

Uncivil Civilizations in *The Hairy Ape*

What "two worlds" are represented in the first two scenes of the play? Describe in detail the nature of these two different settings and the people in them.

What profile of the cultural fabric of early 20th century America emerges from the descriptions and dialogue of the first two scenes of the play?

Delineate the tensions between people and situations that O'Neill sets up in the "two worlds" of the first two scenes--both within each setting and between each setting. Give your analysis range; explain in detail what has caused the tensions. For instance, what tension exists between the characters in each of the following pairs and what causes the tension between them?

Mildred and Aunt
Paddy and Yank
Long and others
Mildred and Yank

Make a detailed list of the expressionistic devices O'Neill uses to dramatically reinforce the differences in the settings of the stoke hole world and that of the promenade deck. Explain the ways the expressionistic devices reinforce the tensions existing within and between the characters of the two worlds. Consider both visual and auditory devices.

What is Yank's outlook about himself at the beginning of the play? How do the other stoke hole workers view him?

What incident challenges this view? What is Yank's response?

Note that *The Hairy Ape* is not divided into acts, but instead, unfolds in eight scenes. Map the development of the action of the play by constructing a brief summary of what each scene contributes to the narrative. Identify any expressionistic devices you encounter in scenes III through VIII. Add a brief description of each device to the list you made of devices used in scenes I and II. Consider the devices that are repeated.

What, in your perception, is the basic theme of the play? Construct an overview of the ways O'Neill builds this theme. Give attention to settings of each scene and expressionistic devices as well as dialogue.