The Hairy Ape Study Guide

The Hairy Ape by Eugene O'Neill

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* was first produced on March 9, 1922, by the Provincetown Players, a theatrical group that he co-founded. The work was staged in New York City at the company's own Provincetown Theatre. Publication of the play occurred that same year. By this time O'Neill was already an established playwright, having won two Pulitzer Prizes. *The Hairy Ape* represented something of a departure for him, being an exploration into a more expressionistic style than his previous plays.

The Hairy Ape had been written rather quickly in 1921, and the first production left little time between the final draft and the start of rehearsals. There is some dispute as to who actually directed the first production, with evidence that a triumvirate of Anthony Hopkins, James Light, and O'Neill contributed to the stage direction.

Alexander Woollcot reported in the *New York Times* that this Provincetown production was "a bitter, brutal, wildly fantastic play of nightmare hue and nightmare distortion." Other critics agreed, finding the play to be a powerful commentary on the human toll exacted from America's bumpy transition from an agrarian to industrial nation. Audiences also identified with O'Neill's characters, who represented, in some form, people from their everyday life.

The Hairy Ape's strong condemnation of the dehumanizing effects of industrialization made it appealing to many labor groups and unions, who seized upon its concepts to further their cause for better working conditions. The play also attracted the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which had kept a file on O'Neill. The organization's report on the playwright stated that *"The Hairy Ape* could easily lend itself to radical propaganda, and it is somewhat surprising that it has not already been used for this purpose."

The Hairy Ape's New York production faced more concrete bureaucratic interference: an attempt was made by the mayor to close the play down for fear that it would provoke labor disputes or riots. Despite the fears of local and federal governments, the play never became a threat in that sense. Rather audiences and critics embraced it as thought-provoking entertainment. Although Woolcott found fault with the play's initial production, he also concluded his review by stating that he found *The Hairy Ape* to be "a turbulent and tremendous play, so full of blemishes that the merest fledgling among the critics could point out a dozen, yet so vital and interesting and teeming with life that those playgoers who let it escape them will be missing one of the real events of the year." In the years since its debut the play has become one of O'Neill's better-known works and a distinctive exploration of a pivotal period in American society.

Author Biography

O'Neill was born on October 16,1888, in New York City, the son of a successful touring actor. His early life was spent on the road, a difficult life for a child. He later criticized the family's constant travelling, suggesting that the stress led to his mother's addiction to drugs as well as heavy drinking by the other family members. O'Neill started his college education at Princeton University, but that came to an abrupt end when he was dismissed for a prank. He married Kathleen Jenkins in 1909, producing a son, but divorced her only three years later. He then spent two years working as a sailor and manual laborer m South American ports.

In 1912 O'Neill was diagnosed with tuberculosis and sent to a sanitarium. Forbidden any strenuous physical activity, he resolved to get serious about his writing. During his recuperation, he became interested in playwrights, in particular the works of August Strindberg *(Miss Julie).* His contact with such literary works convinced him that he wanted to be an artist; he moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and began studying at Harvard. He stayed there for a year and then moved on to Greenwich Village in New York. From there, he went to Provincetown, Massachussetts, and met a group of artists and writers that included playwright Susan Glaspell *(Trifles)* and radical journalist John Reed. With these writers, O'Neill started the Provincetown Players, an amateur theater company dedicated to producing independent works. O'Neill's first play, the one-act *Thirst,* was produced in 1916.

O'Neill wrote and was produced regularly throughout his life, earning a worldwide reputation as a premier playwright. He is noted not only for the quality of his work but for the considerable volume of his creations; during his nearly forty years as a professional playwright he produced over fifty works for the stage. Many of his plays are today considered hallmarks of American drama, including *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *Desire under the Elms* (1924), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), *The Iceman Cometh* (1946), and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1957). Of the many accolades bestowed upon him, he received four Pulitzer Prizes—for *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), *Anna Christie* (1922), *Strange Interlude* (1928), and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1957)—and, in 1936, a Nobel Prize for literature.

O'Neill's stature is such that he is regarded as one of America's greatest dramatists, although there were periods during which his work was not held in such high regard. Critical and popular opinion turned firmly to the positive with the 1956 debut of *Long Day's Journey into Night,* an autobiographical work that frankly examines the dysfunction of the O'Neill family. Due to the sensitive nature of the material, the playwright stipulated in his will that the play not be produced until after his death The emotional power of *Long Day's Journey* prompted a re-examination of O'Neill's earlier work, earning him newfound appreciation among theatergoers and critics.

Despite the great number of works he saw produced during his life, O'Neill died with a number of unfinished or unproduced plays, including a cycle he was completing at the time of his death. A great number of his latter writings—like *Long Day's Journey*—were

of a personal nature, and O'Neill ordered them destroyed before his death. A handful of these plays were spared, however, and the collections *The Unknown O'Neill* (1988) and *Ten "Lost" Plays* (1995) resurrected the playwright's unpublished work for future reading and production.

O'Neill remarried twice in his life, in 1918 to writer Agnes Boulton (a union that produced two children) and in 1929 to the actress Carlotta Monterey. He died from complications of pneumonia on November 27, 1953, in Boston, Massachusetts.

Plot Summary

Scene 1

The play opens in a ship's forecastle, the quarters for the crew located in the forward part of the boat. The firemen of the large ocean-going ship are all happily drinking, although there is discernible tension, indicating that the men are capable of violence at a moment's notice. One of the firemen, Yank, declares that beer is sissy and that he only drinks the "hard stuff." Paddy sings a song about whiskey. Yank yells at them, insisting that they are "dead." He says he wants quiet because he's trying to think. Someone sings a sentimental song about home and Yank launches into a verbal attack of home, of emotional connections, and of women.

Long claims they are all really living in hell and blames their miserable conditions on the people in first-class, "the damned Capitalist class." Yank doesn't have the time or attention span for Long's talk of politics. He calls Long yellow and declares that all of the workers are better men than the people in first-class. "Dem boids don't amount to nothing." He gets the group riled up, drowning out Long's speech. Paddy reminisces about the old days, before boats had engines, when man and the sea and the ship became one. Yank says he's crazy, dead even. It takes a real man to work in hell he claims. Yank sees his energy as what drives the ship. "I'm steel," he says, ridiculing the idea that they are slaves. He dismisses Paddy as an outcast, a leftover from a previous age.

Scene 2

On the promenade deck, young Mildred Douglas reclines in a deck chair with her aunt. They engage in small talk and little arguments. Her aunt chides Mildred about her forays into social service and attempts to help the poor. Mildred says she wants "to touch life somewhere," although she has enjoyed the benefits of the wealth produced by her family's steel business.

The aunt points out that Mildred is really quite artificial and that her efforts in helping the poor are actually thinly veiled attempts at some kind of social credibility. Mildred, however, is intent on visiting the stokehole of the ship, to mingle with the common workers and experience their lifestyle. She has received permission from the ship's captain by claiming she had a letter from her father, the chairman of the ship line, who requested that she inspect the vessel. The second engineer escorting her to the stokehole questions her white dress, since she might rub up against dirt or oil; Mildred replies she will throw it out when she comes back up because she has plenty of dresses.

Scene 3

In the stokehole, the men are bare-chested, sweaty, and dirty as they shovel coal into the massive furnace that propels the ship's engines. The heat appears to be oppressive, close to unbearable. Paddy is exhausted. Yank ridicules him and brags about his own ability to face the furnace without tiring. He rallies the men as they put their energy into stoking the furnace.

"He ain't got no noive (nerve)" Yank says of Paddy, and the men respond to his encouragement as he calls on them to feed the baby (the furnace). At the height of their brute physical activity, Mildred enters in her lily-white dress. The whistle sounds, signaling the end of the work shift. The men notice Mildred and are shocked by her incongruous presence. Yank is oblivious to her and continues to work, shaking his shovel at the whistle.

Mildred observes Yank's animal-like force and is appalled by it. Suddenly Yank sees her, sending a venomous, hateful glare at her. She swoons with fear, nearly fainting into her escort's arms. She asks to be taken away, labeling Yank a filthy beast. He is enraged at the msult and throws his shovel at the door through which she has exited.

Scene 4

Yank, unlike the other fireman, has not washed himself after their shift. The men are off-duty and entertaining themselves, while Yank sits, his face covered m coal soot, trying to figure out the previous events in the furnace room. The other men tease him, suggesting he's fallen in love with the stokehole's strange visitor. No, he counters, the feeling he has for Mildred is hate.

Long complains that the engineers put them on exhibition, like they were monkeys. He mentions that Mildred is the daughter of a steel magnate. Paddy suggests her visit was like a visit to the zoo, where they were pointed out as baboons. Paddy says it was love at first sight when she saw Yank, like she had seen a great hairy ape escaped from the zoo. He makes fun of how Yank threw the shovel at her exit.

Yank seems to like the label "Hairy Ape" and imagines that his encounter with Mildred resulted in violence to her. Long says he would have been punished for such an act, but Yank continues this fantasy, feeding his anger over the disparity in his and Mildred's social standing. As Yank shows signs of losing his temper and control, the others pile on him and hold him down. Paddy advises them to give Yank time to cool down before letting him up.

Scene 5

It is some time after the ship's return to port, and Yank and Long walk down Fifth Avenue in New York, talking. Long is once again offering his political rhetoric about the

working class while Yank, oblivious to his companion's words, speaks of his growing obsession with teaching the upper class—specifically Mildred—a lesson about human worth. At the same time Yank complains that he doesn't fit in or belong anywhere. They see the jewelry and the furs in the windows of the store and are infuriated at the prices, which are far beyond the means of common men such as themselves. Yank sees a group of wealthy people coming out of a church where they have been making relatively insignificant contributions to the needy. Yank verbally attacks this group saying they don't belong and bragging about his physical prowess, how people like him are the ones who make things work. He challenges them to a fight. Before he can commit any physical violence, however, Yank is restrained by police, who arrest him.

Scene 6

Yank is in jail, angry at being caged like an animal m the zoo. The other prisoners mock him. They ask him what crime he committed, suggesting a domestic argument. Yank explains the root of his anger—Mildred's visit to the stokehole—and his subsequent attack on the rich people. During his rant, he mentions Mildred's last name. The prisoners inform him that her father is president of the Steel Trust. One inmate suggests that Yank join a group of labor activists, the Wobblies, whose efforts are aimed at exacting revenge upon upper class denizens such as Mildred and her father. The inmate gives Yank information about the union. Yank gets very excited that a tangible solution to his problems has presented itself. He talks about the steel bars that are restraining him, imagining himself as a fire that will burn through them. His fervor becomes so intense that he bends the bars and has to be subdued by the guards.

Scene 7

Yank shows up at the Wobblies (the nickname for the International Workers of the World) local union office. He asks to join but has to stop and think when they ask him his real name. The union members are happy to find a fireman from the shipping line who is willing to join their cause. They express an interest in organizing the line's other workers. They want to know why Yank is joining. They ask whether he wants to change the inequality of the world with "legitimate direct action—or with dynamite." He responds that dynamite is the answer and indicates his desire to blow up the Douglas Steel Trust and its president Quickly sensing that Yank is mentally unstable and dangerous, the union rejects his application. Out on the street, Yank becomes agitated, repeating his belief that there is no place where he truly belongs. A pair of policemen chastise him, believing him to be a drunk.

Scene 8

Yank visits the monkey house at the zoo. He talks to the animals about his experiences in the city. One gorilla responds by pounding on his chest, and Yank decides that they are members of the same club, the Hairy Apes. He wonders how the animals feel,

having people look at them in a cage and make fun of them. Pondering the similarities in his and the animals' situations, Yank is so moved that he pnes the cage-door open. As the gorilla exits, Yank tries to exchange a secret handshake with his newfound friend. The gorilla grabs him in a crushing hug. Yank drops to the ground and, as he dies, realizes that he doesn't even belong with the hairy apes. The monkeys jump and chatter about the stage.

Scene 1

Scene 1 Summary

The stage directions indicate that the setting of the first scene is the forecastle (the bunkroom where the sailors live) of a transatlantic ocean liner. The ceiling is low, so the sailors have to stoop; the walls and bunks are all framed in polished steel, and the men are described as rough and rowdy, and all being white. The image is of animalistic men in a cage.

One of the men sits apart from the others. Yank is stronger, fiercer and has a shorter temper than the others have. They fear him because of his physical power and tease him in order to see what happens when he looses his temper.

At the beginning of the play all the sailors are quite drunk. They are not given individual lines to say, but make a sound like a mob. They speak in a way similar to an ancient Greek chorus: they respond as a group and not as individuals, and we hear individual phrases emerging from the general roar. The sailors keep shouting, laughing and horsing around until Yank yells at them to calm down. The sailors are quiet for a moment, and then the uproar starts again.

The sailors turn to an old, wrinkled Irish sailor named Paddy and ask him to sing. He responds with a song about whiskey, and the sailors all join in. Yank does not like that either; he tells them all to be quiet, he is trying to think. The other sailors tease him about thinking, and one starts singing a sentimental song about home, but Yank has had enough: he angrily shouts at them that home is where they are, not where they were. Home is there in the bottom of the ship. Home is where they belong.

A British sailor named Long argues with him, saying that all men are created equal and should not be kept cooped up as the sailors are. He goes on to complain about the people keeping them cooped up: the spoiled people in the upper cabins, the Capitalist class. Long is shouted down by the other sailors, and Yank threatens to beat him up if he is not quiet. Yank shouts that Long and the other sailors should take pride in where they are and who they are, telling them to remember that they are the ones who make the ship run, that they are better men than the Upper Classes are. He says that if one of the Upper Classes came down to the engine room, they would have to be carried out in a stretcher. The other sailors threaten to punch Long out for his views, but Yank tells them to leave him alone. Yank takes a long swig from a bottle of booze, the sailors all do the same and they are all happy and rowdy again.

Paddy comes out of a drunken doze and has a long, poetic speech about the joys of being at sea and how the sailors ought to feel at one with the world but are instead trapped in steel cages, slaves hidden from the world and treated like animals. Yank responds with a long speech of his own – in language that is less poetic but more raw and violent – agreeing that they may be trapped, but there is power and strength in

being in their situation. He describes himself as "steel," as being where he belongs, as not being a slave but as being the engine of not just the ship, but also the world.

Paddy, who has been listening to Yank's speech and getting drunker and drunker, laughs and sings a song about caring for nobody. Yank does not lose his temper at being laughed at: instead, he agrees that caring for nobody is the way to go.

A bell sounds eight times, letting the men know it is time to go to work shoveling coal in the engine room. The sailors form a line and shuffle out. Paddy says he is not going. Yank looks at him with contempt, and tells him he "doesn't belong."

Scene 1 Analysis

The stage directions in plays by Eugene O'Neill are often as important as the dialogue and action. In the case of this play, the stage directions set up the central image of the play visually and very clearly: that working men are treated like animals, and because of the way they are treated, *act* like animals.

Yank is the central character of this scene and of the play. In many ways, he is the most animalistic of all the sailors, the most physical and the most inarticulate. The reasons why he is named Yank are not ever explained, but as the play goes on, it becomes clear that the name "Yank" (a shortened version of "Yankee," used to describe Americans in general and Americans from the northern states in particular) is symbolic.

O'Neill intends Yank, as a character, to represent an aspect of "the American Dream": the desire, and struggle, struggle to belong, and therefore to succeed. The mirror image of that desire is also very much part of Yank's character: the desperation that appears as a result of that desire not being fulfilled.

The name "Yank" may also be representative of the way that apes often "yank" on the bars of their cages in frustration and desperation, struggling to get out in the same way that Yank – later in the play - struggles to get out from what he believes are the "cages" imposed upon him by the wealthy.

The contrast between the main characters in this scene is quite vivid, and is depicted mostly through their different ways of speaking. Yank speaks impulsively, with raw gutsy language, indicating he is a creature of instinct, action and drive. Paddy speaks poetically and sentimentally, indicating he is a creature of feeling and deeper thought. It's Paddy who first specifically relates the lives of the working men to the lives of animals in a zoo, developing in the dialogue the image introduced in the stage directions, and foreshadowing the final scene of the play, in which Yank literally does end up caged.

When Yank speaks about what would happen if a member of the Capitalist Classes came down to the engine room, it foreshadows what happens in the third scene of the play, when that is exactly what happens.

Finally, this scene introduces the theme of "belonging." Yank has a lot of contempt for people who do not belong, who do not fit in with their environment, who do not accept, embrace and take joy in their position in life. This is the beginning of Yank's journey, and the journey of the play, which is an exploration of what it *means* to belong, what it costs a person spiritually and intellectually to belong, and the ways that what a person believes about where he/she belongs can be either easy lies or painful truths.

Scene 2

Scene 2 Summary

This scene is set on the deck of the ship, in the sunshine. The stage directions indicate the atmosphere is to be bright, and vivid with life, as opposed to the two new characters introduced at this point: a rich young woman named Mildred, and her rich old aunt, who are faded in their physical appearance (in spite of Mildred wearing a white dress) and their attitudes and emotions.

In artificially refined language, Mildred and her aunt discuss nature, their intense dislike for each other, and the source of their wealth: Nazareth Steel, a company founded, owned and run by Mildred's father.

Mildred talks – in vague, dreamy words and images – about how she does not feel as though she has earned the right to live off her father's money, and how she would like to be of some use. Her aunt does not believe her, telling her that Mildred's apparent sincerity is as artificial as everything else about her is.

Mildred tells her aunt that she has manipulated the captain into allowing her to go below decks to the engine room to see what the working men down there are like. Mildred's aunt is completely against the idea, saying firstly that Mildred's desires to see the men are as artificial and shallow as the rest of her life, and then suggesting that Mildred will get her beautiful white dress dirty.

The Second Engineer, who has been assigned to be Mildred's guide as she goes into the engine room, makes the same observation about her dress. Mildred dismisses the concerns of both her aunt and the engineer, saying she has fifty such dresses, and will throw the soiled dress into the sea when she comes back.

The Second Engineer leaves, meeting the Fourth Engineer who is coming along to protect Mildred. After Mildred comments appreciatively on the Engineer's looks, she and her aunt have a final, vicious verbal battle, which climaxes with Mildred slapping her aunt and laughing as she joins the Second Engineer.

Scene 2 Analysis

The contrast between this scene and the first scene is extreme. Firstly, the atmosphere here is quiet and bright, as opposed to the noise and darkness of the first scene. This is the playwright contrasting the bleakness of the working class world with the openness and beauty of the upper class world. Secondly, the main characters are two women, contrasted with large numbers of men. Thirdly, and most importantly, the language used by the characters is refined and artificial, compared to the raw realness of the chorus of men and Yank's explosiveness. The language in this scene, therefore, illustrates the

nature of the characters and their realities in this scene just as effectively as the language in Scene One illustrates the realities of the characters in the first scene.

The playwright makes it clear that Mildred and her aunt are isolated by money: from their own needs and drives, from awareness of the workers who make their money for them, and from genuine feeling. Again and again, O'Neill in his stage directions describes their emotions and words as "affected," meaning that their attitudes are fake, artificial, put on, assumed.

Mildred's interest in what is going on in the engine room is also artificial: she is curious, but does not have a real interest in knowing the truth. Her refusal to change out of her virginal white dress is symbolic of the way the people of her class and status refuse to acknowledge the reality of the way that laborers live. In the same way, her casual mention of the engineer's virility hints that she is merely interested in a sensory thrill rather than any real understanding.

Even though her language and ideas are just as artificial as Mildred's, her aunt is still perceptive and sharp. She knows that Mildred's interest in the engine room is artificial, and calls her on it. Her concern for Mildred's welfare, however, is shallow and, again, put on for effect.

The single mention of her father's company, Nazareth Steel, suggests that in the playwright's intention, the exploitation of the working class and the expansion of the capitalist system are somehow tied to Christianity, Jesus Christ having been born in Nazareth. The idea is developed further through the imagery of the environment of the engine room being described as "hellish."

The establishing of Mildred's father being in steel reinforces the image that shows up throughout the play of steel being a cage, used to define people's identities, where they belong. In the case of Mildred and her aunt and their upper class, moneyed life, steel is still a cage, but the interior of the cage is a much nicer one.

In terms of dramatic action, through the use of contrasting language, O'Neill very effectively sets up tension and anticipation, leaving us wondering what is going to happen when Mildred actually does go into the engine room.

Scene 3

Scene 3 Summary

This scene is set in the stoke hole, or engine room. The sailors from the first scene shovel coal into the engines in a distinct, even rhythm. The room is furiously noisy, with the clanging of steel doors, crunching coal and the roar of flames.

Paddy complains about the length of the shift, and that his back is breaking. Yank chews him out for being lazy. The chief engineer (whom we never see) blows his whistle, a signal for the men to hurry up. The shoveling rhythm of the men intensifies as they work even harder. Yank sets up a kind of chant to keep the rhythm going. When Paddy complains again, the sailors – carried away by the energy of their rhythm – shout him down.

At the height of the action, the Second and Fourth Engineers come in with Mildred. Most of the sailors slow down as they become aware that she is there. The chief engineer blows his whistle louder and more often. This makes Yank angry, and he shouts even louder, spurring the men on, becoming more and more angry, threatening to kill the chief engineer, shaking his shovel violently, unaware the whole time that Mildred's there watching.

At the climax of his animalistic rage, Yank suddenly turns and sees Mildred. When she sees him, the intensity of his fury, and the brutality of the situation, Mildred comes close to fainting and asks to be taken away, whispering that Yank is a "filthy beast."

The Second and Fourth Engineers carry her out, clanging an iron door closed behind them. Yank, in a total fury, throws his shovel at the door. It bounces off with a clang and falls to the floor.

The chief engineer blows his whistle the loudest and longest we have heard yet.

Scene 3 Analysis

This brief, intense scene is a straightforward confrontation between rawness and refinement, a confrontation foreshadowed more than once in the action up to now. It is a visual and visceral exploration of the play's central theme of belonging and as such is a climax that the play to this point has been building.

Specifically: Mildred does not belong in this world. The deep shock of being there, and of seeing a truth and reality she has never had to face, is a heightened portrayal of what O'Neill says happens when anyone shows up in a world where they do not fit. It's an intense shock to her, and foreshadows what happens to Yank later in the play when *he* tries to fit in where *he* does not belong.

Scene 4

Scene 4 Summary

This scene is set in the same environment as the first: the forecastle of the ship. The sailors have come off their shift, cleaned themselves up and eaten – all except for Yank, who is still dirty and hungry. He is preoccupied with thoughts of the confrontation in the engine room. The sailors – speaking again like a Greek chorus - tease him about all his thinking, and Paddy is convinced that in the moment Yank saw Mildred, he fell in love.

Long has a different perspective: he reveals to the men that Mildred is the daughter of the man who owns the ship, the man who is keeping them captive. Long believes that the Engineers were showing off the sailors as though they were animals in a zoo. He tries to get the sailors to join a kind of mutiny against the capitalism that got Mildred her money and the sailors into their cages, but they all – including Yank – shout him into silence.

Paddy again talks about how the moment that Yank and Mildred saw each other was the moment Yank fell in love, even though Mildred was looking at him as she would look at a "hairy ape" in the zoo.

Yank shouts that he would like to brain her for looking at him that way, and explains to the other sailors that the way she was looking at him was the reason that he threw the shovel. As his anger builds, he vows to get even with her, and suggesting that because he works, he is actually a better human than she is. His explosive temper builds and builds to the point where he is prepared to rush out and actually confront her, but the other sailors hold him back. As they struggle to hold him down, Yank shouts out in rage that he wants up, that he wants to show her who is an ape!

Scene 4 Analysis

In the stage directions for this scene, Yank is described as being "in the exact attitude of Rodin's *The Thinker*," a famous sculpture of a nude man sitting with his chin resting on his clenched fist apparently deep in thought. The sculpture is somewhat unrefined and unpolished, and in that way it's a depiction of the contrast between the rawness of man's animal nature and his struggle to understand, become more aware and thoughtful.

The description of Yank in this position makes us aware that Yank is struggling to change his animalistic nature, and struggling to understand what happened in the engine room. Yank is moving away from where he has always *thought* he belonged and into places where he *wants* to belong and therefore has a *right* to belong. Again, this struggle is the basis of the American dream, and much of America's culture, and is perhaps the reason why Yank has the name he has.

In contrast to Yank, Long sees what happened in the engine room as the ultimate example of what happens when people of the Capitalist class are is confronted by the reality of the Laboring class: they cannot handle it, and resort to shutting their eyes. This is another of the play's themes: that those of the Capitalist Class need to be confronted with the truth about the lives of those that work for them, but are afraid of that truth. It is an idea that plays an increasingly important role in the action from now on: the resentment the working class feels towards the Capitalist Class making money from the labor of the workers. This reflects the personal opinion of the playwright: Eugene O'Neill spent a great deal of time and energy protesting against racism and other discriminatory policies.

Scene 5

Scene 5 Summary

The setting here is Fifth Avenue in New York City, the part of the shopping district with the most expensive shops. Two large windows dominate the scene: one displaying furs, the other displaying jewelry. Everything on display has over-sized price tags.

Yank (dressed in filthy working clothes) and Long (dressed in cleaner, off duty clothes) come on and comment on how they are out of place in the middle of all this obvious money and cleanliness. Yank wonders where everybody is; Long explains they are all in church; Yank talks about how his parents made him go to church once, explaining how on the Saturday night before they fought like boxers. Yank also talks about how uncomfortably aware he is that he does not belong here, and that he is prepared to leave. Long talks him into staying, saying that this is Yank's last chance to actually confront Mildred. Long also struggles to convince Yank that the anger he feels is not just personally towards Mildred, but also as a member of the lower class towards the upper class – and that as a member of the lower class Yank has a responsibility to confront the upper classes.

Long and Yank look in the window of the jewelry store. Long sees all the jewels as another example of how the upper class lives off the lower, but Yank just sees all the gems as pretty. At the window of the fur store, though, Yank becomes angry when he sees a coat made of monkey fur on display, and gets even more angry when Long calls it hairy ape fur. This reminds Yank of his anger towards Mildred, and he vows again to get even with Mildred.

Long sees that church has let out and the people from the upper class are coming towards them. He urges Yank to control his temper and not become violent: the only way the workers can gain power, he says, is through peaceful demonstration.

The "crowd from church" comes in, speaking as a crowd rather than individualized characters – they are the same kind of Greek Chorus as the sailors. They are dressed in their best clothes, and speak in the same insincere affected way as Mildred and her aunt did. Without actually noticing Yank and Long, they make wide detours around them.

Yank starts to get angry at being ignored. Long struggles to get him to control himself. Yank's temper explodes, and he pushes into the crowd of churchgoers who seem not to notice him, deliberately bumping into them. The churchgoers ignore him, even when he runs right into them. Long takes Yank's arm and tries to pull him away, but Yank shoves him aside. Long takes off, leaving Yank alone with the Upper Class crowd.

Yank tries repeatedly to get a reaction out of individuals in the crowd, but it does not work. He gets increasingly angry, yelling at them and shoving them, comparing himself

to the steel in the beams of the skyscraper being constructed across the street, saying he's "the inside and the bottom" of it like he's the inside and bottom of their lives and wealth. His shoving and yelling gets more intense, but are always ignored.

A woman notices the monkey fur coat in the furrier window, cries out in pleasure, and the whole crowd joins her, exclaiming in delight. This sends Yank into a frenzy of anger, reacting to the woman as though she was Mildred and had just called him a hairy ape. He leaps to a lamppost and he furiously tries to pull it up and use it as a club.

A fat gentleman runs on, trying to catch a bus, and runs into Yank, who is outraged and punches the fat man in the face. The fat man calls for the police. A large number of police, all blowing whistles, appears almost from out of nowhere and subdues Yank.

Scene 5 Analysis

This scene is a reverse of Scene Three. Yank now shows up in Mildred's world, and the same thing happens to him as happens to her: he experiences "not belonging" in a shocking and violent way. However, while Mildred's reaction to such a shock is to withdraw, and probably never think of the situation again, Yank's reaction is to fight, and to attack with both words and actions.

Long's belief that Yank's struggle with the citizens of Fifth Avenue is the same as the struggle of all working people with the Upper Classes may be the playwright's own belief. It may also be that what happens to Yank because of his attack is what O'Neill felt was the unjust outcome of any attack on the upper classes, or the status quo: imprisonment, and stifling of independent, questioning thought.

The hairy ape image is taken even further at this point, with O'Neill suggesting that the Upper Classes have destroyed the heart and soul of the Working Classes leaving just their outside use. In other words, by showing the Upper Classes as being delighted at seeing just the *skin* of the hair ape, the playwright is saying that the upper classes use the lower classes thoughtlessly and relentlessly, exploiting them for their own comfort and pleasure.

The image of steel comes to the forefront in Yank's verbal attack upon the citizens of Fifth Avenue. He compares himself and his work to steel, saying that both he and steel are the foundation of everything they (the Upper Classes) are. In this case, Yank sees it as a positive: in the next scene, however, the image is turned around, becoming an image of steel bars trapping Yank not where he belongs, but where the upper classes or society think he should be.

Scene 6

Scene 6 Summary

This scene is set in prison, where the steel bars of the metaphorical prison in the first and fourth scenes become a more realistic prison. Yank is alone onstage, again in the attitude of the Thinker.

The chorus of voices – prisoners this time – set up a mocking commentary on the prison as a zoo, and Yank as an ape in that zoo. Yank responds to the voices' teasing with anger, and tells them that he got thirty days in prison just because he was trying to get even with someone. The voices jump to the conclusion that it was a woman. Yank tells them it was a woman, but not in the way they think. He goes on to talk about Mildred as he remembers her: all in white, unreal, as though she did not belong. When he remembers her eyes his anger returns, and he rattles the bars on his cage, saying again he will get even with her.

An individual voice (we never see the speaker's face) starts talking, calms Yank down and tells him that if he really does want to get even with Mildred, then he ought to join a group that the Voice at first calls the Wobblies. To explain who they are, the Voice reads an article from a newspaper *denouncing* the Wobblies, who turn out to be members of a union, the Industrial Workers of The World.

The article accuses the union of trying to destroy America, and calls upon American politicians to destroy the union *first*. The other voices get rowdier and rowdier, ridiculing the idea that the ideals of "the glorious constitution of the United States" can only be saved by destroying the union. At the climax of the rowdiness, an unseen guard orders them all to pipe down.

The Voice reads more of the article, which talks about how the IWW plots to use violence to tear down society, which would result in civilized man going back to being an ape. This strikes a chord with Yank, who takes the paper, sits quietly for a moment as he reads and thinks. When he realizes that the union's desire for destruction is the same as his own, he decides that he needs to join the Union. Suddenly he explodes in fury as he realizes that Mildred's father makes "half the steel in the world" and in doing so makes both the literal cage that keeps him trapped and the metaphorical cage of society's attitudes that keep him from belonging.

He shakes the bars of his jail cell, climbs them like a monkey and rages that they (the bars) do not belong, and that he will drive through those bars to where he really belongs. The guard decides he is making too much noise, and turns the fire hose on him to keep him quiet.

Scene 6 Analysis

By setting this scene in a room constructed of steel in the same way that the first scene was, the playwright says that the working classes, no matter what their situation, are living and working in a prison, either a literal prison or a prison of ideas and station imposed upon them by the Upper Classes.

Yank again starts the scene in the position of the Thinker, and is still thinking and wondering about the same thing as he was earlier: why Mildred's appearance in the engine room had the effect on him that it did. It is clear that he is *not* in love with her, as Paddy has suggested. His thoughts are not romantic, but instead focus on her not belonging and the intensity of feeling around that not belonging. That intensity is reflected in the eagerness that Yank displays when the Voice reads him the article about the Industrial Workers of the World.

Yank becomes desperate to join the Union because he feels as though he *belongs* there. As his desperation to belong explodes, he realizes that the steel of the prison bars is what is *keeping* him from belonging, and for the first time in the play starts swinging on the bars like a monkey. Yank's realization that he is both physically and metaphorically caged feels inevitable, as though his violent expression of frustration and anger is what the playwright has been building to all along. This is not the climax of the play, but only a step towards it.

Scene 7

Scene 7 Summary

The stage directions tell us this scene takes place nearly a month later, after Yank's thirty-day prison sentence has been completed. The setting is a street in a rough part of town, and the interior of a building on that street, where a man works. A group of men – workers – hangs around both inside and outside the building. One man – the Secretary – sits at a table working on a ledger.

Yank appears, dressed roughly, (as he was when he confronted the upper classes in Scene Five). For the first time he appears to be moving and acting cautiously. After Yank knocks tentatively, then loudly, then even more loudly, the Secretary yells impatiently for him to come in. Yank does, looking around himself warily, as though he is expecting the place to be like some kind of secret society with coded greetings and handshakes. Instead, it is very ordinary.

The Secretary asks Yank whether he is a member: Yank says no. The Secretary asks what his job is: he says he is a fireman on the liners. The Secretary asks him his name: Yank has trouble remembering it ("[he's] been Yank for so long") but finally gives it as Robert Smith. The Secretary signs him up as a union member for fifty cents, and shows him where the union literature is, including pamphlets to hand out on the ship.

Yank is still uncomfortable; thinking the procedure of joining was going to be more mysterious than it turned out to be. The Secretary is immediately suspicious of his strange behavior, thinking Yank is some kind of policeman. The other men present are also suspicious, which Yank senses. He protests that he is regular, and that he belongs.

The Secretary continues to test him, asking him what he knows about the union's operations. Yank says he will talk about everything once he has gone through the initiation. The Secretary tells him that there is no initiation, and Yank is disappointed.

Finally, the Secretary comes right out and asks why Yank wanted to join the union. Yank says that the article in the paper said the union wanted to blow things up, and that is what he wants to do too. The Secretary, pretending to be casual but in fact signaling the other men to get ready for action, asks whether Yank had someone or something particular in mind. Yank reveals that he wants to blow up Mildred's father's steel factory, and talks eagerly about how he would go about doing it and how great it would be afterwards. He says that the last thing he would do is write Mildred a letter and say the "hairy ape done it."

The Secretary signals the other men, who throw themselves on Yank, check him for weapons and subdue him. The Secretary asks Yank which policeman or agency he is a spy for, but does not even wait for an answer: he has Yank thrown out.

Yank reacts with bitterness: he does not belong in the union either. His temper builds as, again in the position of the Thinker, he speaks loudly and violently that the men in the union have no guts to act on the anger they feel, how they are prepared to settle for safe and quiet lives. He talks about how there is no real anger in them, no real drive to belong. Then he talks about how the drive to belong is at the bottom of everything, and if there's no fight to belong any more there's no steel inside, and how he feels he's got no fight any more himself, no steel, and so has nothing left to live for.

He cries out to the moon for an answer to all his questions, but he is being too loud: a policeman shows up. Yank takes this as the answer from the moon: that locking him up and putting him in a cage is the only thing the world knows to deal with people fighting fiercely to belong. The policeman decides not to take him to jail: it's "too long a walk to the station." He hauls Yank to his feet and shoves him off, responding to Yank's question about where he is supposed to go from here with a casual "go to hell."

Scene 7 Analysis

The exploration of the issue of belonging takes another twist in this scene. In spite of being so desperate to belong, and because of his misinterpretation of the newspaper article, Yank clearly does NOT belong in the IWW any more than he belongs on Fifth Avenue.

For the first time in this scene, we learn Yank's real name: Bob Smith, an average, unremarkable name for someone who sees himself as an average and unremarkable man, just wanting to belong. When he has Yank say "I been just Yank for so long," the playwright is suggesting that Yanks – Americans –spend so much time and energy trying to "belong," trying to live the American dream that they lose their own sense of who they are as individuals, their own identity. This is the point at which Yank becomes a tragic character, a good man brought down by a tragic flaw. In Yank's case, his flaw is rawness, lack of restraint. In spite of being described as "The Thinker," it is Yank's *lack* of thought, his impulsiveness, his constant resorting to verbal and physical violence, which brings about his ultimate destruction.

The violence Yank faces in this scene when he is rejected echoes that of the violence he faces at the end of the scene on Fifth Avenue, and he faces it for the same reasons. In both situations, his frustration and anger let him to violence, to raw expressions of intense emotion, as a means of demonstrating his right to belong. Both times, he is restrained and removed from the place where he so desperately wants to belong.

There are two differences, however, between the violence at the climax of the Fifth Avenue scene and the violence in this scene. Firstly, in this scene Yank's drive to violence is only *spoken about* (when he talks about wanting to blow up the Douglas steel factory). In the Fifth Avenue scene, he actually physically and violently confronts people.

The second, and more important, difference between the scenes is that at the end of this scene he gives up. The struggle has become too much for him, and after he cries out to the moon for information "straight from the stable" (to continue the imagery associated with Christianity), he is sent by the smiling policeman to "hell" (more Christian imagery). This is the final step towards the climax of both his story and the play, which takes place in the next scene.

Scene 8

Scene 8 Summary

The final scene of the play takes place at the Zoo, where the metaphorical steel cages are again real. Also real is the "hairy ape," a gorilla imprisoned in a cage here. As Yank has done earlier, the gorilla sits in the attitude of "The Thinker," continuing the visual parallel between Yank and apes.

When Yank appears, he is met with a chorus of shouts. In this scene, though, the shouts are from monkeys (as opposed to the shouts of men he encountered earlier in the ship and in the prison).

Yank goes to the gorilla cage and looks at the gorilla closely. He comments on the gorilla's huge musculature and hands, and evident physical power. The gorilla, as if he has heard and understood, stands and pounds on his chest with what looks like pride. Yank sees this as being the same sort of thing he has been doing, challenging the world, and describes them *both* as hairy apes.

Yank realizes that he is seeing what Mildred thought *she* saw when she looked at him. His anger towards her suddenly flares, then just as suddenly dies back down when he becomes confused about his ideas of who is in a cage and who is not.

His language mellows a little as he talks to the gorilla about what he's been doing in the twenty four hours since the confrontation with the police officer: wandering through the city, watching the sunrise, looking at the steel of the skyscrapers and incoming ships, speaking with the same sort of poeticism as Paddy did in the first scene about the same things: the joy of life in the world, as opposed to the hell of life in a cage. Yank admits that he could not understand the feeling Paddy talked about earlier because the world that Paddy was talking about was not where he belonged. He admits that he came to the zoo to see what a real hairy ape was like, waiting until the end of the day and all the other visitors had gone so he and the ape could be alone. He compares the people coming to see the gorilla with Mildred coming to see him and his temper rises. He bangs on the bars of the gorilla's cage in frustration, which angers the gorilla and sets the other monkeys chattering.

Yank struggles to put his thoughts together: about how he has no real past and no real future, only a present where he does not belong. He admits that he is jealous of the gorilla that does not have the capacity to think and therefore has it easy: he belongs where he is, because he cannot think or question it.

Because of thinking this through, Yank realizes that *action* rather than talking or thinking is what makes both he *and* the gorilla belong. He decides that the way for them both to get even with the people who have kept them both trapped is to release the gorilla. He takes a crowbar from under his coat, forces the lock on the gorilla's cage, opens the

door and frees the gorilla. Hesitant at first, the gorilla comes out … but then when Yank offers to shake his hand in a mocking tone, the gorilla's animal rage surges out and he wraps his arms around Yank in "a murderous hug." Yank's ribs are crushed. The gorilla throws Yank into the cage, shuts the door and shuffles off into the darkness.

Yank holds onto consciousness for another few moments. He realizes that even the gorilla thinks he did not belong … cries out in desperation, asking where he does fit in … then calms himself, trying to die with courage.

Desperate, dying and in pain, he grabs hold of the bars of his cage, hauls himself to his feet, and imitates a circus barker, urging an imaginary crowd to step right up and see "the one and original – hairy ape." He cannot sustain his energy, crumples to the floor and dies.

Scene 8 Analysis

At the climax of this play, as Yank stands face to face with the gorilla, he sees what Mildred saw in the engine room, and decides to embrace and celebrate his animal nature rather than fight it. He realizes that that is where he belongs, that he should not fight it any more and that he has to accept he has got more in common with the gorilla than with Mildred.

This is where the play turns fully into tragedy. When Yank releases the gorilla, symbolically accepting and releasing his own nature, the gorilla grabs him in a violent, crushing embrace. Yank is literally and symbolically killed. He is also imprisoned (in another steel cage) by the part of himself he has always struggled with … his own, animalistic nature, his identity as a hairy ape.

The hell, therefore, that the policeman sent him to at the end of scene seven is revealed not to be a literal hell, or even the hell of jail. Hell, in this play and in O'Neill's intent, is firstly and metaphorically imprisonment in the steel bars of the Upper Class's definitions of the role of the Working Class; but secondly, and more immediately, hell is man's animalistic, raw, unrestrained impulsive nature … a second hell which, in the mind and writing of Eugene O'Neill, leads to the first.

Characters

Mildred Douglas

Mildred is a vision in white, appropriate for the upper class promenade deck which she inhabits. She is young and idealistic and at the same time oddly aware that her idealism is without real impact or significance. She has a history of social activism and empathy for the lower class in spite of the wealth accumulated by her steel tycoon grandfather and father, whose millions were made by the sweat of workers such as Yank. There is a hint of guilt in her inquiry into the state of the workers, but her interest lacks, as her aunt has criticized, vitality. She shrinks back from the brutal sight of the stokehole and Yank, the quintessential fireman.

Guard

His role is to keep the prisoners in line. He is faced with Yank, a very strong and surprisingly out of control prisoner.

Long

Criticized by Yank for his Socialist leanings, Long still has much in common with Yank. He also sees the dehumanization that is occurring and ties it to the importance of the machine. He agrees with Yank when he sees the people in first class, who represent the ruling class, as being the people who have enslaved the workers by putting them in front of the brutal furnace. While Yank goes off to glory in his position with the furnace, Long proposes socialist solutions to the problem of dehumanization and enslavement. His propositions are rejected by Yank.

Mildred's Aunt

The aunt is accompanying Mildred on the ship and obviously has little sympathy with her niece's charitable tendencies. This lack of sympathy exhibits itself in banter between the two women when the aunt criticizes her niece for being insincere, suggesting that artificiality is a much more natural pose for Mildred.

Paddy

Paddy is a worker on the ship and the voice of the past. He spends his time in reverie, remembering the pleasure he derived from sailing in the old days, when he could feel the wind and the waves; he longs for the simplicity of a time gone by. He has only reluctantly gone on to the new mechanized form of water travel. He is old and tired and wants time to reflect, to sit with his pipe. Paddy acts as a counterpoint to Yank's brute

strength and calls to mind an earlier day before industrialized society wrought dehumanized creatures such as Yank and inhuman working conditions such as those found on the ship.

Second Engineer

The Second Engineer takes Mildred to the stokehole, while cautioning her about the dirt she may encounter. He suggests that she change her outfit.

Robert Smith

See Yank

Union Secretary

The Secretary greets Yank with open arms but then is suspicious about his reasons for joining the union. He baits him with questions that Yank is too stupid to circumvent and then throws the brute out, suspecting that he is a plant from the police or the secret service.

Yank

Yank is a foot soldier in the industrial revolution, a fireman (one who tends the massive furnaces that power the ship) who boasts that he loves the hellish heat of the stokehole in which he works. He is a caricature of masculinity, the ultimate macho man—he disdains anything soft or "sissy" and makes fun of anyone he sees as being less than his ideal of a strong man. It is his physical strength that sustains him, the only thing on which he can depend, his only source of pride.

Yank starts the play feeling superior to others because of his physical prowess though he slowly comes to realize that this strength makes him seem like an animal. When he is first introduced to the idea of being a hairy ape he likes it, buthe soon finds that the label causes him trouble. He eventually strives to rise above that role, struggling to understand the world and his place in it. For all his efforts at higher thinking, however, he's not successful at figuring it out; his resulting confusion often sends him into uncontrollable rages Unable to clearly see himself, Yank projects his own doubts and faults on others. When he says others don't belong in society, he is really announcing his own alienation. He only begins to realize his true state as he dies.

Themes

Class Conflict

Yank is the epitome of the lower class, the working poor. He has the brawn but not the brain. He and his peers put their shoulders to the wheel and make the great capitalist machine run; they provide the sweat and muscle that will push Amenca to the forefront of the industrial age. The system exploits these efforts, reaping great profits for those who own the machines but offering little reward for those who operate them.

Although Yank initially envisions himself above the first-class passengers on the ship—reassuring himself with the knowledge that without people like him the ship would not run—he comes to realize that the rich are getting richer from his efforts while his own rewards remain paltry. It is Mildred's father who owns the steel works and the ship line. And it is people like Mildred who can afford the furs and diamonds on Fifth Avenue. They are living the good life by exploiting the workers.

It is this realization that he is only a cog in the machine and not the center of the industrial universe that plants the first seeds of Yank's disillusion. Before Mildred's appearance in the stokehole, Yank had not been directly exposed to the upper class. While his perception of himself was one of elevated status, he is confronted with the fact that the true mark of high status—money—is in the hands of others. His illusions of importance in question, Yank begins to ponder his exact place in society

Meaning in Life

Although it is a pose at direct odds with his mental capacities, Yank is seen several times throughout the play in the pose of the "Thinker" (a famous sculpture by Auguste Rodin depicting a man in deep, contemplative thought). What provokes these ponderous episodes is his struggle to understand his role in life. It is a role that he thought he understood. He worked hard, providing the human energy that enabled the massive ship to run its engines. For these efforts he felt he should be viewed as a kind of superhuman, a creature upon whom the rest of society depended. Yet when Mildred nearly faints at his brutish appearance, he is confronted with the possibility that others do not see him in this light.

While his initial reaction to being called an animal—a hairy ape—is one of pleasure, he comes to realize that the distinction is not a positive one Far from being considered a superman, he is an outcast and an oddity. He is not like his fellow workers and he is certainly not like the first-class passengers.

His first realization that he does not have the social standing he believed provokes growing self-reflection in Yank. Prior to Mildred's visit, he had a firm ideal of his place in society, the meaning of his life. Learning that others do not see him as he sees himself poses the question: where does he fit in? Lacking even the most basic social tools,

Yank is an outcast even among the other firemen. Where he had previously seen this alienation as proof of his superiority, he now begins to question his place among humanity. At the start of the play, Yank is happy—or at least content—with his station in life. The knowledge that reality is far from his perception marks the start of his downfall, his search for a place to belong, and eventually his death.

Socialism and Society in the Industrial Age

While the FBI feared that *The Hairy Ape* would be used as a propaganda tool for those with socialist/ communist agendas, the play came to be known more for its study of human nature than for its politics. Socialism, as voiced by the character of

Long, argues that the only fair economic system is one that allows ownership by the workers and a more even distribution of wealth among all citizens. While *The Hairy Ape* makes some arguments in favor of better working conditions and an equitable share of profits (it is clear from the play that the firemen are not well compensated for toiling under extreme conditions), it does not aspire, like Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty,* to present an overview of the injustices wrought on the working class.

What O'Neill sought to illustrate was how America's rapid evolution into an industrial nation created personality types that were suited for the necessary tasks. In a form of Darwinian adaptation, those with physical prowess became the workers while those with a sense for money and planning became the upper class. This evolution also created rigid ideals for each social class. O'Neill's interest lay in the development of an extreme social persona such as Yank. Yank's strength and skill as a menial worker allowed him to develop and excel at one thing—stoking an engine furnace. Yet his advancement as a firemen came at a cost to his humanity. He has evolved to an ultra-refined state in which he is as much a machine as human. He can no longer interact with his peers. Beyond criticizing or embracing one system, the play condemns a society— socialist, capitalist, or other—that would allow such an extreme disassociation to take place in the name of progress.

Style

Scene vs. Act

Unlike many traditional plays that utilize the act format, O'Neill designed *The Hairy Ape* to be broken up as eight scenes. An act is a demarcation of action in a play that is often comprised of several scenes. Scenes are typically shorter than acts and limited to one or two locations. By structuring his play's action around short episodic scenes, O'Neill is able to encompass a variety of settings that depict Yank's disassociation with both his peers and members of the upper class. The scene format also allows the action of the play to flow quicker, creating a tension that builds to Yank's death in scene 8.

Expressionism and Realism

The Hairy Ape is often categorized as expressionist theater. O'Neill's writing did not exclusively center on this style—in fact, only a handful of the playwright's work fits the definition of expression-istic theater. Dramatic expressionism is a theatrical movement that is largely credited to August Strindberg (author of *Miss Julie* and a significant influence on O'Neill) Within this genre, a playwright can show a very subjective viewpoint on life, one that can be interpreted on a number of levels (which explains why *The Hairy Ape* has variously been viewed as both pro-socialist propaganda and anti-socialist criticism).

With expressionism, the playwright depicts life not as it really is but as he (or his characters) perceives it to be. Often expressionism has found itself connected with social concerns. It also frequently addresses itself to a future, which may or may not ever be experienced in the work (such as Long's Utopia of a worker-owned state). The approach is often seen as pessimistic in that it commonly finds society to have senous flaws, yet most expressionistic theater offers some hope for improvement—although a character such as Yank does not reap the benefits of such improvement.

Within the theater, the expressionistic approach opened up-the space well beyond the stage and offered the possibility of involving the audience in a much more intimate way. The structure of the play does not have to concern itself as much with a strict chronology of time and sequence, so the playwright has more opportunity to make use of imagination; O'Neill's intent is less concerned with establishing a clear narrative path than painting an impression of Yank's character and dislocation. The playwright can express his views, make use of theatrical devices such as lighting and sound effects, and can distort or exaggerate characters (while realistic in some sense, the hyperbolic Yank is a good example of an extreme expressionist character).

While *The Hairy Ape* has distinct expressionist tendencies, O'Neill infused realistic elements to set off the more extreme action and define his message. The structure of the play is somewhat disjointed and has its surreal moments (particularly the scenes set

in the hellish stokehole), yet O'Neill has populated his play with a variety of recognizable character types and settings. Part of the play's success in reaching its audience lies in the familiarity of the people and situations it portrays. By allowing his viewers to identify with facets of his play, O'Neill is able to drive home the more subjective, expressionist aspects of the play. Set against relatively normal characters such as Long and Mildred, Yank appears even more grotesque and out of step with society.

Likewise, the relative normalcy of the first-class deck contrasts with the fiery, otherworldly stokehole, emphasizing the vast differences between the classes.

Symbolism

There are some significant and important symbols throughout *The Hairy Ape.* The symbols are employed to reinforce the playwright's ideas and ᵣ intentions behind the play. Mildred, with her pure white dress, is a symbol of naivete, an unspotted, pure life. This innocence sinks into the depths of the ship, disrupting the equilibrium that had existed among the firemen.

The fire of the furnace is tied into the animal energy of the fireman, who are harnessed to a fever pitch when they feed the ship's engines. The stokehole also symbolizes the hellish nature of the men's lives. It is an underworld that is uncomfortable to all except Yank, who has, symbolically, sold his soul to the ideal of work.

Steel comes up often in the play. Yank claims he is steel Mildred is the daughter of a man who makes steel. The bars of the prison are steel as are the bars of the gorilla's cage in the zoo. Within the play steel represents that hard and irresistible fact of separation and enslavement. Yank mistakenly sees himself as made of steel but it is the steel of society that holds him apart from the rest of humanity.

The ape is a symbol of the animal and basic nature of man, the evolutionary beginnings of the human race. Yank is a kind of missing link between socialized humans and the wilder animals. His persona is one that is to be harnessed or put behind bars; as evidenced by his attack on the high society group in scene 5, it is something that is not safe out on the streets. Yank's primal state is far from the world of Mildred, who nearly faints when she sees his raw, brutish strength and frightening, ape-like appearance.

Historical Context

The 1920s, the decade in which *The Hairy Ape* first appeared, represented an exciting and tumultuous period in American history. It was the age of the flappers (young female socialites intent on dancing and partying), Prohibition, and a massive influx of wealth, often due to stock market speculation. Although the working class saw little change in their quality of life during this period, there was a growing affluent class who could afford to indulge themselves in such leisure activities as a sea cruise to Europe, as Mildred and her aunt do in O'Neill's play.

For many decades up to and beyond the 1920s, as the upper classes were amassing considerable wealth from its advances, the Industrial Revolution was creating a more demanding and intense work environment for both skilled and unskilled laborers. As scientific technology created more powerful means of industry, such as the steam engine used to power ocean liners and railroads, more workers were needed to maintain the machines, often with little regard for their safety or mental well-being.

As the pitch of the revolution became more intense and the need for faster and faster means of production arose, workers were pushed to often unbearable extremes to foster industrial growth.

As working conditions worsened, unions arose. These organizations sought to ensure that laborers were fairly paid for their work—and that work conditions met with safety requirements. The union movement was viewed by business owners with suspicion. The International Workers of the World (the Wobblies represented in the play) represented a growing movement of workers dissatisfied with the status quo who demanded equity. Often this movement was connected with socialism or the communist party, which attained power in Russia with the revolution of 1917. Socialism argues for community ownership of the means of production, with all classes sharing equally in the profits.

While unions enjoyed significant growth in the 1920s, it was also a difficult period in which union organizers were opposed, often violently, by business owners. A basic tactic of the unions was the stake, in which workers would uniformly walk off the job, stalling production, and, hopefully, forcing the owners to meet their demands. Management retaliated by sending in strikebreakers (often these were thugs hired to intimidate union leaders and brutalize workers) and replacement workers (often called "scabs"). Clashes between striking workers and the management's replacements often turned violent.

The 1920s was the lull between the storms. The world had survived World War I. But it had not yet dealt with the side effects of a burgeoning economy. The 1930s would see an economic depression that impacted the world and the lives of both rich and poor.

By 1922, however, World War I had ended, nations were stabilizing, and the industrial machine built to support the war effort was now put into the service of consumerism.

Times were very good for the nations on the winning side of the war. Yet in the nations defeated in WWI, this period marked the rise of fascism, particularly the regimes of Benito Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany. The impact of these dictatorships would come to the fore in the next two decades as the world headed toward a second global battle

In addition to lubricating the machines of the industrial age, modern science was making significant inroads in human health care. Discoveries in the treatment of diabetes with animal insulin and microorganisms connected to the advent of the antibiotic penicillin gave humankind greater stability and control of its environment. Crippling diseases that once represented a serious impediment to advancement now seemed surmountable; man was learning to control his world.

As the 1920s brought newfound affluence to many parts of society, people had more time and money to spend on arts and leisure. As a result the decade saw the motion picture industry reach its first zenith of commerce and creativity, and there was a surge in significant new music, art, and literature. Novelist James Joyce published the completed version of his landmark work *Ulysses* in 1922. Although the book would never make any bestseller list, Joyce's account of one day in the life of Molly and Leopold Bloom in Dublin, Ireland, was destined to have a significant impact on how fiction (and other literature forms) was written. Joyce's unique stream of consciousness approach eventually influenced the Beats of the 1950s, which included poet Allen Ginsberg and novelists Jack Kerouac and William S Burroughs.

In music, Jazz came into its own in the 1920s. A distinctly American musical form with roots in numerous styles, Jazz originated in New Orleans and eventually found mass popularity in New York nightclubs such as the Cotton Club. Although embraced to some extent stateside, Jazz music became wildly popular m Europe, where race proved less of an obstacle for the predominantly black musicians.

This expatnatism came to affect a variety of artists in the 1920s, as a significant number of important Americans left the U.S. to live and work in Europe. This group included writers such Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald While these white writers and artists were sitting in sidewalk cafes in Pans, France, African American writers who had migrated to America's northern cities began to express their anger at racism (notably the recent history of slavery and civil rights abuses that followed Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation) and to forge an identity for themselves. This movement was called the Harlem Renaissance and includes writers such as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Zora Neale Hurston.

Critical Overview

O'Neill himself acknowledged that *The Hairy Ape* straddles a number of styles. "It seems to run the gamut from extreme naturalism to extreme expressionism—with more of the latter than the former," he wrote in 1921. The initial response to productions of *The Hairy Ape* focused on the skill of the play's staging and its forceful impact on a viewer. Describing O'Neill's skill with the voice of the working men, Alexander Woollcoot of the *New York Times* said, "Squirm as you may, he holds you while you listen to the rumble of their discontent, and while you listen... it is true talk, all of it, and only those who have been so softly bred that they have never really heard the vulgate spoken in all its richness would venture to suggest that he has exaggerated it."

The playwright's intentions in depicting the world of the ship laborers was graphic: O'Neill intended the stokehole as a depiction of Hell. For Yank this isn't a problem. According to Richard Skinner in *Eugene 0 'Neill: A Poet's Quest,* ' "There is both splendor and terror at Yank's pride at being at the bottom." This pride, however, takes him through a number of episodes, culminating in the face to face meeting with a real hairy ape. In Yank's monologue directed to the gorilla, Skinner found "the most profound problem of the disjointed and divided soul." The critic continued, "Man is searching for peace in mere animal instinct and rinding that then he can not throw off his manhood. The answer? Escape even from thought."

Although many dubbed it a challenging piece of theater, the majority of critics termed *The Hairy Ape* as a success. What the play is about, however, has been a topic of discussion. Some have claimed it is about the capitalist oppression of the masses (the workers) while others have termed it an examination of alienation in human society.

Alienation is a topic on which many critics have focused, the sense of dislocation that affects the firemen. Yank and his peers may believe themselves to be in touch with the world, better than the rich folks on the upper decks. The workers may echo Yank's sentiment that it is they who drive the world. But as Edwin Engel wrote in *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill,* Yank enjoys "a false sense of belonging to something, of being part of steel and of machinery, whereas he is actually their slave." This enslavement is one that dawns on Yank slowly as he realizes he doesn't really belong anywhere

The realization dawns with Mildred's visit to the stokehole. "Mildred has laid him bare," stated Thierry Dubost in *Struggle, Defeat or Rebirth: Eugene O 'Neill's Vision of Humanity,'* 'He does not know where he fits into a world that has become incomprehensible to him, which is the reason for his wandering, his pathetic quest for community where he could be accepted and could at last be himself."

Although Yank was content in the secluded underworld of the stokehole, Mildred's visit shattered that insularity. After her appearance he starts referring to himself as the hairy ape. Despite Yank's tragic end, many critics have not viewed O'Neill's final message as one of permanent despair. '"The Hairy Ape' was to be only a symbol of the dark despair

that sometimes sweeps over the soul to disappear later in a triumph of sheer will," stated Skinner.

Where does *The Hairy Ape* fit into the body of works that have prompted many to proclaim O'Neill as the most important American dramatist? O'Neill thought this play was very important, and it may be his most obvious exploration into how human beings are lost from their past and present. How they cope when any semblance of importance is removed from their lives. While *The Hairy Ape* is not considered in the same league as O'Neill's widely regarded masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey into Night,* it is noted as one of the playwright's more significant dramatic works and a highly effective example of expressionist theater.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Worthington is a playwright and educator. In this essay she examines O'Neill's sense of alienation and despair as seen through the experience of Yank.

On the surface *The Hairy Ape* might seem to be a fairly political play. There is the marked contrast of the sweaty fireman whose brute strength propels the ship that provides diversion and pleasure to those privileged class denizens who inhabit the upper decks. There is obvious reference to exploitation of the workers. But *The Hairy Ape,* although laced with references to capitalism, socialism, and other concepts, is really about the existential condition of man, namely that humans rarely feel like they fit in, that they are essentially always alone and separate.

This play, which was a foray into expressionism for the playwright, presents a number of characters who are in essence only stick figures. There is Mildred, the precious princess who cannot face reality, although she flirts with the idea of social activism and chanty. Despite her social posturing, her true self is readily apparent: "Be as artificial as you are," her aunt advises. Ultimately, artificial is all Mildred is—although she is well-intentioned and appears to have a good heart. Then there is Long who mouths socialist gospel but has no personality or soul to speak of. And Paddy, a relic from the past, is painted without dimension. It is only Yank, the swarthy, beastly king of the stokehole, who is a multidimensional character. And it is Yank who personifies O'Neill's examination of the human condition.

"Yank ... is the only character who really lives, all the others merely serve as background against which he stands out," claimed Andrew Maione in *Contour in Time; The Plays of Eugene O 'Neill.*

In the course of the play Yank goes from the cocky leader of the mighty firemen to a heap of a human being, crushed physically and morally. In the sweaty stokehole, Yank possesses a comfortable worldview. He shows disdain for the upper classes that Long criticizes. Yet these supposed oppressors are inconsequential in Yank's view. "They don't belong," he rants again and again. He roars out his defiance toward them, believing his mastery of the furnace defines and raises him above all others.

"In the stokehole, Yank belongs. His credo— that he is the force at the bottom that makes the entire mechanized society move—is right. He is such a force until the meeting with Mildred causes him to doubt himself and sends him out in a frenzied effort to destroy the God of power he has served in his furnace altar.' *in Time.*

Yank's sense of place is tenuous at best. In what others label as hell, he feels a connection. But this feeling of connection does not extend beyond the stokehole, which for him is the center of the universe, even the pinnacle.

The fateful encounter with Mildred puts his world on edge. He is a man beside himself when her look of horror and revulsion emblazons itself on his psyche. His worldview is

shattered as he realizes he is not the king of anything. And he sets out roaring like a wounded beast. Now his only connections are with steel—he has in fact called himself steel: "I'm steel—steel—steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it!"—with the fire of the furnace, and with the animals in the zoo (the other hairy apes). He is forced to admit his lack of connection with other humans; he is alienated from society.

This alienation is one that O'Neill underscores throughout the play by employing a number of symbols. The steel, whether it's the clanging door of the furnace, the shovel that is an extension of Yank's arm, or the bars of the prison and the gorilla cage at the zoo, is hard and ultimately isolating. It reinforces the idea of separation. Even Mildred the unwitting muse (or tormentor) of Yank, represents the metal: she is the daughter of a steel magnate, the offspring of the cold, isolating substance.

Mildred wears white. It is a cold color, one without warmth or hue. Her white dress does not connote pureness or welcome but coolness and distance. The color underscores the gulf between her world and that of the soot-black firemen—and it is Yank who revels in the ¦soot, refusing to wash it off his skin after his work is done. Heightening the contrast, Mildred's complexion, when confronted with the filthy beast-like Yank, turns pale and white.

The sea, which is one of the backdrops for this drama, again reinforces the idea of dislocation. Long a fascination for O'Neill (he worked for a time as a merchant seaman), the sea is always creating distance. The sailors on the ship are disconnected from family and home. Yank himself, drinking with the other firemen, pronounces the lack of importance of home. It was just someplace to get away from for him. "On'y too glad to beat it, dat was me. Home was lickings for me, dat's all." This statement explains his outburst "t'hell wit home."

"No one has understood better than Eugene O'Neill that the soul at war with itself belongs nowhere in this world of realities. The soul that denies or seeks to escape from its own creative powers sinks in misery below the beast," stated Richard Skinner in *Eugene O 'Neill: A Poet's Quest*

Yank first starts to sense this point when he sees Mildred fault at the sight of him. The disturbance that starts to brew in him leaves him confused, trying to think while his drinking companions grow far away from him. The dawning awareness of his disassociation from society comes to a head when Yank is on shore, wandering down Fifth Avenue, gaping at the unattainable luxuries in the glass windows. "De don't belong no more'n she does," he announces. He heckles a group of wealthy church goers exiting a service. He approaches the group, proclaiming that they don't belong. Emphasizing his own place in society (as much for his own benefit as theirs), he shouts: "Look at me, why don't youse dare? I belong, dat's me"' Yank's behavior becomes more erratic as the wealthy people ignore his remarks. Eventually he becomes so violent that the police arrive and arrest, him.

Incarcerated, Yank laments his state and obsesses about the woman he believes is responsible for his present condition. "I'll show her who belongs," he vows. But then he

explodes with the knowledge that her father has made the steel in the cell that holds him. The guards must come and hose him down, like a wild animal.

Once released from prison, Yank searches out the Wobblies, hoping to find a place in the labor movement, one that will calm his anger and exact the revenge he desires. He's a natural, it seems. A worker with leadership among other workers. But his alienation extends even to this arena as he 'is ousted by the union. His ideas about blowing up the steel mills are correctly interpreted by the union as a sign of his instability.

Finally, it dawns on Yank that despite his claims of belonging, just the opposite is true. "Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me Aw hell! I can't see—it's all dark, get me? It's all wrong "

The only place Yank can think to go is the zoo, where he feels an affinity for the gorillas. After all, he is the hairy ape isn't he. Yank struggles to understand what he's been through. He resigns himself to the animal kingdom, believing this is the one place where he will belong. Yet once again, and with tragic finality, he discovers that he doesn't fit in anywhere—even with the animals.

The longing that Yank carries in his breast, this quest for connection and belonging, is, according to some critics, a mystical yearning. Even though it is played out in the arena of social politics, Yank's dilemma, the focus of the play, is ultimately a quest for spiritual fulfillment. While it is ambiguous (in the case of Yank) as to whether the search involves a concrete religion and God, the spiritual theme is one that O'Neill pondered throughout his work.

Explaining the importance O'Neill placed on the spiritual, he once said, "I suppose that is one reason why I have come to feel so indifferent toward political and social movements of all kinds. Time was when I was an active socialist, and, after that, a philosophical anarchist. But today I can't feel that anything like that really matters." While this statement does not explicitly name God, other critics have interpreted the playwright's words to mean that religion in life has far greater weight and import than such trivial and transitory things as social politics. In *Eugene O 'Neill: A World View,* Virginia Floyd wrote, "For O'Neill the quest for the meaning of life, of existence, proves to be religious in nature. His concern is not the relation between man and man but the relation between God and man and between man and his divided soul, seeking, as the playwright himself, for a faith to make it whole."

Throughout *The Hairy Ape,* we see that Yank's animal nature, which is one of the few things that offers him connection to his world (the stokehole), is grotesque and, ultimately, the cause of his death. He proudly adopts the title of hairy ape and glories in the raw strength of it. But it is Mildred who recognizes the true nature of Yank's brute animal center, and, as a representative of civilized society, the one who rejects and recoils from such traits.

"I have tried to dig deep in it, to probe in the shadows of the soul of man bewildered by the disharmony of his primitive side," O'Neill wrote. That animal or primitive side, which is so near the surface in Yank, is the source of his alienation. Yet, in the final scene, when he makes actual contact with an animal that he believes to be like himself, he is crushed to death, dying with the realization that even among the apes he does not belong. Floyd stated that the final words of the play; which come in the stage directions, are some of the most bitter O'Neill ever wrote. As Yank's lifeless body slumps to the bottom of the gorilla cage, O'Neill writes "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs." Only in complete surrender to alienation and isolation from humanity—which is ultimately death— does Yank find what he wants- to belong to something.

With these enigmatic words concluding his play, O'Neill leads us to assume that the problem of the human condition, the problem of alienation, is one that is never truly solved in life. While some cope with it better than others, no one is exempt. By stating that, in his death, Yank "at last belongs," many have read O'Neill's meaning to be a religious one. While humankind must endure alienation in corporeal life, all will be a part of the heavenly kingdom in their eternal life. Those reading the playwright's intent from a pessimistic point of view, however, have adopted a more organic interpretation of O'Neill's final words regarding Yank. His lifeless form slumped to the ground, it is the earth to which the hairy ape now truly belongs, his decomposing body becoming one with the soil.

Source: Etta Worthington, for *Dramafor Students,* Gale, 1998.

Critical Essay #2

In this review, which was originally published on March 10,1922, Woolcott states that despite the usual flaws that one comes to expect in the work of O'Neill, The Hairy Ape *is a stunning piece of theatre with at least "a little greatness" to it.*

The little theatre of the Provincetownsmen in Macdougal Street was packed to the doors with astonishment last evening as scene after scene unfolded in the new play by Eugene O'Neill. This was *The Hairy Ape,* a bitter, brutal, wildly fantastic play of nightmare hue and nightmare distortion. It is a monstrously uneven piece, now flamingly eloquent, now choked and thwarted and inarticulate. Like most of his writing for the theatre, it is the worse here and there for the lack of a fierce, unintimidated blue pencil. But it has a little greatness in it, and it seems rather absurd to fret overmuch about the undisciplined imagination of a young playwright towering so conspicuously above the milling, mumbling crowd of playwrights who have no imagination at all.

The Hairy Ape has been superbly produced. There is a rumor abroad that Arthur Hopkins, with a proprietary interest in the piece, has been lurking around its rehearsals and the program confesses that Robert Edmond Jones went down to Macdougal Street and took hand with Cleon Throckmorton in designing the eight pictures which the play calls for. That preposterous little theatre has one of the most cramped stages New York has ever known, and yet on it the artists have created the illusion of vast spaces and endless perspectives. They drive one to the conclusion that when a stage seems pinched and little, it is the mind of the producer that is pinched and little. This time O'Neill, unbridled, set them a merry pace in the eccentric gait his imaginings. They kept up with him.

O'Neill begins his fable by posing before you the greatest visible contrast in social and physical circumstance. He leads you up the gangplank of a luxurious liner bound for Europe. He plunges you first into the stokers' pit, thrusting you down among the men as they stumble in from the furnaces, hot, sweaty, choked with coal dust, brutish. Squirm as you may, he holds you while you listen to the rumble of their discontent, and while you listen, also, to speech more squalid than even an American audience heard before in an American theatre. It is true talk, all of it, and only those who have been so softly bred that they have never really heard the vulgate spoken in all its richness would venture to suggest that he has exaggerated it by so much as a syllable in order to agitate the refined. On the contrary.

Then, in a twinkling, he drags you (as the ghosts dragged Scrooge) up out of all this murk and thudding of engines and brawling of speech, to a cool, sweet, sunlit stretch of the hurricane deck, where, at lazy ease, lies the daughter of the President of the line's board of directors, a nonchalant dilletant who has found settlement work frightfully interesting and is simply crazy to go down among the stokers and see how the other half lives aboard ship.

Then follows the confrontation—the fool fop of a girl and the huge animal of a stoker who had taken a sort of dizzy romantic pride in himself and Ms work as something that was real in an unreal world, as something that actually counted, as something that was and had force. Her horrified recoil from him as from some loathsome, hairy ape is the first notice served on him by the world that he doesn't belong. The remaining five scenes are the successive blows by which this is driven in on him, each scene, as written, as acted and as intensified by the artists, taking on more and more of the nightmare quality with which O'Neill seemed possessed to endow his fable.

The scene on Fifth Avenue when the hairy ape comes face to face with a little parade of wooden-faced church-goers who walk like automata and prattle of giving a "Hundred Per Cent. American Bazaar" as a contribution to the solution of discontent among the lower classes; the scene on Blackwell's Island with the endless rows of cells and the argot of the prisoners floating out of darkness; the care with which each scene ends in a retributive and terrifying closing in upon the bewildered fellow—all these preparations induce you atlast to accept as natural and inevitable and right that the hairy ape should, by the final curtain, be found dead inside the cage of the gorilla in the Bronx Zoo.

Except for the role of the girl, which is pretty badly played by Mary Blair, the cast captured for *The Hairy Ape* is an exceptionally good one. Louis Wolheim, though now and then rather painfully off the beat in his co-operation with the others, gives a capital impersonation of the stoker, and lesser parts are well managed by Harry O'Neill as an Irish fireman dreaming of the old days of sailing vessels, and Harold West as a cockney agitator who is fearfully annoyed because of the hairy ape's concentrating his anger against this one little plutocrat instead of maintaining an abstract animosity against plutocrats in general.

In Macdougal Street now and doubtless headed for Broadway, we have a turbulent and tremendous play, so full of blemishes that the merest fledgling among the critics could point out a dozen, yet so vital and interesting and teeming with life that those playgoers who let it escape them will be missing one of the real events of the year.

Source: Alexander Woolcott,"Eugene O'Neill at Full Tilt" (1922) in *On Stage Selected Reviews from the New York Times, 1920-1970,* edited by Bernard Beckerman and Howard Siegman, Arno Press, 1973, p. 27.

Critical Essay #3

Clark delineates the dramatic elements of O'Neill's play that qualify the work as a tragedy. Central to the discussion is the main character Yank's transition from an uncomprehending brute to an aware thinker.

The Hairy Ape has been widely praised and widely reprinted. Most reviewers and critics have agreed that it has unusual power and unusual ability to project its sense of tragedy. But critics have disagreed on where that sense of tragedy comes from and, in consequence, on basic matters of interpretation. Early critics saw its power in its brutal naturalism, for a long tune hardly noticing the expression-istic techniques—and disregarding O'Neill's explicit instructions that the treatment of the scenes "should by no means be naturalistic." More recently commentators have recognized some of the complex ways in which this comparatively direct and simple play works. I like much of Doris V. Falk's analysis in psychoanalytic and existential terms. She seems especially germane when she suggests that Yank in his "belonging" "has abdicated his manhood, has ceased to be an 'existent' and becomes a passive, vegetative being at the mercy of forces outside himself and beyond his control." *[Eugene O'Neill and the Tragiz Tension,* New Jersey.] However we interpret "belonging," we miss O'NeiU's play if we interpret it as good. Yet as late as 1947 Joseph Wood Krutch, perhaps the most sensitive and appreciative of O'Neill's critics, was able to describe Yank as "a man who, however brutalized, remains a man until he loses his sense of 'belonging,' and thereby inevitably becomes an animal." *[American Scholar,* Summer, 1947] The truth, I am convinced, is almost diametrically opposite this. I would describe Yank as a man who, by glorying in his merely belonging, contributes to his own brutalization, who remains a brute until he gets jarred out of that sense of belonging and then inevitably moves toward becoming a man, in the process inevitably destroying himself.

To see this as the direction of the action, we need merely ask at what stage we admire Yank more: when he is the brutal mechanistic ape shoveling coal into the hell-fires to drive faster the mechanism he is part of and exploited by, or when he is talking to himself and to the real ape outside the cage. Yank's movement from the cage and hell of the stokehole to the actual cage involves several different complementary and overlapping threads of action, all but one of them leading downward.

All these threads begin from the dramatic and jarring confrontation of Yank and Mildred in Scene HI. Yank has already shown himself not only belonging, but belonging so completely that he neither knows nor needs to know what he rejects in so belonging He comments "with a cynical grin" on the activity that is to become so important to him: "Can't youse see I'm tryin' to t'ink?" His mates echo the cynicism when they echo the word "Think" and then work it up into almost a chant, "Drink, don't think. Drink, don't think." He has neither a past (like the lost romance and beauty of Paddy's clipper ships) nor a future (not even like the one implied in Long's cheap attacks that look forward to the overthrow of the "damned Capitalist Class"). Yank is all present: "Sure, I'm part of de engines! Why de hell not! Dey move, don't dey? Deyre speed, ain't dey!... Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel—steel—steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch

behind it!" Yank's rhetoric defines a frighteningly blind hubris. He not only belongs to all this; he *is all* of it—crew, ship, motion, steam, money, steel....

Yank not only belongs completely at the beginning of the play, he dominates both his society and the setting. In a way, we admire his sometimes goodnatured, sometimes brutal domination of his mates in the stokehole. But O'Neill carefully controls our response. Though Yank shows a kind of intellect in arriving at the fancy that he is steel, his hubris is hardly an intellectual one: witness the ridicule of his own "trying to t'ink." The first three scenes dramatize the contrast between Yank's pretensions and the reality behind them. That reality is the meaningless stokehole life of the present contrasted with Paddy's clippership life of the past. That reality is the engineer's whistle, a mere sound, which runs Yank. That reality is the money represented by Mildred and her aunt—crass materialism. That reality is Mildred herself, fainting at the sight of "the filthy beast" and being carried up on a stretcher, ironically just as Yank had predicted if one of "dem slobs" came down into the hole. Like that of most tragic heroes, Yank's hubris, especially in the third scene, carries a fine dramatic irony, not too subtle here but powerful. To the first whistle he responds with his "exultant tone of command." To the second he responds "contemptuously": "Take it easy dere, you' Who d'yuh tinks runrun' dis game, me or you? When I git ready, we move. Not before! When I git ready, git me!" To the third he responds with the fierce gestures and curses that Mildred sees and hears. In this scene O'Neill carefully emphasizes Yank's ape-like qualities. All the men shovel "in the crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas." As Yank curses the engineer, "he brandishes his shovel murderously over his head in one hand, pounding on his chest with the other, gorilla-like." As he becomes conscious of the men watching something behind him, he "whirls defensively with a snarling, murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth, his small eyes gleaming ferociously." The height of his hubris exactly coincides with the depths of his animality.

Confronted thus with Mildred, from the unknown world behind his own and so diametrically different from him, Yank "feels himself insulted in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride." He of course can only feel the insult, not rationalize it, but he feels rightly: it has hit the very heart of his pride. That pride, so intimately associated with his bruteness, is at once the least human and the most human think about Yank, at once the least and the most promising, at once the least and the most admirable. It carries many of the ambiguities and ambivalences of classical hubris. We admire the energy, the confidence, the positiveness. We shudder for the blindness, the swagger, the presumption. Even in associating Yank's pride with his bruteness, O'Neill manages to suggest something of the classical potential for positive development and terrible destruction that can come from hubris, from the ail-too human presumption of the godhood that will destroy.

From this confrontation, the movement downward from hubris begins. Also from here, and most important to the tragic effect, the complementary movement upward begins, upward from the depths of Yank's animality. We see the beginnings of his change immediately in the next scene. Still reeling under the impact of Mildred's revulsion, Yank is now "The Thinker"; he shows no self-ridicule, only resentment at interruption when he's "tryin' to tink." O'Neill emphasizes the ironic contrast by having the men echo the

work "Think" again, as they did in Scene One. Thinking is nearly always painful; it is especially difficult for this man-brute who has just been shocked out of what was most brute m him. But thinking is a human function: the brute has started to think, and in so doing has started moving toward manhood. A quest also, even for vengeance or for something to belong to, is a human journey. Yank takes that journey, blindly as all men must. Blindly, gropingly, hopelessly (though only at the end can he know that). But his quest aims at the wrong things, is still dictated by the shattered remains of hubris: revenge, he feels, can restore his pn.de.

Yank may have "fallen in hate," as he insists to Paddy, but his own self, not merely Mildred, is the object of his hate: he cannot stand the self Mildred has revealed to him. But he can sense this only dimly. His "thinking" still remains on the most elementary level. His contemptuous dismissal of "Law," "Government," "God," comes simply from the pragmatic awareness that none of these can solve his problem. And what thinking he has done dissolves into rage as he recognizes Paddy's truth that Mildred had looked "hairy ape" at him even if she had not said the words The rage subsides momentarily into bewilderment that brings on questions: "Say, who is dat skoit, huh? What is she' What's she come from" Who made her? Who give her de noive to look at me like that? Dis ting's got my goat right. I don't get her. She's new to me. What does a skoit like her mean, huh?" Elementary questions, to be sure, but questions that Yank could not have asked before confronting Mildred. And perhaps not even so elementary. For Yank is really groping toward one of the most fundamental of religious-philosophical questions: the source and meaning of opposites, of Yank and Mildred, of extreme wealth and extreme poverty, of the black animal human and the white effete human, even (though this may seem a big jump) of good and evil. But at this stage Yank can respond only emotionally. His new image of their relationship—"She grinds de organ and I'm on de string, huh"—adds a fine touch to O'Neill's pattern of ironic contrasts between man and ape. With the loss of his hubris, Yank's image of himself shrivels. No longer even the "filthy beast" Mildred had seen, the harry ape she had "looked" though not said, but just a weak, jabbenng monkey on a string. No wonder the image sets off his new "frenzy of rage" and sends him rushing for immediate revenge.

But of course he cannot—and should not— live with the new image of himself The Fifth Avenue scene shows Yank desperately trying to regain the old image by revenge if not on Mildred herself then on the society she represents. He shows little of his new-found thinking here. But the scene effectively demonstrates the hopelessness of physical revenge and, by implication, of any revenge as a means of restoring the old Yank. The old Yank cannot be restored. But Yank does not know that.

In jail, Yank is "The Thinker" again. He has been given "Toity days to tink it over." But as he says, "Tink it over' Christ, dat' sail I been doin' for weeks!" Yank ends this scene with his "appalling" new awareness that Mildred's "old man—president of de Steel Trust—makes half de steel in de world—steel—where I tought I belonged—dnvm' trou—movin'—in dat—to make *her*—and cage me in for her to spit on!" We, of course, have seen all this long before, but it is painful new knowledge for Yank. It leads him first to the new image of himself as fire melting steel, "breakin' out in de night—" then to the

resultant trouble as he bends the bars and gets the appropriate punishment for fire that has broken out: the fire hose "full pressure."

His encounter with the actual I.W.W., not the demagogue's version, closes the door on the final possibility for revenge His mad idea to "blow up de steel, knock all de steel in de woild up to the moon" can "belong" no place except in his own wild mind, certainly not in so banal an organization as Yank finds. But being thrown out sets off the thinking again. He sees that the I. W. W. are "in the wrong pew." They want to solve all problems by giving men a dollar more a day and an hour less: "Tree square a day, and cauliflowers in de front yard—ekal rights—a woman and kids—a lousy vote—and I'm all fixed for Jesus, huh?" Bitter irony, this. But Yank has already been forced into a far deeper awarenes of the complexity of human problems, especially his own, than these men will ever reach:

Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly. Feedm' your face—sinkers and coffee—dat don't touch it It's way down—at de bottom Yuh can't grab it, and yuh can't stop it It moves, and everything moves It stops and de whole world stops Dat's me now—I don't tick, see'—I'm a busted Ingersoll, dat's what Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me Aw, hell! I can't see—it's all dark, get me It's all wrong' *{He turns a bitter mocking face up like an ape gibbering at the moon.)* Say, youse up dere, Man in de Moon, yuh look so wise, gimme de answer, huh' Slip me de inside dope, de information right from de stable—where do I get off at, huh?

I'm not sure that O'Neill plays quite fair with his character here—at the moment of his simple, eloquent rhetoric and his most intense questioning, to describe him as like an ape gibbering at the moon. But the description reinforces the fundamental ironies in the contrasting lines of symbol and action: When most an ape Yank feels himself most a man; now having moved a long way toward manhood he looks most the ape. O'Neill pushes the irony in the brief encounter with the policeman. Yank has two responses, both telling: "Sure! Lock me up! Put me in a cage! Dat's de ony answer yuh know." Underline "yuh" and we get the force of this. Yank shows a new kind of unconscious superiority here: he at least knows that the policeman's answer, society's answer, is not enough. And when the policeman asks what Yank's been doing, Yank answers, with a new kind of ironical awareness: "Emiff to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure dat's de charge." Born, to life in the cage. When Yank asks, "Say where do I go from here?" the policeman, *giving him a push—with a grin, indifferently,* answers "Go to hell." The policeman is the last human we see other than Yank. The contrast is telling: the man who has his one answer giving the ape with all his questions a push on the way to hell.

The hell of Yank's finish contrasts tellingly also with the original hell of the stokehole. The zoo is the home of the real ape. As we might expect here, where Yank has come home to belong, he begins by admiring the gorilla's chest and shoulders, the "punch in eider fist dat'dknock 'em all silly," his ability to "challenge de whole woild." But almost immediately he recognizes that he is seeing in the ape what Mildred saw there in the stokehole: "On'y outa de cage—broke out—free to moider her, see? ... She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too—worser'n yours—sure—a damn sight—'cause you got some chanct to to bust loose—but me—*(He grows confused)* Aw, hell! It's all wrong, ain't it?"

Yes, it is all wrong, on a social and philosophical level. Yank should not have been given the ability to think, without the ability to find some way out for himself. Yank is right on the psychological level, too: he can never find a way out of the cage of himself. At least never so long as he tries merely to belong. But he is wrong about himself on the human, the tragic level. For he *has* busted out of the cage. He *has* begun to think, the distinctively human function. He has even begun to sense beauty, the beauty Paddy had told him of: "Sure, I seen de sun come up. Dat was pretty, too—all red and pink and

green. I was lookin' at de skyscrapers—steel—and all de ships comin' in, sailin' out, all over de oith— and dey was steel, too. De sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was breeze blowin'." Here steel no longer cages him in. And he has come to a fine awareness of his own dilemma. All of that is pretty, but he couldn't belong in that: "It was over my head." And so he has hurried over to see the gorilla.

The gorilla (at least Yank has moved back from the monkey-on-a-string image) Yank senses as the only image of himself left after the shock waves set up by the encounter with Mildred have worked themselves this far. Both are, as he puts it, "members of de same club—de Hairy Apes." But especially here with the unthinking gorilla Yank moves gropingly higher in his questioning, toward an increasingly intelligent understanding of himself, though "tinkin' is hard." The gorilla is better off than Yank because he can't think; he can "sit and dope dream in de past, green woods, de jungle and de rest of it." Then he can belong, even though he's in a cage. But Yank "ain't got no past to tink in, nor nothin' dat's comin', on'y what's now—and dat don't belong." Here Yank reaches the high point of his "tinkin":

But I kin make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin;—a'most git away with it—a'most—and dat's where de joker comes in, *(He laughs*) I ain't on oith and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, taken' all de worst punches from hot' of 'em Maybe that's what dey call hell, huh?

Maybe it is. But it's anew kind of hell, in sharp contrast to the hell of the stokehole And the policeman who gave him a push toward hell was only repeating in miniature the mighty push given him by Mildred and the lesser shoves by the Fifth Avenue crowd, the guards in prison, and the I.W.W.

And so here is Yank m his hell, without a past to think in or a future to move toward, caught between heaven and earth and trying with his unprepared intellect and emotions to separate them but taking the worst punches from both. And aware of it, able to define it: this is the point. For Yank has moved so far from his original hubris as the figurative steel but the actual human brute that now he is asking, in his own simple language and simple way, the pro-foundest of questions and defining the profoundest of human dilemmas. For Yank's questions about why he is, what he is, and where he is, are the same questions man has always raised when faced with suffering and injustice and unfulfilled aspirations. His final definition of his situation rings with echoes from the psalmist, from Job, from the Preacher, from Euripides, from Shakespeare. And the Yank that speaks here is a brute-become-man, speaking now with a knowledge earned and

tempered in his own demonstrated suffering—a brute reborn a man through the suffering that he has partially brought on himself by denying at first his own humanity.

Such a picture of the new Yank leaves a final question. Why does Yank destroy himself? O'Neill handles this carefully. The new Yank destroys himself, as Sophocles would have him do, by the very fact of his new-found humanity. For the human traits that lead him to the questions also make him despair of answers, and his past has givenhim no equipment to cope with a universe for which he can find no answers. He releases the gorilla so that together they can "knock 'em often de oith and croak wit de band playin'." Thus release of the ape is a kind of suicide for Yank, an embracing of the animal "brother" or self, which as brute destroys him: the literal hairy ape literally crushing the man, as the symbolic ape had earlier crushed the man in Yank. A kind of suicide, but arrived at not from mere despair, but surely more from his thinking, from having defined his situation and, though finding no other way out, from seeking this as the positive end.

Tragedy is where we find it—even when its author calls it a comedy. I would hardly argue that Yank is noble or tragic in the classical sense. He is no Oedipus caught in a trap the gods have apparently set, no Job craving ultimate understanding, no Lear raving his defiance at the universe and coming to know his own humanity as a result. But I would argue that he is a little bit of all these, reduced at first to the lowest level that still can be called human and forced suddenly to confront on his level the breakup of his universe as all of these had had to confront the breakup of theirs. That the expenence should call forth from the brute his humanness, that that hu-manness should call forth from us our understanding and sympathy and respect, that we should re-experience in Yank's new-found dignity our own sense of human dignity in the face of the inexplicable—these are the sources of the tragic effect in *The Hairy Ape.* And they are sources that reaffirm the power and pertinence and meaning and dignity of tragedy* in our age. Even without the mighty heroes of the past, even with heroes reduced to the lowest levels of humanity, man is still man and tragedy still tragedy. And tragedy still speaks to us from the deepest levels of our troubled universe and our troubled spirits. O'Neill and Yank have helped us know all this.

Source: Marden J. Clark,"Tragic Effect in *The Hairy Ape"* in *Modern Drama,* Volume 10, no. 4, February, 1968, pp. 372-82.

Adaptations

The Hairy Ape was adapted as a film in 1944 with Alfred Santell directing. It stars Susan Hay-ward as Mildred and William Bendix as Yank. The black and white film was produced by United Artists and is available on videocassette from United American Video Corporation.

Topics for Further Study

Think about the character of Yank as a representative for the common laborers who worked in the stokehole. How do these workers compare to laborers in contemporary society? What might you expect to be their (the laborers) take on society and the economic conditions? How is this similar to or different from Yank's attitude?

How does Yank compare with the character of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman?* How is he different? How are then-fates similar or different?

Investigate the era of the 1920s. If you were Eugene O'Neill today and wanted to write about the same topic, where would you set this play, what would you title it, and who would you have as main characters?

Imagine you were a politician in the 1920s. What would you have proposed as political platforms to try and gain the support of laborers such as the firemen on the ship.

Investigate composers who were producing work in the 1920s. Listen to their music. How does this art form compare with *The Hairy Ape* in style and content? How is it different?

Compare and Contrast

1922: An important textile mill in Manchester, NH, announces that is cutting wages twenty percent and increasing weekly hours from forty-eight to fifty-two. The Railroad Labor Board announces a thirteen percent wage cut.

Today: While working conditions in many areas have vastly improved, mergers and downsizing have significantly increased the pool of temporary workers. Many corporations rely on the expertise of former employees who are now employed as independent contractors, working long hours with no benefits and with no assurances as to permanency. This situation reduces the overhead of the corporation, which no longer has to pay benefits for these workers.

1922: Henry Ford makes more than $264,000 per day. The Associated Press estimates his wealth to be in the billions.

Today: Bill Gates, the founder and chair of Microsoft, a dominant computer software company, is reportedly worth billions. His company controls vast portions of the computer market. The Justice Department investigates what many claim are unfair monopolistic practices in Microsoft's day-to-day business.

1922: An enzyme is discovered by Scottish bacteriologist Alexander Fleming. Able to break down the cellular walls of bacteria, the enzyme is named penicillin, a breakthrough drug that will change the way disease is battled and overcome.

Today: Researchers have devised a protocol of drugs, which when taken regularly in combination can halt or delay the progress of AIDS. Many HTV positive people depend on this cocktail of drugs to preserve their life, waiting for a more definitive cure for the disease.

1922: Prohibition makes illegal the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages. Despite the law, a lively trade for alcohol exists, resulting in the rise of the organized crime.

Today: The use of marijuana is illegal, resulting in a major trade in illegal drugs, involving more than marijuana. Some states have legalized the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes, but the drug must be prescribed by a doctor.

What Do I Read Next?

Emperor Jones (1920) is another of O'Neill's forays into expressionist theater. It tells the story of a black man who worked as a railroad porter and eventually ends up in the West Indies where, by a bit of fate, raises himself to the role of emperor.

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) chronicles the life of a salesman who, while harboring delusions of grandeur, is ultimately only a cog in the machine of business. The play examines how his failure to grasp reality impacts both his life and the lives of his family.

John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) chronicles the despair of the disenfranchised American worker. The novel deals with the economic period—the Great Depression— that followed the boom era of O'Neill's play.

The Great Gatsby, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald and published in 1925, is a look into the privileged class that before the Great Depression had little care and spent much of its time partying.

Further Study

Day, Dorothy, *By Little and By Little The Selected Writingsof Dorothy Day,* Knopf, 1983

Day was a friend of O'Neill's m the 1920s and they had a strong influence on each other The woman who founded the Catholic Worker movement can be experienced through this collection of her writings over the years

Egan, Leona Rust. *Provtncetown As a Stage. Provincetown, the Provincetown Players, and the Discovery of Eugene O'Neill,* Parnassus Imprints, 1994.

This book recounts the story of the artistic life of Provincetown where O'Neill was nurtured and rose to prominence. This is a scholarly work that, at times, offers tidbits of gossip courtesy of some excerpts from Carlotta O'Neill, the playwright's last wife.

Moorton, RichardF, Jr *Eugene O'Neill's Century Centennial Views on America's Foremost Tragic Dramatist,* Greenwood Press, 1991.

With essays by thirteen writers, this book looks at specific plays and at special themes *m* O'Neill's work, including the concept of searching for a home.

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in DfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by DfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

DfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Drama for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Drama for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from DfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from DfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Drama for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Drama for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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