Eugene O'Neill

The Hairy Ape

A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life in Eight Scenes (1922)

Paper: Literature and Marginality (ENGMJ-703)

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Contents

1. About the Author
2. Publication and Stage Background
3. About the Play
4. Scene-wise Summary
5. Major Character Analysis
6. The Role of Women Characters
7. The Role of Other Important Characters

The Play at a Glance: Scenes; Character Relations

8. Thematic Analysis
9. Symbols and Imagery
10. Significance of the Title
11. The Hairy Ape as a Tragedy
12. Expressionism and Naturalism in the Play
13. The Hairy Ape and the Literature of Marginality
14. Marginal Characters in the Play
15. Allusions and References in the Play
16. Important Passages for Explanation
17. Model Answers to Long Questions
18. Model Answers to Medium Questions
19. Short Questions and Answers

Works Cited

1. About the Author: Eugene O'Neill

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill was born on 16 October 1888 in a hotel room on Broadway in New York City and died in Boston on 27 November 1953. He is generally regarded as the founder of serious modern American drama, and he remains the only American playwright to have won the Nobel Prize in Literature, awarded to him in 1936. He also won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama four times.

His father, James O'Neill, was an Irish-born actor who became famous, and rich, by playing the hero of *The Count of Monte Cristo* thousands of times on tour. His mother, Ella Quinlan, became addicted to morphine after Eugene's birth. The boy spent his early years in hotel rooms, trains and Catholic boarding schools, and the unhappy family life of the O'Neills later became the subject of his greatest play, *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Both parents died within two years of each other; his mother died in February 1922, only days before *The Hairy Ape* opened.

O'Neill spent one year at Princeton University (1906 to 1907) and left without a degree. The years that followed gave him the material for *The Hairy Ape*. He sailed to Buenos Aires on a Norwegian sailing ship, lived among sailors and dock workers in Argentina, and in 1911 served as a seaman on the American Line steamers *New York* and *Philadelphia*, which ran between New York and Southampton, the very route of the liner in the play. Back in New York he lived at a cheap waterfront saloon known as Jimmy-the-Priest's, among stokers and seamen. One of them, an Irish stoker named Driscoll, later killed himself by jumping overboard. O'Neill said in 1922 that it was "the why of Driscoll's suicide" that gave him the first idea of the play.

In 1912 O'Neill fell ill with tuberculosis. During months in a sanatorium he read widely, especially the Swedish dramatist August Strindberg and the Greek tragedians, and decided to become a playwright. He studied playwriting at Harvard under George Pierce Baker, and in 1916 the Provincetown Players, an experimental theatre group on Cape Cod, staged his sea play *Bound East for Cardiff*. The group moved to Greenwich Village in New York and produced many of his early plays.

His major works include *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), *The Emperor Jones* (1920), *Anna Christie* (1921), *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), *Strange Interlude* (1928), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), *The Iceman Cometh* (1946) and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (staged in 1956). Throughout his work O'Neill is concerned with people who have lost their place in the world, with the pull of the past, with the masks people wear, and with the search for something to "belong" to after the decline of religious faith. He brought to the American stage the methods of European drama, including naturalism, symbolism and Expressionism, and he wrote about sailors, farmers, stokers and prostitutes as seriously as earlier dramatists had written about kings.

2. Publication and Stage Background

O'Neill wrote *The Hairy Ape* in late 1921. In a letter of December 1921 to his friend Kenneth Macgowan he described it as running "the whole gamut from extreme naturalism to extreme expressionism", and he said that the play as a whole could not be fitted into any of the current "isms". He had at first imagined Yank as an Irishman, like the real Driscoll, but changed him into a tough New Yorker from the Brooklyn waterfront.

The play was first performed by the Provincetown Players at their small Provincetown Playhouse on Macdougal Street, Greenwich Village, on 9 March 1922. It was directed by James Light, with help from the producer Arthur Hopkins, and the settings were by Cleon Throckmorton with Robert Edmond Jones. Louis Wolheim, a large, rough-featured actor, became famous in the role of Yank. The costume designer Blanche Hays suggested masks for the Fifth Avenue churchgoers, the first use of masks in an O'Neill production, although the script itself does not call for them. On 17 April 1922 Hopkins moved the production to the Plymouth Theatre on Broadway, where it had a successful run.

The play was published in book form in the same year, 1922. Its radical subject attracted official attention: the American government kept a file on O'Neill and feared the play might be used as "radical propaganda". Later productions included a short London run with Paul Robeson as Yank, and in 1944 a Hollywood film version starring William Bendix and Susan Hayward. The play has been revived often since, because its picture of the worker swallowed by the machine has never lost its force.

Historical background

Coal-fired liners: In the early twentieth century great ocean liners carried passengers between New York and Europe. Their engines were driven by coal, and below the waterline gangs of stokers, also called firemen, shovelled coal into the furnaces in shifts called watches, in terrible heat and dust. The ringing of

"eight bells" marked the change of watch. Above them, in the first-class saloons and on the promenade deck, travelled some of the richest people in the world. The ship itself was a picture of a divided society, and O'Neill, who had worked on such ships, knew both levels.

Industrial America and the steel trusts: By 1900 the United States had become the world's leading industrial power, and steel was its symbol. Huge companies, or trusts, controlled the industry. Mildred's father, president of the fictional Nazareth Steel, belongs to this world of new millionaires whose fortunes were built in a generation or two. Her grandfather began as a "puddler", a worker who stirred molten iron by hand.

The Red Scare and the I.W.W.: The Industrial Workers of the World, nicknamed the "Wobblies", was founded in Chicago in 1905 to unite all workers in "one big union". It was accused of violence and sabotage, and during the First World War and the Red Scare of 1919 and 1920 many of its leaders were jailed. The Senator's speech that Yank hears in prison, comparing the I.W.W. to Catiline's conspiracy, parodies the political rhetoric of these years.

New York places: Fifth Avenue was the street of the rich, with its churches and luxury shops. Blackwell's Island, now Roosevelt Island, in the East River, held the city's prison. The Battery is the park at the southern tip of Manhattan, facing the harbour.

Darwin and the ape: Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, set out in *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), made the relationship between humans and apes a central question for modern thought. O'Neill's stage direction that the stokers should resemble pictures of Neanderthal Man, and the play's ending in the monkey house, draw directly on this idea.

3. About the Play

Subtitle and genre

O'Neill called the play "A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life in Eight Scenes". The word "comedy" is ironic, since the play ends in the hero's death. It may point to the grim joke of Yank's situation, a man caught between ape and human, or to the idea that the universe treats human suffering as a kind of joke; Yank himself says in the last scene that this is "where de joker comes in". "Ancient and modern" suggests the meeting of humanity's animal past and its industrial present, which is exactly the meeting that destroys Yank. Most critics read the play as a modern tragedy written in a largely Expressionist style.

Structure

The play has eight scenes and no acts. The first four take place on board a transatlantic liner and the last four on land, in New York. Each scene is a stage in Yank's journey: from confidence in the stokehole, through the shock of Mildred's look, to the streets, the prison, the union office and finally the zoo. This pattern of a single hero moving through a series of stations is typical of Expressionist drama and is often called a "station drama", after the Stations of the Cross.

The turning point comes in Scene III, when Mildred calls Yank a "filthy beast". Before it, Yank believes he belongs; after it, every scene shows another place where he does not belong. The scenes are linked by repeated images and actions: the cage, steel, the word "belong", the mocking chorus, and Yank's pose as Rodin's "The Thinker", which appears in Scenes IV, VI and VII and is mirrored by the gorilla in Scene VIII. The play therefore ends where its first stage direction began, with a creature in a cage.

Setting

The settings move from the firemen's forecastle and the stokehole, below the waterline, to the sunlit promenade deck, then to Fifth Avenue, a prison cell on Blackwell's Island, an I.W.W. office near the waterfront, and the monkey house at the zoo. Every setting is in some sense a cage: the steel bunks "like the steel framework of a cage", the prison cells that run "into infinity", the gorilla's cage. The higher world of the rich, the deck and the avenue, is bright, clean and empty of life.

Language

Each character speaks in a distinct voice. Yank speaks rough Brooklyn slang ("dis", "dat", "tink", "oith" for earth, "boid" for bird). Paddy speaks the lilting English of an old Irish sailor, full of poetry and lament. Long speaks Cockney English and the jargon of socialism ("capitalist clarss", "proletarians"). Mildred and her aunt speak in the brittle, witty language of the upper class. The stokers repeat Yank's words in a mocking chorus whose voices sound "as if their throats were phonograph horns", and the Fifth Avenue crowd speaks in empty, mechanical phrases. These contrasts show that the characters live in separate worlds and cannot truly speak to each other.

4. Scene-wise Summary

Scene I: The firemen's forecastle

The play opens in the firemen's forecastle, the crew's quarters, of a transatlantic liner an hour after it has left New York for Southampton. O'Neill's stage directions insist that the scene should not be naturalistic. The steel bunks cross each other like the bars of a cage, the ceiling presses down so that the men cannot stand upright, and the stokers themselves, hairy-chested and long-armed, should look like pictures of Neanderthal Man. The men, drunk and of many nationalities, shout, sing and quarrel.

Yank sits in the foreground, broader, fiercer and more sure of himself than the rest. The others respect and fear his strength, and he is their leader. When someone begins a sentimental song about a girl waiting at home, Yank scorns it: the ship is his home, he ran away from his own home as a child because it meant nothing but beatings, and women are not to be trusted. When he says he is trying to "t'ink", the men repeat the word mockingly in a metallic chorus and chant "Drink, don't think!"

Long, a Cockney socialist, jumps on a bench and declares that the ship is hell and that the stokers are wage slaves of the "capitalist clarss" who travel first class. Yank silences him. The men in first class, he says, are only "baggage"; it is the stokers who make the ship move, so "we belong and dey don't".

Old Paddy, a wizened Irish sailor with a sad, monkey-like face, then mourns the days of the sailing clippers, when men worked in the sun and wind and were part of the ship and the sea. Now, he says, they are caged in by steel "like bloody apes in the Zoo", and he asks whether Yank wants to be "a flesh and blood wheel of the engines". Yank answers with a great speech of pride. He is the new force that drives the world: he is steam, smoke, speed and steel, "de muscles in steel". The men pound the steel bunks in agreement. When eight bells sound, they file out to their watch in something like a prisoners' lockstep, while Paddy stays behind, drinking and dreaming.

Significance: The scene establishes Yank's confidence, his belief that he "belongs", and the three attitudes to the workers' condition: Yank's pride in the machine, Paddy's nostalgia for the past, and Long's political protest. The cage imagery of the set already contradicts Yank's boast.

Scene II: The promenade deck

Two days out, on the sunlit promenade deck, Mildred Douglas and her aunt recline in deck chairs. Mildred is twenty, pale, pretty, nervous and bored; her aunt is fat, proud and pretentious. O'Neill describes them as artificial figures set against the vivid life of the sea. Mildred is dressed all in white.

The two women quarrel in polished, cutting language. Mildred has studied sociology and done "social service work" on New York's East Side, and now plans to visit the slums of Whitechapel in London; her aunt mocks this as slumming. In a rare moment of sincerity Mildred admits that she would like to be of use and to "touch life somewhere", but feels she lacks the vitality to do so. Her grandfather was a puddler who made steel, her father made millions from it, and she sees herself as "a waste product in the Bessemer process", inheriting the wealth but none of the strength that made it.

She has obtained permission to visit the stokehole by pretending that her father, president of Nazareth Steel and chairman of the shipping line, has approved. The Second Engineer arrives to escort her and tactfully warns her that her white dress will be soiled; she replies that she has fifty dresses like it and will throw this one into the sea afterwards. She leaves, after slapping her aunt, who calls her a "poser".

Significance: The scene presents the upper world that the stokers keep moving. Mildred is not simply a villain: she is restless, half-sincere and conscious of her own emptiness. But her visit to the stokehole is a search for a new thrill, and her ignorance prepares for the disaster of the next scene.

Scene III: The stokehole

In the stokehole a line of men, stripped to the waist, feed the furnaces. When the furnace doors open, the light shows them crouching in the attitudes of "chained gorillas". The noise of steel, coal and fire is deafening, yet it has a mechanical rhythm. Paddy complains that his back is broken, but Yank leads the work with joy, calling the furnace a hungry "baby" to be fed. A whistle from an engineer somewhere above orders them to work harder, and Yank shakes his fist at it, declaring that the stokers decide when to move.

At this moment Mildred enters with the two Engineers and stands behind Yank. The other men see her and stop, astonished. Yank, furious at the whistle, does not see her; he pounds his chest like a gorilla and pours out curses against the engineer. Then he notices the men staring, whirls round snarling, and sees Mildred in her white dress in the glare of the furnaces. They look into each other's eyes. Mildred, paralysed with horror at what seems to her an "abysmal brutality", covers her eyes and cries, "Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast!" She faints and is carried out. Yank, feeling insulted in the very heart of his pride, hurls his shovel at the closing door.

Significance: This is the turning point of the play. Mildred's look and her words destroy Yank's confidence. For the first time he sees himself as he appears to the world above, not as the force that drives everything but as a beast.

Scene IV: The forecastle again

After the watch, the men have washed, but Yank sits unwashed, black with coal dust, in the exact pose of Rodin's "The Thinker". He has not eaten. The men repeat his word "Think!" in their metallic chorus, but this time Yank is angry instead of amused.

Paddy teases him that he has fallen in love; Yank answers that he has "fallen in hate". Long explains that Mildred's father is a millionaire who owns the ship and makes half the world's steel, and that the stokers are all his slaves. He wants to take the matter to law and government, but Yank and the chorus mock "Law!", "Governments!" and "God!". Paddy describes the scene bitterly: the engineer showing the men like animals in a circus, and Mildred looking at Yank as if she had seen "a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo".

The phrase strikes Yank deeply. He repeats it, half in rage and half in bewilderment, and puzzles over who this woman is and how she dared to look at him that way. He swears to get even with her and to prove that he belongs and she does not. In a frenzy he rushes for the door to find her, and the other men have to pile on top of him to hold him down.

Significance: Yank begins to think for the first time, and the label "hairy ape" enters the play. His pride turns into a desire for revenge, which drives him into the world on land.

Scene V: Fifth Avenue

Three weeks later, on a fine Sunday morning, Yank and Long arrive at a corner of Fifth Avenue. The street is clean and quiet; the windows of a jeweller and a furrier display glittering goods with enormous price tags. Yank tells Long that he tried to wait for Mildred at Southampton but was driven off by detectives. Long has brought him here to awaken his class consciousness: Mildred, he says, was only a representative of her class. Long is indignant at the prices; Yank is unimpressed until he sees a monkey fur priced at two thousand dollars, which he takes as a personal insult.

The churchgoers come out, described as a procession of "gaudy marionettes" with something of the horror of "Frankensteins". They talk emptily about the sermon and a charity bazaar. Yank insults them, propositions a lady and deliberately bumps into the gentlemen, but they behave as if he does not exist, replying only with a mechanical "I beg your pardon". It is Yank who recoils from each collision. Long, frightened, deserts him.

When the women cry out in delight at the monkey fur, Yank is enraged. He tries to tear up the kerb and a lamp-post to use as weapons, and when a fat gentleman running for a bus bumps into him, he punches him full in the face. The gentleman does not even move; he only complains that he has missed his bus and calls for the police. A crowd of policemen club Yank to the ground.

Significance. This is the most Expressionist scene in the play. The rich are shown as mechanical puppets who cannot see or feel Yank at all. His strength, which seemed so powerful in the stokehole, has no effect on them. He discovers that he does not belong in their world, and that they are untouched by him.

Scene VI: The prison on Blackwell's Island

The next night Yank sits in a prison cell on Blackwell's Island, bruised and bandaged, again in the pose of "The Thinker". The row of cells seems to stretch into infinity. Waking, he grasps the bars and thinks he is in a cage at the zoo. The other prisoners mock him, and he tells them, "I'm a hairy ape, get me?" He explains that he was trying to get even with a girl in white, the daughter of Douglas, the steel millionaire.

One prisoner advises him to join the Wobblies, the I.W.W., and reads aloud a Senator's speech attacking them as wreckers who would make civilisation "degenerate back to the ape". Yank seizes on the word "wreckers". Then a terrible thought strikes him: Mildred's father makes steel, and steel, which Yank thought he belonged to, has made the very cage that holds him. In fury he swears to become fire that melts steel, and he bends one of the cell bars with his bare hands. The guard turns a fire hose on him and calls for a strait-jacket.

Significance: Yank recognises that steel, his symbol of power and belonging, is really the instrument of his imprisonment and of the rich. His identity is turned inside out. He now turns to destruction as a way of belonging.

Scene VII: The I.W.W. office

Nearly a month later Yank comes to an I.W.W. local near the waterfront. He expects a secret, conspiratorial society and knocks cautiously as if guessing a password, but finds an ordinary, shabby office where men

play checkers and write letters. The Secretary enrols him; Yank has to think before he can remember his real name, Robert Smith, since he has been "Yank" for so long.

Yank keeps winking and hinting, convinced that the union's openness is a disguise, and finally announces that he wants to blow up the steel works of Douglas, to knock all the steel in the world "up to de moon". The Secretary, suspecting him of being a police spy or an agent provocateur, has him seized. Deciding he is too stupid to be dangerous, he calls him "a brainless ape" and has him thrown into the street.

Sitting in the gutter in the pose of "The Thinker", Yank reflects bitterly that the Wobblies too think he does not belong. Their aims, shorter hours, more pay, votes, do not touch the thing he feels deep inside him, "at de bottom". "Steel was me, and I owned de woild", he says. "Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me". He asks the Man in the Moon where he "gets off at". A policeman tells him to move on, and when Yank asks where he should go, the policeman answers, "Go to hell".

Significanc: Even the workers' movement rejects him. Yank finds that his problem is not only economic or political but spiritual: he has lost his sense of who he is and where he fits.

Scene VIII: The monkey house at the zoo

At twilight the next day Yank enters the monkey house. A gorilla squats in its cage in the pose of "The Thinker". Yank speaks to it in a friendly, mocking, sympathetic way, admiring its chest and arms. He asks whether they are not both "members of de same club", the club of "de Hairy Apes". He realises that this is what Mildred saw when she looked at him, but she did not know that he too was in a cage, and a worse one.

He tells the gorilla that he spent the night on a bench at the Battery and watched the sun rise over the steel skyscrapers and ships. He understood what Paddy meant about beauty, but he could not get into it; it was over his head. The gorilla, he says, is luckier: it belongs to its own past of green woods and jungle and cannot think. Yank, however, can almost think and almost talk, and that is where "de joker" comes in. He is neither on earth nor in heaven but in the middle, taking the worst punches from both, and perhaps that is hell.

Proposing that they go down Fifth Avenue together and fight to the end, Yank forces open the cage with a crowbar and offers the gorilla his hand as "de secret grip of our order". Something in his mocking tone enrages the animal. It crushes Yank in a murderous hug, throws his body into the cage and shuffles away. Dying, Yank says that even the gorilla did not think he belonged, and cries, "Where do I fit in?" Then, refusing to complain, he hauls himself up and, in the voice of a circus barker, announces "de one and only" Hairy Ape before he slips to the floor and dies. The final stage direction reads: "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs".

Significance: The search for belonging ends in the cage where it began. Yank is rejected by the animal world as he was by the human world. Only in death, and only "perhaps", does he find a place.

5. Major Character Analysis

Yank (Robert Smith)

Yank is the hero of the play and appears in every scene except the second. His real name is Robert Smith, but he has been called "Yank", slang for an American, for so long that he almost forgets it. He grew up on the Brooklyn waterfront, where his parents drank and fought and beat him; his mother died of drink, and he ran away, worked at trucking and in the market, and finally shipped as a stoker. In the stokehole he found the only home he has known.

At the start Yank is supremely confident. He is the strongest of the stokers, their leader and, in O'Neill's words, their "most highly developed individual". He believes that he and his fellow workers make the ship and the whole modern world move: "I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it!" He despises everything that does not fit this belief: Paddy's memories of sailing ships, Long's socialism, religion, home and women. His strength is physical, his thinking simple. When he says he is trying to "t'ink", it is a joke.

Mildred's look in Scene III shatters this confidence. Yank is wounded not by a blow but by a way of seeing him. For the first time he becomes conscious of himself as others see him, and he begins, painfully, to think. The pose of Rodin's "The Thinker", which he takes in Scenes IV, VI and VII, shows this new and difficult activity. His first response is the response of wounded pride: revenge. He tries to reach Mildred, then to strike at her class on Fifth Avenue, then to destroy steel itself with the help of the I.W.W. Each attempt fails, and each failure teaches him that he does not belong where he thought he did. In prison he realises that steel, his symbol of power, has made his own cage. Among the Wobblies he learns that his trouble is not only economic: it is something "at de bottom" that more pay and votes cannot reach.

In the last scene Yank shows a new tenderness and insight. He has watched the sunrise and understood Paddy's talk of beauty, but cannot "get IN it". He sees that he is caught between the animal, which belongs to its past, and the human world, which rejects him. His death in the gorilla's arms is both pathetic and dignified: he refuses to whine, mocks himself as a circus exhibit, and dies.

Yank is more than an individual. O'Neill said that the public saw only the stoker, not the symbol, and insisted that "Yank is really yourself, and myself". Yank stands for modern man, who has lost the old harmony with nature that he had as an animal but has not yet found a new spiritual harmony to replace it. His strength, courage, humour, loneliness and confusion make him one of the most memorable figures in American drama.

Mildred Douglas

Mildred is the twenty-year-old daughter of the president of Nazareth Steel, chairman of the shipping line. She appears only in Scenes II and III, but her single look and cry set the whole tragedy in motion, and she haunts Yank's mind for the rest of the play. O'Neill describes her as pale, delicate, nervous and bored, an "expression not of its life energy but merely of the artificialities" of her family's wealth.

Mildred is not a simple villain. She has studied sociology, done social work on the East Side and wants "to touch life somewhere". In a moment of real self-knowledge she calls herself "a waste product in the Bessemer process", heir to her family's millions but not to the energy of the grandfather who began as a steelworker. Yet her interest in the poor is a pose and a search for thrills, as her aunt says. She lies to get permission to visit the stokehole and goes down in a white dress she plans to throw away.

In the stokehole her pose collapses. Faced with Yank's naked rage, she can only see a beast. Her white dress makes her look to Yank like a ghost, something dead and unreal. She represents the rich class, cut off from the labour that supports it, and the gaze of a society that turns the worker into an animal. That Yank never meets her again shows how unreachable that class is.

Paddy

Paddy is an old, wizened Irish stoker with a face "extremely monkey-like", full of the sad patience of that animal. He drinks heavily and sings old sea songs. He is the voice of the past. In Scene I he remembers the days of the clipper ships, when men worked under the sky with skill and daring and "a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one". Compared with that life, the stokehole is a hell in which men are caged "like bloody apes in the Zoo".

Paddy acts as a commentator and prophet. He sees the truth of the stokers' condition before Yank does, and it is he who first uses the image of the "hairy ape" in Scene IV. His mocking talk of "love" also shows his bitter wit. He is a foil to Yank: the old against the new, poetry against force, the sea against the engine. Yet Paddy has no answer either. He can only drink and dream, and his world is gone. In the last scene Yank admits he understood what Paddy meant, but could not belong in it.

Long

Long is a Cockney stoker and a socialist. He sees the stokers' life as hell and blames "the damned capitalist clarss". He quotes the Bible and the language of political pamphlets, and later tries to show Yank that Mildred is only "a representative of 'er clarss". His analysis of class is largely correct, but he is a talker, not a fighter. He wants to go to law, to vote, to use "peaceful means", and when Yank becomes violent on Fifth Avenue he runs away.

Long is another foil to Yank, representing organised political protest. The other stokers jeer at him, and Yank dismisses his ideas as "Salvation Army-Socialist bull". Through Long, and later the I.W.W., O'Neill suggests that politics may change conditions of work but cannot satisfy Yank's deeper need to belong.

Mildred's Aunt

The aunt is Mildred's chaperone, a fat, proud old lady with a double chin and lorgnettes. O'Neill presents her as a type of the rich: pompous, artificial and cynical. She mocks Mildred's social work as slumming and says, revealingly, "I loathe deformity". Her repeated cry of "Poser!" exposes the falseness in Mildred's interest in the poor. Through the quarrel between aunt and niece, O'Neill satirises a class that is bored, quarrelsome and empty.

Minor characters

The Second Engineer is a decent, embarrassed officer who escorts Mildred and warns her about her dress. The engineers, who blow the whistle from somewhere above, stand for the authority that controls the stokers without being seen. **The Secretary of the I.W.W.** is a practical, suspicious man who expects police spies, a sign of the persecution of the union, and who throws Yank out as "a brainless ape". **The Fifth Avenue crowd** and **the Gentleman** are mechanical figures who neither see nor feel Yank. **The prisoners**, **the Guard** and **the Policeman** show society's only answer to Yank: mockery, a fire hose, a cage, and the advice to "go to hell". **The Gorilla**, sitting like "The Thinker", is Yank's double; it belongs to its world as Yank does not, and its embrace kills him.

6. The Role of Women Characters

Only two women speak in the play, Mildred Douglas and her Aunt, and both appear only in Scenes II and III. A few more women are seen briefly: the rouged and overdressed ladies of Fifth Avenue, one of whom cries out in delight, "Monkey fur!", and the lady whom Yank tries to pick up. Other women exist only in the men's talk: the girl in the sentimental song who waits "far away in Canada", the women Yank dismisses as "tarts", and Yank's own mother, who died of drink. In a play about male labour, women are few, but their role is decisive.

Mildred as the catalyst of the action

Mildred sets the whole tragedy in motion. Her visit to the stokehole and her cry, "Oh, the filthy beast!", turn Yank from a confident man into a lost one. It is a striking irony that the strongest man in the play is broken not by force but by the look of a frail, "anemic" girl. She has the power of her class: she can enter any place on the ship by using her father's name, and her view of Yank is the view of the whole upper world. Although

she never appears again after Scene III, she remains present in Yank's mind as "de white-faced tart" whom he tries to reach on Fifth Avenue, in prison and in the zoo.

Mildred as a woman on the margin of her own world

Mildred is privileged, yet as a woman she has little real place in her family's world of steel and money. She is chaperoned by her aunt, has no work of her own, and must borrow her father's authority to do anything. Her social service on the East Side and her plan to visit Whitechapel are attempts to find a purpose, "to be some use in the world", but she is treated as a poser. She knows that she is merely the end product of her family's wealth, "sired by gold and darned by it", and, as she adds, "damned in more ways than one". In this sense she too is marginal: decorative, idle and cut off from life. Her white dress makes her look to Yank like "a ghost", a figure without blood, and Paddy calls her a woman "widout one drop of rale blood in her".

The Aunt

The Aunt is a satirical portrait of upper-class womanhood: fat, pompous, dressed to show her position and full of contempt for the poor. Her remark "I loathe deformity" reveals how the rich see the bodies of workers and the poor as ugly and unnatural. Her role is to expose Mildred's pose and to show the empty, quarrelsome life of their class. Through the two women O'Neill presents the rich as artificial figures set against the vital sea, "inert and disharmonious".

Women in the men's world

The stokers' attitudes to women are harsh. Yank declares that girls "don't wait for noone" and are "all tarts"; he swears to "fling her in de furnace"; on Fifth Avenue he propositions a lady crudely and insults the women as painted "stiffs". When Long mentions votes, Yank sneers, "Votes for women! Let dem do it!", a reference to American women winning the vote in 1920. Paddy mocks Mildred with a grotesque imitation of a woman's voice. These details show the brutal masculinity of the stokehole, which has no place for tenderness. Yank's hatred of Mildred is also a sign of how much her look has wounded his male pride.

A feminist reading would note that the women in the play are given little inner life. They function mainly as symbols in a conflict between men and classes: Mildred as the upper class, the Aunt as its snobbery, the Fifth Avenue ladies as its vanity, Yank's mother as the misery of his childhood. Yet Mildred is allowed one moment of honest self-knowledge in Scene II, and her crisis, a woman who cannot find a meaningful life, quietly mirrors Yank's own search for a place to belong.

7. The Role of Other Important Characters

Paddy

Paddy's role is that of commentator, prophet and conscience. In Scene I his lament for the sailing ships sets up the standard against which modern industrial life is judged: once man, ship and sea were one, now men are caged like apes. He first uses the image of the "hairy ape" in Scene IV, so he gives the play its title, and his mocking wit ("fallen in love") presses Yank to face what has happened. Structurally, Paddy speaks for the past, as Long speaks for political hope and Yank for the industrial present. He disappears after Scene IV, but his words return in the last scene, when Yank admits that Paddy was right about the beauty of the world. He is also a marginal figure: old, Irish, drunk and made obsolete by the machine.

Long

Long's role is to bring the language of class politics into the play. He explains who Mildred is, calls the stokers "wage slaves", and takes Yank to Fifth Avenue to awaken his class consciousness. In plot terms he

is the bridge between the ship and the city, and he prepares for the I.W.W. scene. In dramatic terms he is a comic foil: he talks of fighting the capitalists but runs away when Yank begins to fight. Through Long, O'Neill shows that political analysis, however correct, cannot by itself answer Yank's deeper need.

The Gorilla

The gorilla is the last and most important figure Yank meets. It sits in the pose of "The Thinker", which Yank has taken throughout the play, so it acts as his double, the creature Mildred saw in him. Yank hopes to find in it a brother and a place to belong. Instead the gorilla rejects him and kills him. Its role is to complete the play's argument: Yank belongs neither with the human world, which treats him as an animal, nor with the animal world, which recognises him as something else. It also completes the image of the cage, since Yank dies inside the gorilla's cage.

The stokers as a chorus

The stokers have no individual names, apart from Paddy and Long. They speak in fragments in many accents, and they repeat Yank's words in a mocking, metallic chorus. Like the chorus of a Greek tragedy, they comment on the hero's actions and express the feelings of the group. They also stand for the workers as a faceless mass, reduced by industrial labour to a single body.

The Secretary of the I.W.W.

The Secretary represents the organised workers' movement. He is practical and open, but also suspicious, since the union is constantly watched by spies. His decision to throw Yank out as "a brainless ape" shows that even the movement that claims to speak for the marginal can exclude a man who does not fit its idea of a worker.

The Play at a Glance: Scenes

Scene	Setting and time	Main events	Yank's state of mind	Key image or line
I	Firemen's forecastle; an hour after leaving New York	Drunken stokers; Long's socialist speech; Paddy's lament for sailing ships; Yank's speech of pride	Confident; sure that he belongs	Steel bunks like a cage; "Think!"; "I'm de muscles in steel"
II	Promenade deck; two days out	Mildred and her aunt quarrel; Mildred sets off to visit the stokehole	(Yank absent)	White dress; "a waste product in the Bessemer process"
III	The stokehole	Mildred sees Yank raging and cries "Oh, the filthy beast!"; she faints	Shocked; insulted in his pride	Furnaces; the whistle; "chained gorillas"
IV	Forecastle, after the watch	Paddy describes Mildred's look as at "a great hairy ape"; Yank vows revenge and is held down	Brooding; begins to think; hatred	"The Thinker"; "I've fallen in hate"
V	Fifth Avenue, three weeks later, Sunday	The rich ignore Yank; monkey fur; he punches a gentleman and is arrested	Defiant, then baffled and powerless	Marionettes; shop windows; "I beg your pardon"
VI	Prison on Blackwell's Island, next night	Prisoners read the Senator's speech on the I.W.W.; Yank sees that steel made his cage; bends a bar	Enraged insight; wants to destroy	Endless cells; "Dis is de Zoo, huh?"
VII	I.W.W. office near the waterfront, a month later	Yank offers to blow up the steel works; thrown out as a spy and "a brainless ape"	Rejected; lost; questions his place	"Steel was me, and I owned de woild"; "Go to hell"
VIII	Monkey house at the zoo, next day at twilight	Yank frees the gorilla, which crushes him; he dies in the cage	Seeks kinship; despair; dignity in death	The gorilla as "The Thinker"; "perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs"

Character Relations

Character	Who he or she is	Relation to Yank	What the character represents
Yank (Robert Smith)	Stoker on a transatlantic liner; the hero	Leader of the stokers; searches for a place to belong	Modern man; the worker cut off from nature and from society
Mildred Douglas	Daughter of the president of Nazareth Steel	Her look and words destroy his confidence; the object of his revenge	The idle, artificial rich; the gaze that turns the worker into an animal
Paddy	Old Irish stoker	Mocks and warns him; first calls him a "hairy ape"	The past; the lost harmony of man and nature
Long	Cockney stoker and socialist	Tries to make him class-conscious; deserts him on Fifth Avenue	Organised political protest that talks but does not act
Mildred's Aunt	Mildred's chaperone	No direct contact	The pompous, cynical upper class
Second Engineer	Ship's officer	Brings Mildred into the stokehole; the engineers' whistle angers Yank	Unseen authority over the workers
The stokers	Yank's fellow workers	Follow and mock him; hold him down in Scene IV	A chorus; workers reduced to a mass
The Fifth Avenue crowd	Churchgoers	Ignore him completely; have him arrested	The rich as mechanical puppets
The prisoners and the Guard	Inmates and keeper at Blackwell's Island	Mock him; tell him of the I.W.W.; turn the hose on him	Society's cage
The Secretary of the I.W.W.	Official of the union	Throws him out as a spy and "a brainless ape"	The workers' movement, which cannot meet his inner need
The Gorilla	Animal in the zoo	Yank's double; kills him	The animal past, which belongs but rejects him

8. Thematic Analysis

Belonging and alienation

The word "belong" is the key to the play. In Scene I Yank is sure that he belongs: the stokers make the ship move, so they belong and the first-class passengers are only "baggage". Mildred's look destroys this belief, and the rest of the play is a search for somewhere else to belong. He does not belong on Fifth Avenue, where the rich do not even see him; in prison, where he is caged; in the I.W.W., which throws him out; or in the zoo, where the gorilla kills him. Even his question to the policeman, "where do I go from here?", receives the answer "Go to hell". The final stage direction, "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs", offers belonging only in death, and only "perhaps". O'Neill presents alienation, the sense of being a stranger everywhere, as the basic condition of modern man.

The search for identity

Yank's search for belonging is also a search for who he is. At first his identity is simple: he is steel, speed and power. When Mildred sees him as a beast, he accepts the label others give him, "hairy ape", and repeats it with pride and pain. At the I.W.W. office he has to think before remembering his real name. In the zoo he tries to find himself in the gorilla, and fails. The play shows how fragile an identity is when it depends on work and on the way others see us.

Industrialisation and dehumanisation

The play is a powerful picture of what industrial society does to human beings. The stokers stoop like Neanderthals, move in a prisoner's lockstep, shovel "as if they were part of their bodies" and are seen in the furnace light as "chained gorillas". Paddy asks whether Yank wants to be "a flesh and blood wheel of the engines". Yank's pride in the machine is itself a sign of how completely he has been absorbed into it. The rich are dehumanised too, turned into marionettes and "Frankensteins". Industrial civilisation, O'Neill suggests, makes both workers and owners less than human.

Class conflict

The ship is a model of class society: stokers in the "bowels" below, the rich on the sunlit deck above, and engineers in between blowing the whistle. Mildred's family wealth comes from steel, and the stokers' labour keeps her ship moving. Long gives this conflict a political explanation, and the jeweller's window, with its "incredible prices", makes it visible. Yet the play does not end in revolution. The rich are untouched by Yank's blows, and the workers' union rejects him. O'Neill shows the injustice of class society while doubting that politics alone can cure the deeper wound.

Man between the animal and the spiritual

The play draws on Darwin's theory of evolution. Yank is placed between the ape and the fully human. He has lost the animal's simple harmony with nature but has not reached a higher, spiritual harmony. In the zoo he says he is "in de middle", neither on earth nor in heaven, and that this may be hell. The gorilla "can't tink" and so belongs; Yank can "make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin'" and so is lost. The title, the Neanderthal stage directions and the ending in the monkey house all keep this theme in view.

Thought and the burden of consciousness

At the start "Think!" is a joke for the stokers, who chant "Drink, don't think!" After Mildred's visit, thinking becomes Yank's torment. He sits in the pose of Rodin's "The Thinker", says "Tinkin' is hard", and finally

envies the gorilla because it cannot think. Consciousness, in this play, separates humans from animals but also makes them unhappy, because it shows them their own lack of a place.

Imprisonment and freedom

Cages appear everywhere: the bunks in the forecastle, the stokehole "caged in by steel", the prison cells, the gorilla's cage. Yank discovers that steel, which he thought gave him power, has made his cage. Even the freedom he offers the gorilla, "Pardon from de governor!", leads only to his own death inside the cage. The play suggests that modern society imprisons people in many ways, physical, social and mental.

The past and the present

Paddy longs for the days of sailing ships, when work was hard but free and men were part of the sea. Yank scorns this as "a dope dream": he belongs to the new age of engines and speed. By the end he admits that Paddy was right about the beauty of the world, but that he himself cannot enter it. The gorilla can dream of its jungle past; Yank has "no past to tink in, nor nothin' dat's comin'". The play mourns a lost harmony without believing it can return.

The failure of religion, law and politics

Long appeals to the Bible, the law, governments and voting, and each word is mocked by the stokers' metallic chorus. The Fifth Avenue churchgoers are hypocrites who listen to "Doctor Caiaphas" and plan charity bazaars. The Senator praises liberty and justice while attacking workers. The I.W.W. offers only shorter hours and better pay. None of these institutions can answer Yank's question, "Where do I fit in?"

9. Symbols and Imagery

- **The cage.** The central image of the play, seen in the bunks, the stokehole, the prison and the zoo. It stands for the imprisonment of the worker and of modern man.
- **Steel.** At first Yank's symbol of power and belonging ("Steel, dat stands for de whole ting!"). In prison he realises that steel belongs to Mildred's father and forms the bars of his cage.
- **The stokehole and its fire.** A picture of hell, with furnaces like fiery mouths. Yank calls hell his "fav'rite climate" and in prison he vows to become fire, since "Fire, dat melts it!"
- **Mildred's white dress.** Whiteness suggests purity and wealth, but also death and unreality; Yank thinks she is "a ghost" dressed like a corpse.
- **Rodin's "The Thinker".** Yank takes this pose in Scenes IV, VI and VII, and the gorilla in Scene VIII. It marks Yank's painful attempt to think, and links man and ape.
- **The hairy ape and the gorilla.** The label Yank accepts from others, and the double he finally meets. The ape stands for humanity's animal past.
- **Monkey fur.** The two-thousand-dollar fur in the Fifth Avenue window shows that the rich value an ape's skin more than a worker's life.
- **The whistle.** The engineers' whistle, sounding from the unseen dark above, represents the authority that controls the workers.
- **The chorus of phonograph horns.** The stokers repeat words like machines, showing how industrial life has made even speech mechanical.
- **The sailing ship and the sea.** In Paddy's speech they stand for the lost harmony of man, work and nature.

- **The marionettes of Fifth Avenue.** The rich as puppets, wound up and unfeeling.
- **The moon.** In Scene VII Yank asks the "Man in de Moon" where he fits in, a gesture like an ape gibbering at the moon, and a sign that no answer comes from above.

10. Significance of the Title

The title names Yank by the label others give him. The phrase first appears in Scene IV, when Paddy says that Mildred looked at Yank as if she had seen "a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo". Mildred herself only cried "filthy beast", but Yank seizes on Paddy's phrase and makes it his identity. In prison he announces, "I'm a hairy ape, get me?"; the Senator's speech warns that civilisation may "degenerate back to the ape"; the Secretary calls him "a brainless ape"; and in the zoo Yank calls the gorilla and himself members of the same club, the "Hairy Apes".

The title therefore carries several meanings. Literally it describes Yank's appearance as a hairy, long-armed, stooping stoker, which the opening stage directions compare to Neanderthal Man. Socially it shows how the rich see the worker, as a beast to be stared at, like an animal in a menagerie. Philosophically it points to the theme of evolution: Yank is caught between the ape, which belongs to nature, and the fully human being, which has a spiritual home. The title is also ironic, because the real hairy ape in the last scene rejects Yank as completely as Mildred did. The final stage direction, "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs", turns the insult into an epitaph and leaves the reader to decide whether death is a place of belonging or only an end.

11. The Hairy Ape as a Tragedy

Classical tragedy, as described by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, shows a hero of high rank who falls from prosperity to misfortune through some error or flaw (hamartia), passes through a reversal (peripeteia) and a recognition (anagnorisis), and arouses pity and fear in the audience. *The Hairy Ape* adapts this pattern to the modern world.

Yank is not a king but a stoker. O'Neill was one of the first dramatists to give a common working man the dignity of a tragic hero, an idea Arthur Miller later defended in his essay "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949). Within his own world Yank has high status: he is the strongest and proudest of the stokers, their leader. His flaw is his pride, the belief that he is "de start" and "de end" of everything and that he belongs. The reversal comes in Scene III, when Mildred's look turns his pride into shame. His recognition is gradual. In prison he sees that steel has made his cage; at the I.W.W. office he sees that his trouble lies deeper than wages; in the zoo he sees that he belongs neither with the animals nor with men. His death follows directly from this last recognition.

O'Neill believed that the modern dramatist must deal with the sickness of the present age, the loss of faith in the old God and the failure of science and material progress to replace it. In Greek tragedy the hero struggles against the gods or fate; in this play Yank struggles against forces he cannot see or name: industrial society, class, and his own divided nature. Like a classical hero he fights to the end. "No squakin', see! No quittin', get me! Croak wit your boots on!" he says as he dies.

Some critics argue that the play is not a full tragedy, because Yank never fully understands his situation and his death in a gorilla's arms has elements of the grotesque. O'Neill's subtitle, "A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life", adds to the uncertainty. But the comedy is the bitter comedy of a universe that seems to play a joke on man, and the final word "perhaps" leaves the audience with pity and fear rather than laughter. Most readers therefore see *The Hairy Ape* as a modern tragedy of the common man, in which the hero's fall comes from the conditions of modern life as much as from his own nature.

12. Expressionism and Naturalism in the Play

Expressionism was a movement in painting, poetry and drama, strongest in Germany between about 1910 and 1925. Expressionist dramatists such as Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller, and before them August Strindberg in plays like *To Damascus* and *A Dream Play*, did not try to copy the surface of reality. They distorted it to show inner states of mind and the pressures of modern society. Typical features include a single central figure moving through a series of scenes or "stations", minor characters who are types rather than individuals, symbolic settings and lighting, mechanical movement, choral or repetitive speech, and a protest against the dehumanising effects of industrial life.

The Hairy Ape shows almost all of these features. The opening stage direction declares that the treatment "should by no means be naturalistic". The bunks look like a cage and the ceiling crushes down on the men. The stokers resemble Neanderthals and move in a lockstep. Their voices repeat words "as if their throats were phonograph horns". Many characters have no names, only functions: the Second Engineer, the Secretary, a Gentleman, a Guard. The Fifth Avenue crowd are "gaudy marionettes", and in the first production they wore masks. The prison cells run "into infinity". The play moves in eight episodes, each a station in Yank's journey, and everything is seen in relation to Yank's mind.

At the same time the play contains strong naturalistic elements. The dialogue reproduces real dialects with great accuracy; the details of the stokehole come from O'Neill's own experience at sea; and Yank's life story, brutal childhood, drink and waterfront jobs, belongs to the naturalist tradition of showing how environment shapes character. O'Neill himself said the play ran from "extreme naturalism to extreme expressionism". One critic, Margaret Loftus Ranald, has argued that only the Fifth Avenue scene is fully Expressionist. The best answer is that O'Neill combined the two methods: naturalism gives the play its physical reality, and Expressionism turns that reality into a vision of modern man's inner and outer imprisonment.

13. The Hairy Ape and the Literature of Marginality

What is marginality?

To be marginal is to be pushed to the edges of a society, away from its centres of power, wealth, visibility and speech. People may be marginalised because of class, labour, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, age, disability or political belief. The literature of marginality either gives voice to such people or examines how the centre sees and treats them. Several thinkers help us read this kind of literature. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci used the term "subaltern" for groups shut out of the dominant order. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), asked whether the marginalised can really be heard within the language of the powerful. The American writer bell hooks, in *From Margin to Center* (1984), argued that the view from the margin can see the whole of society more clearly than the view from the centre. Karl Marx, in his early writings of 1844, described the alienation of the worker, who is estranged from what he makes, from his own work, from other people and from his own humanity. Each of these ideas is useful for *The Hairy Ape*.

The margin as a place

The play maps marginality in space. The liner is built in layers: the stokers labour below the waterline, in the "bowels" of the ship, while the rich sit on the sunlit promenade deck. The engineers' whistle sounds from somewhere above, unseen. On land the pattern continues. Fifth Avenue is, in Long's words, "their bleedin' private lane", and he jokes, "Proletarians keep orf the grass!" The I.W.W. office stands in a narrow street by the waterfront, the prison on an island in the river, and the zoo at the edge of human society. Yank moves from one edge to another and never reaches the centre.

Class, labour and invisibility

The stokers are the workers on whose labour the modern world runs, yet they are hidden from those who profit by it. When Mildred sees them, she sees beasts. On Fifth Avenue the rich do not see Yank at all; they walk around him and say "I beg your pardon" without a glance. Invisibility is one of the clearest signs of marginality, and the scene anticipates Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), whose narrator says he is invisible because people refuse to see him. In Marx's terms, Yank is alienated from the steel he helps to make, which ends up as the bars of his cage, and from his own humanity, which the rich call "ape".

Ethnicity and the immigrant worker

The forecastle is full of immigrant workers who speak in German, Italian, French, Scandinavian, Irish and Cockney accents, and the stage direction notes that all the "civilized white races" are there, all looking alike. They call each other by ethnic insults such as "Dutchman", "Wop", "Square-head" and "Harp", and Yank later calls the Secretary a "Sheeny", an anti-Jewish slur. The play thus shows that the margin has its own hierarchies and prejudices. Paddy, the old Irishman, recalls the long marginality of the Irish in America; O'Neill, the son of an Irish immigrant, knew this history well. The forecastle is a white world, and its casual racist talk reflects the racial order of the time. It is notable that the Black singer and actor Paul Robeson later played Yank on the London stage.

Political and criminal margins

The I.W.W. was a persecuted organisation, watched by spies and denounced in the Senate as "wreckers". Its members live at the political margin, and their suspicion of Yank shows how persecution breeds mistrust even among the marginal. The prison scene shows another margin, the criminalised poor. When the policeman asks what Yank has done, he answers, "I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge". For the poor, simply existing can be treated as a crime.

Animalisation and the marked body

The most powerful way the play shows marginalisation is through animal imagery. The stokers are compared to Neanderthals and "chained gorillas"; Long complains of being shown off like "monkeys in a menagerie"; Paddy imagines the engineer presenting them as baboons "from darkest Africy"; Mildred sees a "filthy beast". To call people animals has long been a way of denying their humanity, used against workers, immigrants, colonised peoples and racial minorities. The worker's body itself, stooped and over-muscled by labour, is treated by the rich as a deformity; the Aunt says, "I loathe deformity". The play's scenes of staring and exhibition, and Yank's final speech in the voice of a circus barker, recall the freak show, which links the play to disability studies and to the paper's concern with bodies placed at the margin.

Voice and the marginal speaker

Yank's greatest struggle is to think and speak about his own condition. His words are mocked by the stokers' chorus, ignored on Fifth Avenue, misunderstood by the prisoners and suspected by the union. "Nobody gets me but me", he says. In the zoo he says he can "make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin'", and almost get away with it. In Spivak's sense, Yank speaks, but he cannot be heard by those with power. O'Neill's own position is also worth discussing: he had worked among stokers, but he was a middle-class writer speaking for them. The play is therefore both an attempt to give the marginal a voice and an example of how that voice is shaped by someone else.

Double marginality

Yank is marginal even among the marginal. He is rejected by the centre, the rich; by the counter-centre, the workers' movement; by society's institutions, the law and the prison; and finally by nature, the gorilla. He has no family, no home, no faith and no community except the stokehole, and even that is lost. The final stage direction offers him a place only in death, and only "perhaps". The play does not romanticise the margin. It shows its violence, prejudice and confusion as well as its strength. But it also turns the gaze back on the audience, for, as O'Neill said, "Yank is really yourself, and myself". The marginal figure becomes a mirror of modern humanity as a whole.

14. Marginal Characters in the Play

- **Yank.** The central marginal figure, a worker hidden below decks, called an ape, ignored by the rich, jailed, rejected by the union and killed by the gorilla. He is marginal in class, in space, in speech and finally in species.
- **The stokers.** Nameless immigrant workers who speak broken English and are seen only as a mass. They are marginal by class and ethnicity, and are reduced to a chorus of "phonograph horns".
- **Paddy.** Old, Irish, drunken and made obsolete by the steam engine. He is marginal by age and by the passing of the way of life he loved.
- **Long.** A Cockney radical whose politics place him at the edge of acceptable opinion. Even his fellow stokers jeer at him.
- **Yank's parents.** Absent figures from the Brooklyn waterfront, poor, violent and drunk; his mother died of delirium tremens. They show the poverty that produced Yank.
- **The prisoners.** Unseen voices in endless cells, the criminalised poor who mock Yank but also share their knowledge with him.
- **The I.W.W. members.** Persecuted labour radicals at the political margin, suspicious of spies.
- **Mildred and the women.** Privileged by class but marginal as women in a world run by fathers and money, given little to do but pose.
- **The Gorilla.** The animal, beyond the edge of human society altogether, caged and stared at like the workers.

15. Allusions and References in the Play

Reference	Meaning in the play
Rodin's "The Thinker"	Famous bronze sculpture by Auguste Rodin of a seated man lost in thought, first conceived for his "Gates of Hell" based on Dante. Yank and the gorilla take this pose.
The Flying Dutchman	Legendary ghost ship doomed to sail forever without reaching port; Paddy compares the old clippers to it.
"Whiskey Johnny" and "The Miller of Dee"	Old sea shanty and folk song sung by Paddy; the second contains the line "I care for nobody, no, not I".
Bessemer process	Method of making steel invented by Henry Bessemer in the 1850s; Mildred calls herself a waste product of it.

Reference	Meaning in the play
Puddler	A worker who stirred molten iron in a furnace; Mildred's grandfather began as one.
Nazareth Steel	The fictional company of Mildred's father; the name ironically recalls the town of Jesus.
Whitechapel	A poor district of London's East End, where Mildred plans to go slumming.
The leopard and its spots	From the Bible (Jeremiah 13.23): a person cannot change their nature; Mildred applies it to herself.
Doctor Caiaphas	Name of the Fifth Avenue preacher, recalling the high priest who condemned Jesus; a satire on the church of the rich.
The veil of the temple	In the Gospels the temple veil was torn at the crucifixion; the churchgoers want to "rehabilitate" it with a bazaar.
Frankenstein	The monster created by science in Mary Shelley's novel; used for the mechanical rich.
Blackwell's Island	Island in New York's East River with the city prison; now Roosevelt Island.
Catiline and Cato	Catiline plotted against the Roman Republic; Cato urged the destruction of Carthage. The Senator borrows both to attack the I.W.W.
I.W.W. or Wobblies	Industrial Workers of the World, a radical labour union founded in 1905.
Burns and Pinkerton	Private detective agencies used to spy on unions.
The Elks and the Black Hand	A social fraternity and an Italian criminal extortion gang; Yank expects the I.W.W. to have secret rites like them.
Ingersoll	A cheap American pocket watch; Yank calls himself "a busted Ingersoll".
The Battery	Park at the southern tip of Manhattan, facing the harbour.
Zbyszko	Stanislaus Zbyszko, a famous Polish wrestler of the time; the dying Yank says the gorilla should be matched with him.
Salvation Army and soapbox	Yank's mocking words for street preaching and political speech-making.

16. Important Passages for Explanation with Reference to the Context

1. "Can't youse see I'm tryin' to t'ink?"

Yank says this in Scene I, in the firemen's forecastle, when Paddy's singing and the men's noise disturb him. Here it is a joke: Yank is not really thinking, and the stokers repeat the word "Think!" in a metallic chorus and chant "Drink, don't think!" In Scene IV, after Mildred's visit, Yank says almost the same words, but now he is serious and sits in the pose of Rodin's "The Thinker". The repetition marks the change in

him. Thinking, once a joke, has become his torment, and the whole play follows his painful effort to think out who he is and where he belongs.

2. "Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? Well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't. Dat's all".

Yank speaks these lines in Scene I, answering Long's socialist speech about the "capitalist clarss" in first class. Yank turns Long's argument upside down. The rich passengers are only "baggage"; it is the stokers who make the ship move, so they belong and the rich do not. The passage introduces the key word of the play, "belong", and shows Yank's early, proud identity based on work and strength. It is ironic, because the rest of the play proves that Yank belongs nowhere, and that the world of the rich is quite untouched by his labour.

3. "'Twas them days men belonged to ships, not now. 'Twas them days a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one".

Old Paddy says this in Scene I, after his long, poetic memory of the clipper ships. He is answering Yank's claim that the stokers "belong". For Paddy, true belonging existed only in the past, when men worked in sun and wind with skill and daring, and man, ship and sea formed a single harmony. The modern steamer has destroyed this unity, caging men in steel below the waterline. The speech states the theme of lost harmony between man and nature, and it gives the play its standard of comparison. In the last scene Yank admits that Paddy was right about the beauty of the world, but he cannot belong in it.

4. "Is it to belong to that you're wishing? Is it a flesh and blood wheel of the engines you'd be?"

Paddy asks Yank these scornful questions at the end of his speech in Scene I, after describing the smoke, the pounding engines and the coal dust of the modern ship. He means that Yank's pride in the stokehole is really pride in being part of a machine. Yank answers at once, "Sure ting! Dat's me!" and goes on to boast that he is steam, smoke and steel. The question sums up the theme of dehumanisation: industrial work has turned men into parts of machines, and Yank does not even see it. His later discovery that steel has built his own cage proves Paddy right.

5. "I'm a waste product in the Bessemer process".

Mildred says this to her aunt on the promenade deck in Scene II, in a rare moment of sincerity. The Bessemer process is a method of making steel. Mildred's grandfather was a puddler who worked with molten iron, her father made millions from steel, and she feels she has inherited only the money, not the energy and strength that made it. She calls herself a by-product, or waste, of her family's industry. The line shows that Mildred is aware of her own emptiness, so she is not simply a villain. It also links her, through steel, to Yank, who believes steel is his source of power.

6. "Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast!"

Mildred cries this in the stokehole in Scene III, when she suddenly sees Yank, black with coal dust, pounding his chest and cursing the engineer in a murderous rage. Paralysed with horror, she covers her eyes, speaks these words to the engineers, and faints. This is the turning point of the play. Her words and her look destroy Yank's pride and his sense of belonging. For the first time he sees himself as the upper class sees him, not as the force that drives the world but as an animal. Everything that follows, his brooding, his revenge and his search for a place, comes from this moment.

7. "Love, hell! Hate, dat's what. I've fallen in hate, get me?"

Yank says this in Scene IV, in the forecastle, when Paddy teases him that he has fallen in love with Mildred. The stokers repeat "Love!" in their mocking chorus. Yank's reply, with its play on "fallen in love", shows how deeply Mildred's look has wounded him. His feeling is as powerful and obsessive as love, but it is

hatred, born of humiliated pride. Paddy wisely remarks that it would take a wise man to tell one from the other. The line shows that Yank is now bound to Mildred by an emotion he cannot control, and it sets him on his course of revenge.

8. "Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me".

Yank says this in Scene VII, sitting in the street after the I.W.W. members have thrown him out as a spy and "a brainless ape". He reflects that the union's aims, shorter hours, more pay and votes, do not touch the trouble deep inside him. The two sentences sum up his fall. In the stokehole he identified himself with steel and felt master of the world. Now that he knows steel belongs to the rich and forms his cage, he has lost that identity and feels at the mercy of the world. The balanced, reversed sentences show his new, bitter clarity.

9. "I ain't on oith and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call hell, huh?"

Yank says this to the gorilla in the monkey house in Scene VIII. He has been explaining that the gorilla is lucky because it belongs to its own past and cannot think, while he can almost think and almost talk. The passage states the philosophical heart of the play. Yank is caught between the animal world (earth) and the spiritual world (heaven), belonging to neither and hurt by both. The boxing language of "punches" is typical of him. His suggestion that this in-between state is hell links back to the stokehole, which he once called his favourite "hell".

10. "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs".

This is the final stage direction of the play, after Yank has been crushed by the gorilla, thrown into its cage, and has died announcing himself as "de one and only" Hairy Ape. The monkeys set up a wailing chatter. The sentence answers Yank's lifelong search for a place to belong: he finds it only in death, inside a cage. The word "perhaps" is important. O'Neill does not say clearly whether death brings Yank peace or only ends his suffering, and the uncertainty leaves the audience with pity and unease. The line also gives final meaning to the title.

11. "What right 'as they got to be exhibitin' us 's if we was bleedin' monkeys in a menagerie?"

Long says this in Scene IV, after Mildred's visit to the stokehole. He is outraged that the engineers brought a rich young lady down to look at the stokers as though they were animals in a show. The line connects the visit to the play's imagery of apes, cages and exhibition, and to the theme of marginality: the workers are not only exploited but displayed as curiosities for the amusement of the rich. Long's protest is correct, but his solution, to go to law, is mocked by the others, which shows how powerless the marginal are to defend their dignity.

12. "Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge".

Yank says this to the policeman in Scene VII, after he has been thrown out of the I.W.W. office. When the policeman asks what he has done, Yank answers bitterly that his crime is simply to have been born. The line sums up his sense that there is no place for him in the world. For the poor and the marginal, existence itself seems to be treated as an offence, punished with cages and the police. It also shows Yank's grim humour and his growing despair.

13. "Sure! Lock me up! Put me in a cage! Dat's de on'y answer yuh know".

Yank speaks these words to the policeman in Scene VII, just before the question of his "charge". He has been rejected by the rich, the union and the city, and he sees that society answers every problem it cannot understand by locking it away. The line links the prison, the ship and the zoo as forms of the same cage. It is also a prophecy, since Yank will die inside a cage in the next scene.

17. Model Answers to Long Questions

General questions

1. Consider *The Hairy Ape* as an Expressionist play.

Expressionism was a movement in European art and drama, especially in Germany between about 1910 and 1925. Expressionist dramatists distorted outward reality in order to express inner experience and to protest against the dehumanising effects of modern industrial society. Their plays often follow one central character through a series of episodes, use characters who are types rather than individuals, and rely on symbolic settings, lighting, mechanical movement and choral speech. O'Neill, who admired Strindberg, used these methods in *The Emperor Jones* and, most fully, in *The Hairy Ape*.

The opening stage direction announces that the treatment "should by no means be naturalistic". The forecastle bunks look like the bars of a cage, the ceiling crushes the men, and the stokers resemble Neanderthals. These details express the inner truth of the workers' condition rather than its outward appearance. In the stokehole the men are lit by the furnaces like "chained gorillas". The stokers repeat words like "Think!", "Love!" and "Law!" in a metallic chorus "as if their throats were phonograph horns", which shows that even their speech has become mechanical.

The structure is that of a station drama. Yank moves through eight scenes, each a stage in his search for belonging: the forecastle, the stokehole, Fifth Avenue, the prison, the union office and the zoo. Most minor characters have no names, only functions: the Second Engineer, the Secretary, a Gentleman, the Guard. The Fifth Avenue scene is the most Expressionist of all. The churchgoers are "gaudy marionettes", mechanical and unseeing; in the first production they wore masks; Yank's blows have no effect on them. The prison cells run "into infinity", and the repeated pose of Rodin's "The Thinker" links Yank with the gorilla.

At the same time the play has a naturalistic base. The dialects of Yank, Paddy and Long are reproduced with accuracy, the details of the stokehole come from O'Neill's life at sea, and Yank's brutal childhood explains his character in the naturalist manner. O'Neill himself said the play ran from "extreme naturalism to extreme expressionism". The combination is the play's strength. Naturalism makes Yank a believable stoker; Expressionism turns him into a symbol of modern man, caged by industrial society and divided within himself. *The Hairy Ape* is therefore one of the finest examples of Expressionism on the American stage.

2. Discuss the theme of "belonging" in *The Hairy Ape*.

The word "belong" runs through the play like a refrain, and Yank's search for a place to belong is its main action. O'Neill described Yank's struggle to "belong" as the struggle of modern man, who has lost his old harmony with nature and has not found a new spiritual harmony.

In Scene I Yank is sure that he belongs. The stokers make the ship move; the rich are only "baggage"; so "we belong and dey don't". He identifies himself with steel, speed and power. Paddy offers a different idea of belonging: in the days of sailing ships men belonged to the ship and the sea, but now they are caged like apes. Long offers a political idea: the workers belong to an oppressed class.

Mildred's cry, "Oh, the filthy beast!", destroys Yank's belief. From Scene IV onwards he tries to find a new place. On Fifth Avenue the rich do not even see him, and his blows have no effect. In prison he realises that steel, which he thought he belonged to, belongs to Mildred's father and has built his cage. At the I.W.W. office he hopes to belong to a band of wreckers, but the union throws him out as a spy and "a brainless ape". Sitting in the street, he admits that his trouble lies "at de bottom", beyond wages and votes, and asks where he "gets off at". The policeman's answer, "Go to hell", sums up society's indifference.

In the zoo Yank seeks kinship with the gorilla. He sees that the animal belongs to its own past and cannot think, while he is caught "in de middle", neither on earth nor in heaven. Even the gorilla rejects him, and he dies crying, "Where do I fit in?" The final stage direction, "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs", offers belonging only in death and only as a possibility.

The theme therefore works on several levels: social, as the worker is excluded by the rich; political, as even the workers' movement cannot hold him; and philosophical, as man is shown to have lost his place in nature without gaining one in the spirit. *The Hairy Ape* is a tragedy of alienation, and its question, "Where do I fit in?", is addressed to every modern reader.

3. Trace the development of Yank's character.

Yank (Robert Smith) is the hero of *The Hairy Ape*, and the play is the story of his transformation from proud certainty to bewildered despair. He grew up on the Brooklyn waterfront in a violent home, ran away, and found his only home in the stokehole of a liner.

In Scene I he is the strongest and most confident of the stokers. He sees himself as the force behind the modern world: he is steam, smoke and steel, "de muscles in steel, de punch behind it". He despises Paddy's nostalgia, Long's politics, home, women and religion. His thinking is simple and his strength is everything; "Think" is only a joke.

The encounter with Mildred in Scene III changes him. Her horror makes him see himself as a beast. In Scene IV he sits in the pose of "The Thinker", unwashed and silent, and begins to think. He feels insulted to the heart and swears revenge, accepting Paddy's phrase "hairy ape" as his name. In Scenes V to VII he tries to strike back: at Mildred's class on Fifth Avenue, where he is ignored and arrested; at steel itself, after his prison realisation that steel has made his cage; and through the I.W.W., which rejects him. With each failure he loses part of his old identity, and by the end of Scene VII he admits that he is no longer steel and that "de woild owns me".

In Scene VIII Yank shows new gentleness and insight. He has watched a sunrise and understood the beauty Paddy spoke of, though he could not enter it. He sees his position clearly, caught between animal and man. His death in the gorilla's arms is pathetic, but he faces it with courage, refusing to complain and mocking himself as a circus exhibit.

Yank's development is from a man who belongs without thinking to a man who thinks but cannot belong. He is both an individual, rough, funny, proud and lonely, and a symbol. O'Neill said that "Yank is really yourself, and myself", meaning that his confusion is the confusion of modern humanity.

4. Comment on the significance of the title "The Hairy Ape".

The title of O'Neill's play is the label that others fix on its hero, Yank, and that he finally accepts as his identity. It first appears in Scene IV, when Paddy describes how Mildred looked at Yank as if she had seen "a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo". Yank seizes on the phrase, repeating it in rage and bewilderment.

On the literal level, the title describes Yank's appearance. The opening stage directions compare the stokers to Neanderthal Man, hairy-chested and long-armed, and in the stokehole they look like "chained gorillas". On the social level, it shows how the rich see the worker: as an animal to be exhibited. Long complains that the stokers were shown off like "monkeys in a menagerie", and on Fifth Avenue a monkey fur is worth more than a worker.

The phrase follows Yank through the play. In prison he declares, "I'm a hairy ape, get me?", and hears a Senator warn that radicals would make civilisation "degenerate back to the ape". The I.W.W. Secretary calls him "a brainless ape". In the zoo he claims the gorilla as a fellow member of the club of "Hairy Apes".

On the philosophical level, the title expresses the play's central idea. Yank stands between the ape, which belongs to nature and cannot think, and the human being, who should have a spiritual home. He has lost the first and not found the second. The title is also ironic, since the real ape in the final scene rejects and kills Yank. The last stage direction, "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs", turns the insult into an epitaph. The title thus sums up the play's concern with identity, class, evolution and alienation.

5. Is *The Hairy Ape* a tragedy? Discuss.

O'Neill subtitled the play "A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life", but most readers see it as a modern tragedy. According to Aristotle, a tragic hero of some greatness falls from good fortune to misfortune through a flaw or error, passes through a reversal and a recognition, and arouses pity and fear. *The Hairy Ape* adapts this pattern to an ordinary working man.

Yank is a stoker, not a king, but within his world he has stature: he is the strongest, proudest leader of the stokers. O'Neill was one of the first to treat such a man as a tragic hero, an idea Arthur Miller later defended in "Tragedy and the Common Man". Yank's flaw is his pride, his belief that he is "de start" and "de end" and that he belongs. The reversal comes when Mildred calls him a "filthy beast". His recognition comes in stages: in prison he sees that steel has made his cage; outside the I.W.W. office he sees that his problem is not wages but something deeper; in the zoo he sees that he belongs neither with men nor with animals.

The forces against him are modern equivalents of fate: industrial society, class division and his own divided nature. O'Neill believed that the modern dramatist must deal with the sickness of an age that has lost faith in the old God and found no new one. Yank struggles bravely to the end, and his last words, "No quittin', get me! Croak wit your boots on!", give him a hero's dignity.

There are reasons to doubt the tragic label. Yank never fully understands his situation, his death in a gorilla's embrace has elements of the grotesque, and the subtitle calls the play a comedy. But the comedy is bitter: it is the joke a hostile universe plays on man, which Yank calls "where de joker comes in". The final "perhaps" leaves the audience with pity and fear, not laughter. *The Hairy Ape* is best described as a tragedy of the common man in the modern world.

6. Examine *The Hairy Ape* as a criticism of industrial capitalism.

The Hairy Ape was written in the early 1920s, when the United States had become the leading industrial power, when steel trusts held enormous wealth, and when the authorities were persecuting radical unions such as the I.W.W. The play reflects this world and offers a sharp criticism of it.

The liner is a picture of class society. The stokers labour in the "bowels" of the ship, caged in steel, while the rich lounge on the sunlit deck. The engineers' whistle, sounding from above, keeps the workers at their task. The stokers have become parts of the machine, shovelling "as if they were part of their bodies"; Paddy asks whether Yank wants to be "a flesh and blood wheel of the engines". Mildred's fortune comes from Nazareth Steel, whose name ironically recalls Christ, and she calls herself a waste product of the steel-making process.

On land the criticism continues. Fifth Avenue displays jewels and furs at prices greater than the stokers earn in many voyages, and the rich churchgoers are mechanical puppets who plan charity bazaars but do not even see the worker in front of them. The Senator's speech hides repression behind words like liberty and justice. In prison Yank realises that steel, the product of his labour, builds the cage that holds him and the wealth of the man at the top.

Yet the play is not simple propaganda. Long's socialism is presented as cowardly talk, and the I.W.W. rejects Yank. O'Neill suggests that capitalism has damaged something deeper than wages: the worker's sense of himself and his place in nature. The criticism is therefore both economic and spiritual. Industrial

capitalism, the play suggests, turns workers into animals and owners into puppets, and leaves modern man with nowhere to belong.

7. Comment on the theme of marginality in *The Hairy Ape*.

Marginality means being pushed to the edges of society, away from power, wealth and voice. *The Hairy Ape* (1922) is one of the first major American plays to place a marginal worker at the centre of the stage and to examine, from his point of view, how a modern industrial society excludes him.

The play maps marginality in space. The stokers work below the waterline while the rich sit on the sunlit deck, and the engineers control them by a whistle from above. On land, Fifth Avenue is the private lane of the rich, the I.W.W. office stands by the waterfront, the prison on an island, the zoo at the edge of human society. Yank moves from margin to margin and never reaches the centre.

It also shows the different forms of marginality. Economically, the stokers are "wage slaves" whose labour drives the world but who remain hidden. Ethnically, the forecastle is full of immigrants who speak broken English and insult each other with ethnic names, and Paddy recalls the marginality of the Irish in America. Politically, the I.W.W. is persecuted and denounced as "wreckers". Legally, the poor are criminalised; Yank's only "charge" is that he was born. Socially, the rich on Fifth Avenue do not even see him, and invisibility becomes the sign of his exclusion.

The strongest marker of marginality in the play is animalisation. The stokers look like Neanderthals and "chained gorillas"; Mildred calls Yank a "filthy beast"; Paddy turns this into "hairy ape"; the Senator warns of men degenerating into apes; the Secretary calls Yank "a brainless ape". Such language has long been used to deny the humanity of workers, immigrants and colonised peoples. The play ends in a zoo, the final margin, where Yank is rejected even by the ape.

The play is also about the voice of the marginal. Yank struggles to think and speak, but his words are mocked, ignored or misunderstood. In Spivak's terms, he speaks but cannot be heard. O'Neill himself, a middle-class writer who had worked at sea, speaks on his behalf, which raises questions about who represents the margin.

Finally, the play does not idealise the margin. The stokers are violent and prejudiced, and the union rejects one of its own. Yet by making Yank a tragic hero and insisting that "Yank is really yourself, and myself", O'Neill moves the marginal figure to the centre of the audience's attention. *The Hairy Ape* thus belongs firmly to the literature of marginality.

8. Show how Yank is a doubly marginalised figure.

Yank is marginal not only in relation to the rich but also in relation to the groups that might have given him a home. His tragedy is that he is pushed out of every circle he tries to enter.

First, he is marginal by class. As a stoker he works hidden below decks, and Mildred's horror shows how the upper world sees him: as a beast. On Fifth Avenue the rich do not see him at all; his blows bounce off them, and they reply with a mechanical "I beg your pardon". Second, he is marginal by origin. He grew up in poverty on the Brooklyn waterfront, with violent, drunken parents, and ran away from home as a child. He has no family, no education and no faith.

Third, he is rejected by the institutions of society. The police club him, the judge gives him thirty days, the prison guard turns a hose on him, and the policeman tells him to "go to hell". Fourth, and most painfully, he is rejected by the margin itself. The I.W.W., the radical workers' union that should be his natural home, throws him out as a spy and calls him "a brainless ape". Even among his fellow stokers he is alone after Mildred's visit, held down by them and mocked by their chorus.

Fifth, he is rejected by nature. In the zoo he hopes to find a brother in the gorilla, a fellow member of the club of "Hairy Apes", but the animal crushes him. He belongs neither with men nor with beasts; he is "in de middle", neither on earth nor in heaven.

This double, even multiple, marginality explains the play's ending. Yank finds a place only in death, inside a cage, and only "perhaps". O'Neill presents him as the most extreme case of the outsider, and through him suggests that modern society has created a kind of person who belongs nowhere.

9. Comment on the marginal characters in *The Hairy Ape*.

The Hairy Ape is filled with characters who live at the edges of society. Through them O'Neill builds a picture of modern America from below.

The most obvious marginal figures are the stokers. They are nameless immigrants who speak German, Italian, French, Scandinavian and Irish versions of English. They work in the hidden heat of the stokehole and are compared to Neanderthals and gorillas. They have no individual voices; they speak in fragments or in a mechanical chorus. Their ethnic insults against each other show that the margin is divided against itself.

Paddy is marginal by age and history. He is old, Irish and fond of drink, and the skill he once had as a sailor on clipper ships has been made useless by steam. His lament for the past is beautiful but powerless. Long is marginal by politics. His socialist speeches are jeered even by his fellow workers, and he lacks the courage to act. Yank's absent parents represent the poverty of the urban working class, and his mother's death from drink suggests the destruction it causes.

On land Yank meets other marginal groups. The prisoners on Blackwell's Island are the criminalised poor, unseen in their endless cells. The I.W.W. members are political outsiders, hunted by spies and attacked in the Senate. The gorilla, caged and stared at, is the final marginal figure, outside human society altogether, and its likeness to Yank shows how close the worker has been pushed to the animal.

Even Mildred can be read as marginal in a different sense. Though rich, she is a woman with no purpose of her own, chaperoned, idle and dependent on her father's name.

Yank stands among all these figures as the most marginal of all, rejected by each group in turn. Together the marginal characters show that modern society pushes many people to its edges, and that those at the edges are often unable to help one another.

10. Discuss the role of women characters in *The Hairy Ape*.

The Hairy Ape is largely a play about men and male labour, and only two women, Mildred Douglas and her Aunt, have speaking parts. Yet the women have a decisive role in the action and in the play's meaning.

Mildred is the catalyst of the tragedy. Her visit to the stokehole and her cry, "Oh, the filthy beast!", destroy Yank's confidence and send him on his search for belonging. It is ironic that the strongest man in the play is broken by the look of a pale, anaemic girl. She has power because of her class, using her father's name to enter the stokehole, and her horror expresses the way the whole upper world sees the worker. After Scene III she never returns, but she haunts Yank's mind for the rest of the play.

Mildred is also a figure of her own kind of marginality. She has no real work, lives under a chaperone, and borrows her father's authority. She wants "to touch life somewhere" and be of use, but is mocked as a poser, and she sees herself as "a waste product" of her family's wealth. In this she quietly mirrors Yank, since both are searching for a place where they truly belong.

The Aunt is a satirical type of upper-class womanhood, pompous and contemptuous. Her words, "I loathe deformity", show how the rich see the bodies of the poor, and her cry of "Poser!" exposes Mildred's false interest in the working class.

Other women appear only in passing or in talk: the painted ladies of Fifth Avenue who delight in monkey fur, the girl in the stoker's song, the "tarts" Yank despises, and his mother, who died of drink. The stokers' attitudes to women are brutal, and Yank's threats against Mildred show how wounded male pride turns into violence. A feminist critic would note that the women are given little inner life and are used chiefly as symbols of class. Even so, Mildred's brief moment of self-knowledge makes her more than a symbol, and her role is central to the structure of the play.

11. Discuss how the play uses animal imagery to show the marginalisation of the worker.

Animal imagery runs through *The Hairy Ape* from its first stage direction to its last line, and it is O'Neill's chief means of showing how industrial society pushes the worker to the edge of humanity.

The opening stage direction describes the forecastle as a cage and the stokers as resembling Neanderthal Man, with long arms, hairy chests and low brows; their noise is "the bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in a cage". Paddy's face is "monkey-like". In the stokehole the men, lit by the furnaces, appear in the "crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas", and Yank pounds his chest "gorilla-like". Paddy says the stokers are caged "like bloody apes in the Zoo".

After Mildred calls Yank a "filthy beast", the imagery becomes a label. Paddy says she looked at him as if she had seen "a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo"; Long complains that the stokers were shown like "monkeys in a menagerie"; Paddy imagines them displayed as baboons. On Fifth Avenue a monkey fur costs two thousand dollars, more than a worker's life. In prison Yank calls himself and the other prisoners apes, and the Senator warns that radicals would make man "degenerate back to the ape". The Secretary calls him "a brainless ape".

The imagery shows how the powerful deny the humanity of those they exploit. It is the same language that has been used against immigrants, colonised peoples and racial minorities. It also carries the play's philosophical theme, drawn from Darwin: Yank is caught between the animal and the human, belonging to neither.

The final scene literalises the image. Yank meets a real gorilla, claims kinship with it and is killed by it, then dies inside its cage, announcing himself as a circus exhibit. The insult has become his identity and his grave. Through this imagery O'Neill shows that marginalisation is not only economic but a denial of full humanity.

18. Model Answers to Medium Questions

1. How do Paddy and Long serve as foils to Yank?

A foil is a character who brings out another's qualities by contrast. Paddy, the old Irish stoker, represents the past. He mourns the days of sailing ships, when men belonged to the ship and the sea, and sees the modern stokehole as a cage for apes. Against him Yank appears as the proud voice of the new age of steel and speed, who calls Paddy's memories "a dope dream". Long, the Cockney socialist, represents political protest. He blames the capitalist class and wants to fight through law and votes. Against him Yank appears as a man of action who despises talk. Both foils are partly right: Paddy understands the loss of harmony, and Long understands class injustice. Yet neither can help Yank, since Paddy can only drink and dream and Long runs away when Yank turns violent. Together they show the limits of nostalgia and of politics, and they highlight Yank's confidence at the start and his isolation at the end.

2. Comment on Mildred Douglas as a representative of her class.

Mildred is the daughter of the president of Nazareth Steel. O'Neill presents her as the product of a class that has grown rich on the labour of others and has lost its own vitality. She is pale, bored and nervous, and she

calls herself "a waste product in the Bessemer process". Her interest in the poor is genuine only in part. She has done social work and wants to "touch life somewhere", but her aunt rightly calls her a "poser", and her visit to the stokehole is a search for thrills. She lies to get permission and wears a white dress she means to throw away. When she meets real labour in the person of Yank, she can only see a "filthy beast". Her horror shows how far the rich are from understanding the workers who support them. Yet she is not purely a villain; she is aware of her own emptiness. Through her O'Neill criticises the artificial, idle and frightened upper class.

3. What is the significance of the Fifth Avenue scene (Scene V)?

In Scene V Yank and Long visit Fifth Avenue on a Sunday morning to confront Mildred's class. The scene is the most Expressionist in the play. The street is clean and quiet, and the jeweller's and furrier's windows display goods at enormous prices. The churchgoers who come out are "gaudy marionettes" who talk emptily about sermons and bazaars. Yank insults them and bumps into them, but they do not see him and answer only "I beg your pardon"; it is he who recoils from each collision. The monkey fur in the window, and the women's delight in it, enrage him, and when he punches a gentleman, the man does not move but simply calls the police. The scene shows that the rich live in a world sealed off from the workers, mechanical and unfeeling, and that Yank's strength has no power there. It marks his first discovery that he does not belong in their world, and it leads to his arrest.

4. Discuss the importance of the prison scene (Scene VI).

In Scene VI Yank sits in a cell on Blackwell's Island in the pose of "The Thinker", bruised and bandaged. Waking, he grips the bars and thinks he is in the zoo. The prisoners mock him, and he declares that he is "a hairy ape". One prisoner reads a Senator's speech attacking the I.W.W. as wreckers who would make civilisation "degenerate back to the ape", and Yank decides to join them. The key moment comes when he realises that Mildred's father, the president of the Steel Trust, makes steel, and that steel has made the cage that holds him. The symbol of his power becomes the symbol of his prison. In fury he bends a bar, and the guard turns a hose on him. The scene deepens Yank's understanding, turns his revenge from a personal matter into a desire to destroy steel itself, and leads him to the I.W.W. The endless row of cells also expresses the idea that modern society is a vast prison.

5. Why is Yank thrown out of the I.W.W. office (Scene VII)?

Yank comes to the I.W.W. local expecting a secret society of wreckers, with passwords and hidden plots. Instead he finds an ordinary, open office where men read and play checkers. He keeps winking and hinting, convinced that the openness is a disguise, and finally offers to blow up the Douglas steel works, saying he does not care if he is caught. The Secretary, who knows that the police plant spies and agents provocateurs to trap the union, suspects that Yank is one of them. He has him searched, decides he is too stupid to be dangerous, calls him "a brainless ape" and has him thrown into the street. The scene shows that even the workers' movement, which might seem Yank's natural home, will not accept him. It also shows that Yank's need is not the union's need: he wants not better wages but a sense of belonging, which no political programme can give him.

6. Comment on the final scene at the zoo.

In Scene VIII Yank visits the monkey house and talks to a gorilla sitting in the pose of "The Thinker". He admires its strength and claims it as a fellow member of the club of "Hairy Apes". He realises that the gorilla is what Mildred saw in him, but that he is in a worse cage. He describes the sunrise at the Battery and admits that Paddy was right about beauty, but he could not "get IN it". The gorilla, he says, belongs to its past and cannot think, while he is caught "in de middle", neither on earth nor in heaven. He frees the gorilla, offering to shake hands, and is crushed to death. Dying, he asks, "Where do I fit in?", then announces himself as a

circus exhibit. The scene completes the cage imagery, shows that Yank is rejected even by the animal world, and offers belonging only in death, as the final stage direction says, "perhaps".

7. What is the significance of the pose of Rodin's "The Thinker" in the play?

"The Thinker" is a famous sculpture by Auguste Rodin of a powerful, naked man seated with his chin on his hand, lost in thought. O'Neill uses its pose four times. Yank takes it in Scene IV after Mildred's visit, in Scene VI in his prison cell, and in Scene VII sitting in the street; in Scene VIII the gorilla sits in the same way. The pose marks Yank's new and painful effort to think, which began as a joke in Scene I. The sculpture shows a strong body joined to a thinking mind, and Yank's struggle is to join his great strength to understanding. When the gorilla takes the same pose, O'Neill suggests the closeness of man and ape, and the irony that the animal sits in thought without suffering, while Yank, who can "almost" think, is tormented. The repeated pose links the scenes and expresses the theme of man caught between the animal and the spiritual.

8. How does O'Neill use language and dialect in the play?

O'Neill gives each character a distinct speech. Yank speaks rough Brooklyn slang, with "dis", "dat", "tink" and "oith", which shows his background and his limited education, but his speeches have great energy and rhythm. Paddy speaks the poetic English of an old Irish sailor, and his long lament for the clipper ships is one of the most beautiful passages in the play. Long uses Cockney English mixed with socialist slogans. Mildred and her aunt use polished, witty and cruel upper-class language. The stokers often speak as a chorus, repeating Yank's words in metallic voices like phonograph horns, and the Fifth Avenue crowd speaks in empty, mechanical phrases. These contrasts show that the classes and generations live in separate worlds and cannot understand each other. Yank's difficulty in expressing his feelings, "Tinkin' is hard", is part of his tragedy: he can "almost" talk, and that is "where de joker comes in".

9. Discuss the symbolism of steel and the cage.

Steel and the cage are the two central symbols of the play, and they are closely linked. In Scene I steel is Yank's symbol of power and belonging: "Steel, dat stands for de whole ting!" He sees himself as the muscle inside steel that makes the modern world move. Yet from the first stage direction the steel bunks look like a cage, and Paddy says the stokers are caged in by steel like apes in a zoo. Mildred's father makes steel, and her family's wealth rests on it. In prison Yank realises that steel has made the bars of his own cell and that it belongs to the rich. The symbol of his strength becomes the symbol of his imprisonment, and he wants to destroy all steel. The cage appears again in the endless prison cells and finally in the gorilla's cage, where Yank dies. Together the two symbols show how industrial society, which seems to give the worker power, in fact imprisons him.

10. How does the setting express marginality?

The settings of the play arrange its characters in a map of power. On the liner the stokers work below the waterline, in what O'Neill calls "the bowels of a ship", while the rich sit in the sunlight on the promenade deck. The engineers' whistle sounds from an unseen place above, controlling the workers. The forecastle bunks form a cage, and the ceiling forces the men to stoop. On land, Fifth Avenue is the bright, clean territory of the rich, where Yank is a trespasser. The I.W.W. office lies in a narrow street by the waterfront, the prison on an island in the river, and the zoo at the very edge of human society. The settings move from one margin to another, and none is a home. The contrast between dark, cramped places below and bright, empty places above shows that marginality in the play is a matter of space as well as class.

11. Comment on the immigrant stokers and ethnic marginality.

The forecastle in Scene I is crowded with men from many nations. Their voices are heard in German, Italian, French, Scandinavian, Irish and Cockney forms of English, and they drink to each other in different

languages. O'Neill notes that all the "civilized white races" are represented, but that apart from slight differences of colouring they are all alike: the stokehole has erased their individual identities. They are typical of the immigrant labour on which American industry depended. Yet they insult each other with ethnic names, "Dutchman", "Wop", "Square-head", "Harp", and Yank later abuses the Secretary as a "Sheeny". These insults show that the marginalised often reproduce the prejudices of the society that excludes them. The play thus presents ethnic marginality honestly, without romance.

12. Discuss Paddy as a marginal figure.

Paddy is marginal in several ways. He is old in a world that values strength and speed, and Yank tells him he is "too old" and does not belong. He is Irish, a member of a group long treated as outsiders in America, and the others call him "Harp" and "Mick". His face is "monkey-like". His skill as a sailor on clipper ships has been made useless by the steam engine, and he survives by drink and memory. His lament for the past is the most poetic speech in the play, but it is powerless. Paddy is also the play's truth-teller: he sees that the stokers are caged like apes and first calls Yank a "hairy ape". His marginality gives him a clear view of the present, but no way to change it.

13. What is the role of Mildred's Aunt?

The Aunt appears only in Scene II, as Mildred's chaperone. She is fat, pompous and dressed to show her rank, and O'Neill describes her as "a gray lump of dough touched up with rouge". Her role is satirical. She represents the snobbery and emptiness of the rich: she dislikes smoke, finds a pipe-smoking ancestor vulgar, and mocks Mildred's social work as slumming. Her remark "I loathe deformity" reveals how the rich see the poor and their bodies. At the same time she sees through Mildred, calling her a "poser", which helps the audience understand that Mildred's visit to the stokehole is a pose. The quarrel between aunt and niece shows a class that is bored, bitter and cut off from life, in sharp contrast to the vitality of the sea around them.

14. How does the play present the I.W.W. and political marginality?

The I.W.W., or Wobblies, was a radical union persecuted in the years around the First World War. In Scene VI a prisoner reads a Senator's speech that calls its members "wreckers", compares them to Catiline's conspirators, and accuses them of plotting with fire and dynamite. The speech shows how the powerful demonised political radicals. When Yank visits the union office in Scene VII, he finds an ordinary room, not a den of plotters, and the Secretary insists that they break no laws. But the union lives in constant fear of spies and agents provocateurs, and it throws Yank out as one. The scene shows that persecution has made the political margin suspicious and closed, and that even the movement that speaks for the workers cannot make room for a man like Yank.

15. What is the role of the gorilla in the final scene?

The gorilla is Yank's double. It sits in the pose of Rodin's "The Thinker", which Yank has taken in three earlier scenes, and it is the creature Mildred saw when she looked at him. Yank speaks to it as a brother, admires its strength and claims it as a member of the same club. He envies it because it belongs to its own past and cannot think. When he frees it and offers his hand, the gorilla crushes him and throws him into its cage. Its role is to deliver the final rejection: Yank belongs neither with men nor with animals. It also completes the cage imagery, since Yank dies inside the cage, and it gives the title its last ironic meaning, as the real hairy ape refuses the man called by that name.

19. Short Questions and Answers

Q1. What is the significance of the setting of the play as a whole?

Ans. The settings form a map of society. On the liner the stokers labour below the waterline while the rich sit on the sunny deck. On land Yank moves from Fifth Avenue to a prison, a union office and a zoo. Almost every setting is a kind of cage, and none offers Yank a home, which expresses his exclusion.

Q2. Where does the play open, and what do the stage directions say about the setting?

Ans. The play opens in the firemen's forecastle of a transatlantic liner an hour after it has left New York. O'Neill insists the treatment should not be naturalistic. The steel bunks cross like the bars of a cage, the ceiling crushes down on the men, and the stokers should resemble pictures of Neanderthal Man.

Q3. What is the significance of the opening scene?

Ans. The opening introduces Yank as the proud leader of the stokers, sure that he belongs, and sets out three views of the workers' life: Yank's pride in the machine, Paddy's nostalgia and Long's socialism. The cage-like set and the Neanderthal stokers already contradict Yank's boast, so the scene prepares for his fall and states the themes of the play.

Q4. Why is the stokehole an important setting?

Ans. The stokehole is where Yank feels most at home and where he is destroyed. It is a hellish place of fire, coal dust and noise, where the men look like "chained gorillas". Mildred's visit here is the turning point. The setting shows both the power of labour that drives the ship and the dehumanisation of the workers.

Q5. What is the significance of the Fifth Avenue setting?

Ans. Fifth Avenue is the bright, clean street of the rich, with jewels and furs at enormous prices. It is the opposite of the stokehole. Here Yank tries to confront Mildred's class, but the rich do not even see him. The setting shows the gap between the classes and is the most Expressionist scene in the play.

Q6. What is Blackwell's Island?

Ans. Blackwell's Island is an island in New York's East River, now called Roosevelt Island, where the city prison stood. Yank is held there in Scene VI after his arrest on Fifth Avenue. The endless row of cells, running "into infinity", makes the prison a symbol of modern society as a cage.

Q7. Why does the play end in the monkey house at the zoo?

Ans. The zoo is the final margin, at the edge of human society. Since Mildred saw Yank as an ape, he goes to meet the real ape and seek kinship with it. The cage there completes the cage imagery of the play. Yank dies inside it, rejected by the animal as he was by men.

Q8. What is the significance of the ending of the play?

Ans. Yank frees the gorilla, is crushed, and dies in its cage after announcing himself as a circus exhibit. The ending completes his search for belonging: he finds a place only in death. The cage, the title and the theme all come together, and the word "perhaps" in the last stage direction leaves the meaning open.

Q9. Explain the final stage direction, "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs".

Ans. After Yank dies in the gorilla's cage, O'Neill suggests that he may at last have found a place to belong, but only in death. The word "perhaps" leaves it uncertain whether death brings peace or simply ends suffering. The line completes the theme of belonging and gives final meaning to the title.

Q10. Over how much time does the action of the play take place?

Ans. The play covers about two months. Scenes I to IV take place during the first days of the voyage. Scene V comes three weeks later, Scene VI the following night, Scene VII nearly a month after that, and Scene VIII the next day. The gaps show Yank's slow and lonely drift from one place to another.

Q11. Why is the play called "A Comedy of Ancient and Modern Life"?

Ans. The subtitle is ironic, since the hero dies. The "comedy" may be the grim joke of Yank's position between ape and man, which he calls "where de joker comes in". "Ancient and modern" suggests the clash between man's animal past and his industrial present. Most critics nevertheless read the play as a modern tragedy.

Q12. Who is Yank? What is his real name?

Ans. Yank is the hero of the play, a strong, proud stoker on a transatlantic liner and the leader of his fellow workers. His real name is Robert Smith, but he has been called "Yank", slang for an American, for so long that at the I.W.W. office he has to think before remembering it. He grew up on the Brooklyn waterfront.

Q13. Who is Paddy? What does he long for?

Ans. Paddy is an old, wizened Irish stoker with a monkey-like face, who drinks and sings old sea songs. He longs for the days of the clipper ships, when men worked under the sun with skill and daring and were part of the ship and the sea. He sees the modern stokehole as a cage for men.

Q14. Who is Long, and what are his views?

Ans. Long is a Cockney stoker and a socialist. He believes the stokers are wage slaves of the capitalist class who travel first class, and he wants to fight through law, government and votes. The others jeer at him, and Yank calls his ideas "Salvation Army-Socialist bull". He deserts Yank on Fifth Avenue.

Q15. Who is Mildred Douglas?

Ans. Mildred is the twenty-year-old daughter of the president of Nazareth Steel, chairman of the shipping line. She is pale, bored and artificial. She has done social work and wants to see how the other half lives, so she visits the stokehole in a white dress. Her horrified reaction to Yank sets the tragedy in motion.

Q16. Who is Mildred's Aunt?

Ans. The Aunt is Mildred's chaperone on the voyage, a fat, proud, pretentious old lady with a double chin and lorgnettes. She mocks Mildred's social work as slumming and calls her a "poser". Her remark "I loathe deformity" reveals the contempt of the rich for the poor. She is a satirical type of upper-class womanhood.

Q17. Who is the Second Engineer?

Ans. The Second Engineer is a husky, good-looking officer of about thirty-five who escorts Mildred to the stokehole. He is embarrassed by her and tries politely to warn her that her white dress will be soiled. He represents the ship's authority, which sits between the rich passengers above and the stokers below.

Q18. What is the role of the Fourth Engineer and the whistle?

Ans. The Fourth Engineer accompanies the Second Engineer and Mildred to the stokehole. The engineers blow a whistle from somewhere above in the darkness to drive the stokers to work harder. Yank's furious curses at the whistle are what Mildred hears when she arrives. The whistle stands for the unseen authority that controls the workers.

Q19. Who is the Gentleman who misses his bus?

Ans. On Fifth Avenue a fat, high-hatted gentleman, running for a bus, collides with Yank. Yank punches him full in the face, but he does not move. He only complains, "You have made me lose my bus", and calls the police. He represents the rich, untouched by the worker's violence and protected by the law.

Q20. Who is the Woman who cries "Monkey fur!"?

Ans. She is one of the Fifth Avenue churchgoers. Seeing the monkey fur in the furrier's window, she gasps with delight, and the whole crowd repeats her words. Her cry enrages Yank, who takes it as an insult to himself as the "hairy ape". She represents the vanity of the rich, who value an animal's skin above a worker.

Q21. Who is Doctor Caiaphas?

Ans. Doctor Caiaphas is the preacher whose sermon the Fifth Avenue churchgoers have just heard; he does not appear on stage. The churchgoers praise him as "so sincere", though one dozed off. His name recalls Caiaphas, the high priest who condemned Jesus, and so satirises the hypocrisy of the church of the rich.

Q22. Who is Senator Queen?

Ans. Senator Queen is an offstage politician whose speech against the I.W.W. a prisoner reads aloud in Scene VI. He calls the Wobblies "wreckers", compares them to Catiline's plotters and warns that they would make man "degenerate back to the ape". His pompous rhetoric parodies the anti-radical politics of the Red Scare years.

Q23. Who advises Yank to join the I.W.W.?

Ans. A prisoner in the cell next to Yank's on Blackwell's Island gives him the advice. If Yank wants to get back at the rich girl, he says, he should join the Wobblies. He reads Yank the Senator's speech from the Sunday paper and lends him the paper. His advice leads Yank to the I.W.W. office in Scene VII.

Q24. Who is the prison Guard?

Ans. The Guard keeps order in the prison on Blackwell's Island. When the prisoners make noise he threatens them with the hose, and when he sees that Yank has bent a cell bar, he orders the hose turned on at full pressure and calls for a strait-jacket. He shows society's only answer to Yank's rage: force and confinement.

Q25. Who is the Secretary of the I.W.W.?

Ans. The Secretary runs I.W.W. Local No. 57 near the waterfront. He enrols Yank as Robert Smith for half a dollar, but becomes suspicious when Yank talks of blowing up the steel works. Believing him a police spy, he has him searched and thrown out as "a brainless ape". He represents the cautious, persecuted workers' movement.

Q26. What is the role of the Policeman in Scene VII?

Ans. The Policeman finds Yank sitting in the street after he has been thrown out of the I.W.W. office. He jokes, threatens him with his club and tells him to move on. When Yank asks where he should go, the Policeman says, "Go to hell". He represents the indifference of society and the law to the marginal.

Q27. What is the role of the gorilla?

Ans. The gorilla in the monkey house is Yank's double. It sits in the pose of "The Thinker", as Yank has done, and is the creature Mildred saw in him. Yank seeks kinship with it and frees it, but it crushes him to death and throws him into its cage, giving him the final rejection.

Q28. Who first uses the phrase "hairy ape"?

Ans. Paddy first uses it in Scene IV. Describing Mildred's look of horror in the stokehole, he says it was as if she had seen "a great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo". Mildred herself said "filthy beast", but Yank seizes on Paddy's phrase and adopts it as his identity, which gives the play its title.

Q29. What happens when eight bells sound in Scene I?

Ans. Eight bells mark the change of watch. All the stokers jump up mechanically and file out silently, close on each other's heels, in something like a prisoners' lockstep, to begin their shift in the stokehole. Yank mockingly calls Paddy to come down into "hell". Paddy refuses and stays behind, drinking and dreaming.

Q30. Why do the stokers chant "Drink, don't think!"?

Ans. When Yank asks them to be quiet because he is trying to "t'ink", the stokers mock the word and make up the rhyme "Drink, don't think!" The chant shows that thinking is a joke in the stokehole, where life is drink and labour. It also prepares, ironically, for Yank's painful attempts to think after Mildred's visit.

Q31. How does Mildred get permission to visit the stokehole?

Ans. Mildred tells the captain and the chief engineer that her father, the president of Nazareth Steel and chairman of the line, has approved her visit, and claims she has lost his letter. This is a lie, but the officers are afraid to refuse. The episode shows her privilege and her careless pursuit of thrills.

Q32. Why does Mildred insist on wearing her white dress to the stokehole?

Ans. The Second Engineer warns that her white dress will be soiled by oil and dirt and offers an old coat. Mildred refuses, saying she has fifty such dresses and will throw this one into the sea afterwards. The episode shows her wealth and wastefulness. The white dress later makes her look like a ghost to Yank.

Q33. What does Mildred say when she sees Yank, and what is the effect?

Ans. She cries, "Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast!" and faints. Yank feels insulted in the very heart of his pride and hurls his shovel after her. Her words destroy his belief that he belongs and make him see himself as a beast. This is the turning point of the play.

Q34. What does Yank do after Mildred faints and is carried away?

Ans. Rage and bewildered fury rush back on Yank. He feels insulted in the very heart of his pride, roars a curse and hurls his shovel after Mildred at the door that has just closed behind her. The shovel hits the steel bulkhead with a clang. The engineers' whistle sounds again, long and angry.

Q35. What does Yank mean by "I've fallen in hate"?

Ans. When Paddy teases him that he has fallen in love with Mildred, Yank replies that he has fallen in hate. The play on words shows that his feeling is as strong and obsessive as love, but it is hatred born of wounded pride. Paddy wisely remarks that it is hard to tell one from the other.

Q36. Why do the stokers hold Yank down at the end of Scene IV?

Ans. Maddened by the thought that Mildred saw him as a hairy ape, Yank swears to find her and rushes for the door. The stokers fear he will murder her or be shot, so they pile on top of him and, by sheer weight of numbers, bear him to the floor. Even pinned down, he swears to get even.

Q37. What did Yank try to do at Southampton?

Ans. Yank tells Long that at Southampton he sneaked onto the dock and waited by the gangplank for Mildred, intending to spit in her face. But a whole army of plain-clothes detectives was guarding her.

They spotted him and drove him off, so he never saw her. The failure shows how unreachable the rich are.

Q38. Why do Yank and Long go to Fifth Avenue?

Ans. Long takes Yank to Fifth Avenue to awaken his class consciousness. He wants Yank to see that Mildred was only a representative of her class and that his quarrel is with the whole class of the rich. Yank, however, wants personal revenge and is soon arrested for assaulting a gentleman.

Q39. What is the significance of the monkey fur in Scene V?

Ans. In the furrier's window Yank sees a monkey fur priced at two thousand dollars. He takes it as a personal insult, since the rich value an ape's skin more than a worker's life. When the women cry out in delight at it, he explodes with rage. The fur links the rich directly to the "hairy ape" insult.

Q40. How do the rich on Fifth Avenue react to Yank?

Ans. They ignore him completely. They walk around him, do not look at him, and answer his insults and collisions only with a mechanical "I beg your pardon". When he punches a gentleman, the man does not even move. Their behaviour shows that the rich live in a sealed world where the worker does not exist.

Q41. How is Yank arrested on Fifth Avenue?

Ans. Enraged by the monkey fur, Yank tries to tear up the kerb and a lamp-post as weapons. A gentleman running for a bus collides with him, and Yank punches him. The gentleman calls "Officer!", and a whole platoon of policemen rush in, club Yank to the pavement and take him away in a patrol wagon.

Q42. What does Yank realise in prison about steel?

Ans. He realises that Mildred's father, president of the Steel Trust, makes steel, and that steel, which Yank thought he belonged to, has made the cage that holds him. The symbol of his strength is really the symbol of his imprisonment and of the power of the rich. In fury he bends one of the bars.

Q43. What happens when Yank bends the bar of his cell?

Ans. Realising that steel has made his cage, Yank shakes his cell door and, bracing his feet against the bars like a monkey, bends one bar with his tremendous strength. The Guard rushes in, sees the bent bar, and orders the fire hose turned on at full pressure and a strait-jacket brought. The curtain falls as the water strikes the cell.

Q44. How does Yank enter the I.W.W. office, and what does he expect?

Ans. Yank comes cautiously, tiptoes to the door and knocks carefully, as if guessing a password to some secret rite. He expects secret doors, passwords and a mysterious grip. Instead he finds an ordinary, shabby room where men play checkers and write letters, and the Secretary tells him the door is never locked.

Q45. What does Yank propose to the I.W.W., and what does he plan to tell Mildred?

Ans. Yank proposes to blow up the steel works of Douglas, Mildred's father, to knock all the steel in the world up to the moon. He says he does not care if he is caught. He also plans to write Mildred a letter saying that the hairy ape did it, which he believes will make things square.

Q46. Why does the I.W.W. Secretary throw Yank out?

Ans. Yank offers to blow up the Douglas steel works and keeps hinting at secret plots. The Secretary suspects him of being a police spy or an agent provocateur sent to trap the union. Deciding that Yank is too stupid to be dangerous, he calls him "a brainless ape" and has him thrown into the street.

Q47. What does the policeman say to Yank at the end of Scene VII, and why is it important?

Ans. When Yank asks where he should go from here, the policeman pushes him and says, "Go to hell". The casual reply sums up society's indifference to Yank and answers his search for a place with a curse. It also prepares for the final scene, where Yank goes to the zoo.

Q48. What did Yank see at the Battery?

Ans. Yank spent the night on a bench at the Battery, at the tip of Manhattan. He watched the sun rise, red, pink and green, over the steel skyscrapers and the ships. He found it beautiful and understood what Paddy meant about the beauty of the world, but felt he could not belong in it.

Q49. Why does Yank go to the zoo?

Ans. Having been rejected by the rich, the prison, the union and the city, Yank goes to the monkey house to see the gorilla, the real "hairy ape". He hopes to find kinship with the animal, the creature Mildred saw in him. He spent the night at the Battery and comes to the zoo at twilight.

Q50. How does Yank open the gorilla's cage?

Ans. Yank takes a jimmy, a short crowbar, from under his coat and forces the lock on the cage door. He throws it open, calling it a "pardon from de governor", and invites the gorilla to come out and walk with him down Fifth Avenue to fight. He offers his hand as the secret grip of their order.

Q51. How does Yank die?

Ans. Yank forces open the gorilla's cage and offers to shake its hand as a fellow member of their "club". Something in his mocking tone enrages the animal, which crushes him in a murderous hug and throws his body into the cage. Yank dies there, after announcing himself as "de one and only" Hairy Ape.

Q52. What does "belong" mean to Yank in Scene I?

Ans. To Yank, belonging means being part of the force that makes the world move. The stokers drive the ship, so they belong; the rich passengers are only "baggage", so they do not. He identifies himself with steel, steam and speed. This proud idea of belonging is destroyed by Mildred's visit to the stokehole.

Q53. What is meant by marginality?

Ans. Marginality is the condition of people pushed to the edges of society, away from power, wealth, visibility and voice, because of class, ethnicity, race, gender, age, disability or belief. The literature of marginality gives voice to such people or examines how the centre treats them. In this play the stoker Yank is the central marginal figure.

Q54. Why are the stokers marginal figures?

Ans. The stokers labour hidden below the waterline, in heat and coal dust, while the rich they serve sit on the deck above. Most are poor immigrants who speak broken English. They have no names and speak as a chorus. The rich see them as animals. They are marginal by class, by ethnicity, by space and by voice.

Q55. Why do the rich on Fifth Avenue not see Yank?

Ans. The rich ignore Yank completely, walking around him and replying to his insults with a mechanical "I beg your pardon". Their blindness shows that the worker is invisible to the upper class, whose world is sealed off from his. Invisibility is a mark of marginality, as Ralph Ellison later showed in *Invisible Man*.

Q56. Explain Long's joke "Proletarians keep orf the grass!"

Ans. Standing on Fifth Avenue, Long says the street is the rich people's private lane and that the workers are trespassers. He parodies signs that forbid walking on the grass. Yank dully replies that he sees no grass. The joke shows how the city is divided into spaces where the poor are not welcome.

Q57. What does Yank mean by "Votes for women! Let dem do it!"?

Ans. When Long urges peaceful change through votes, Yank sneers that votes are a joke and that women, who had won the vote in America in 1920, can have them. The remark shows his contempt for politics and also the stokehole's scornful attitude to women. For Yank, only force counts.

Q58. Why is animal imagery important in the play?

Ans. Animal imagery shows how the powerful deny the humanity of workers. The stokers are compared to Neanderthals, gorillas, monkeys and baboons, and Mildred sees a "filthy beast". The label "hairy ape" becomes Yank's identity. The imagery also expresses the theme of man caught between the animal and the human, and it leads to the zoo.

Q59. Explain "I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge".

Ans. When the policeman asks what he has done, Yank says his only crime is being born. He feels that the world has no place for him and treats his very existence as an offence. The line shows how the poor and marginal are criminalised, and it expresses Yank's bitter humour and despair.

Q60. What does I.W.W. stand for?

Ans. I.W.W. stands for the Industrial Workers of the World, a radical labour union founded in Chicago in 1905, whose members were nicknamed the "Wobblies". In the play a prisoner reads a Senator's speech attacking them as wreckers, and Yank goes to an I.W.W. office hoping to join them, but is thrown out.

Q61. Who first produced The Hairy Ape, and when?

Ans. The play was first produced by the Provincetown Players at the Provincetown Playhouse on Macdougal Street, New York, on 9 March 1922. It was directed by James Light, and Louis Wolheim played Yank. In April 1922 Arthur Hopkins moved the production to the Plymouth Theatre on Broadway.

Q62. What is Expressionism in drama?

Ans. Expressionism is a style of drama, strongest in Germany between about 1910 and 1925, that distorts outward reality to show inner feelings and to protest against the dehumanising effects of modern life. It uses symbolic settings, characters who are types, mechanical movement, choral speech and a hero moving through a series of episodes, as in *The Hairy Ape*.

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