

Uncivil Civilizations in *The Hairy Ape*

Question 1

Threaded throughout the collection of Eugene O'Neill's, dramatic works is the concept of "pipe dreams." An undercurrent in many of his scripts is the assertion that having a dream of what one thinks he or she is, or can become, is essential to human existence. Without this pipe dream about the self, life becomes meaningless.

Develop an essay (4 to 6 pages) in which you examine O'Neill's play, *The Hairy Ape*, from the point of view of this concept of pipe dream. Consider initiating your analysis by defining precisely what you consider Yank's pipe dream to be.

Expand your analysis with specific evidence of how both the theme and form of the play are built from this central concept.

Question 2

In scene one of *The Hairy Ape*, Eugene O'Neill develops two long speeches – one by Paddy, a lament for the "lost" days of the "tall ships," the other, a boastful response by Yank.

After carefully examining this section of dialogue, develop an essay (4 to 6 pages) in which you define the points that are juxtaposed in the two speeches. What, in Paddy's "wail of a keen" does he specifically lament has been lost? What, in Yank's contemptuous response, does he celebrate has been gained? Give your analysis range. Use direct quotes from the text to support your points of explication.

Question 3

In Scene I of Eugene O'Neill's play, *The Hairy Ape*, the character Mildred makes the comment: "I'm a waste product in the Bessemer process "

Develop a brief essay (4 to 6 pages) in which you explain the implication of this analogy. Include in your explanation:

1. Specific references in the scene one description and dialogue that reinforce the "waste product" image of Mildred.
2. Identify expressionistic references and explain what aspects of these references qualify them as being "expressionistic."

Question 4

Eugene O'Neill's use of expressionistic devices is powerful throughout, *The Hairy Ape*, but he adds dramatic intensity to development of theme and to stage presentation particularly in scene five through his use of such devices.

Study the development of scene five closely. Identify elements of expressionism. Build an essay (4 to 6 pages) in which you delineate each element of expressionism and explain precisely your perception of what each expressionistic element contributes to the narrative or theme of the play. Use direct quotes from the play to add the authority of the text to your assertions.