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**“A LITTLE IN LOVE WITH DEATH”:
STAGING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MODERN SELF IN LONG
DAY’S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT**

Keywords: *the challenge of authenticity; problematic selves; dissolution; questioning the individual certainties*

Abstract: *Using the frame of reception theory, the paper deals with the questioning of individual certainties and the challenge of authenticity in Eugene O’Neill’s Long Day’s Journey into Night. A nearly post-modern text, woven out of conflicting self-narratives and literary quotations, Long Day’s Journey into Night negotiates the definition of humanity between the poetic visions of Shakespeare and Baudelaire, as revealed in the father–son debate over literary tastes. The expectations of the audience, both aesthetic and ethical, are continuously challenged by witnessing the moral and physical disintegration of the Tyrones, while literature-in-the-text is subversively used to point out the decadence of society as a whole. Amidst the problematic selves of the Tyrone family, the character Edmund poses a radical challenge to American materialism by imagining the dissolution of the individual self and the sense of community, while also questioning such venerable notions as love, time and language. In exchange, we are offered the bitter consolation of truth and the possibility of endurance through mutual understanding and genuine feeling.*