Wellek and Warren (1956:75) claim that the most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author, and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study. Thus, biographical approach has been regarded as one of the most well-known and appropriate methods in studying and criticizing a literary work. There is so much to be explored there in terms of the author's personality and life.