

**O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape*:
The Alienation of the American Anti-hero**

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Roughly speaking, realism was a movement that originated in Europe around the 1850s. It represented a reaction against Romanticism. Realists proposed to depict reality as it was, that is to say, art should be an exact imitation of life. Naturalism, we may say, was basically a radicalization of realism. It was in fashion approximately from the 1870s till the 1910s. Naturalism was a social response to Darwinism in science, positivism of Auguste Comte in philosophy and the Industrial Revolution in economy. In realism, the artists were worried about form, thus, they chose themes that could interest the reader of the time such as melodramatic love stories, mainly dealing with the upper classes. On the other hand, naturalists concentrated on themes that could somewhat transgress the moral principles of the growing bourgeoisie, such as prostitution, alcoholism, and adultery in their relationship to determinism:

The old 'naturalism'—or 'realism' if you prefer [...] no longer applies [...] Strindberg [...] expressed it by intensifying the method of his time and by foreshadowing both in content and form the methods to come [...] Truth, in the theatre as in life, is eternally difficult, just as the easy is the everlasting lie. (O'Neill 1924)

The 1920s were the riotous years of the Jim Crow law, lynchings and burnings, but also of the Harlem renaissance in literature. O'Neill was aware in both *The Emperor Jones* (hereafter *EJ*) and *The Hairy Ape* (hereafter *HA*) that with the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement, blacks had learned that their position could be established only by confrontation. Both plays belong to the one-act, monologue plays, constructed to have an

¹ Quotation is taken from *The Provincetown* and used on a playbill for *The Spook Sonata*, Jan. 3, 1924. © Helen Deutsch and Stella Hanan, 1931, 1959.

emotional impact, and developed by the continuous presence of the hero on the stage and the wide variety of scenic means employed. Indeed, I agree with Timo Tisuanen when he says that O'Neill's most notable achievement regarding expressionism is his dynamic flexibility in the use of scenic devices.² Both works can be regarded as tragic plays: we have a hero who surrenders to his inner self, although the conflict begins and ends as a war with outer reality. Therefore, the inner struggle is externalized in symbolic, vital action, as well as in vivid expressionistic symbols.

The Action through Visual and Sound Effects

The idea of "travel" in search for the self is a recurrent means of expressing this inner struggle of the hero in both plays. As Louis Sheaffer affirms, Jones travels gradually towards the primitive African environment, in search for his own self, through a "retrogressive" reckoning of the past: "Like Strindberg in his last plays, O'Neill discovered... the plasticity of the stage, deconstructing its new-found solidities alongside his dislocation of character, language and plot" (Bigsby 57). Similarly, Yank travels in *HA* in search for his identity, as well as for his revenge, particularly after his meeting with Mildred, when he feels himself pulled apart from his natural surroundings: the stokehole. This concept is present throughout the entire play: "The effect sought after is a cramped space in the bowels of the ship, imprisoned by white steel" (*HA* 165). The stokers are regarded as showing "the bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in a cage" (*HA* 165). Here the alienation as a sense of displacement is more fundamental than the social clash between the rich and the poor.

Action and sound effects are entangled, as we see, to achieve an overall coordinated impression. The sound of the tom-tom, in *EJ* is heard from the first time to indicate the assembly of the natives up in the mountains:

from the distant hills comes the faint steady thump of a tom-tom, low and vibrating. It starts at a rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat—72 to the minute and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the end of the play. (21)

² According to C. W. E. Bigsby, in *The Emperor Jones*, the mise-en-scène itself becomes a character—the forest trees closing around Jones, expressions of the terror that suffocates and immobilizes him (55).

Jones's subjects have deserted him and they are "getting their courage worked up b'fore they starts after" (*EJ* 21) him, as Smithers says. As Jones fires his last bullet, made of silver, he is murdered in the final climax of the play: "Jones's physical and mental collapse provides a foreshortened, temporally collapsed, version of the entropic process of mortality" (Bigsby 58). The tom-tom stops after having reached its craziest rhythm as this last bullet destroys the remains of the created myth, the tragic anti-hero. Up to scene 3 in *HA*, the metallic sounds suggest the stokers' feelings of belonging in the ship, of forming an inseparable unity with the engine. There is also a strange impression of order and assonance over the combination of the "tumult of noise—the brazen clang of the furnace doors as they are flung open or slammed shut, the grating, teethgritting grind of steel against steel, of crunching coal" (*HA* 187), reinforcing the idea that these men are "happy" to work in their modern, cage-like hell, as well as the inner conviction of their being important and useful to society. In scene 4, Yank is no longer the leader of the group because the others feel, as he also does, that now he does not belong in the stokehole. The metallic sound has, thus, turned against Yank: "Repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery 'Think!' the word has a brazen metallic quality as if in their throats were phonograph horns" (*HA* 194). To think is the error of Yank. Something has made him start thinking. From now on, everything will be more real and therefore, harder for him.³

The tom-tom and the audiovisual metallic images may be regarded, therefore, as the fundamental "Leitmotivs" in *EJ* and *HA* respectively. Furthermore, they appear in both plays as the expressionistic means to strengthen the overall impression about the characters to be conveyed in every situation. In scene 1, Jones, a colored ex-convict who has been exploiting his servants, common bush niggers, is presented as the hero of the play. Jones is still a self-confident boasting man. He bears the appearance of a great man, as we can infer from O'Neill's description:

He is a tall powerfully-built, full-blooded Negro of middle age. His features are typically negroid. Yet there is something decidedly distinctive about his face—an

³ Keat Murray states that we experience simultaneously the objective detachment of the events on stage and the subjectivity of Yank (109). In this way, we notice three levels of reality: the theatrical play on stage, the play as the mind of Yank, and the presence of *The Thinker* as a mediator between the two, fusing the objective and subjective worlds.

underlying strength of will, a hardy self-reliant confidence in himself that inspires respect. His eyes are alive with a keen, cunning intelligence. (*EJ* 8-9)⁴

But the tom-tom starts to make him feel insecure for the first time, "A strange look of apprehension creeps into his face for a moment as he listens" (*EJ* 20), which roughly suggests the ultimate significance of the tom-tom: the conductive wire of all the action, as Isaac Goldberg affirms. A fluctuation between self-assurance and fear is observed throughout the play.⁵ In *HA*, Yank's authority is restated by a metallic sound that his comrades make to recognize his superiority over all the others. We can see this in scene 1, when Paddy, the old stoker, argues with him about the loss of the spirit of the ancient mariners: "the chorused word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a general uproar of hard, barking laughter" (O'Neill 170). Later on in this play, as we have seen above, the metallic sound turns against Yank, for he no longer belongs to the steel-surrounded stokehole.⁶

The Individual vs. The Group: Characters and Settings

Contrasts between individual and groups may certainly be better observed in *HA*. When the play opens, we are introduced to the Expressionistic Everyman Robert Smith, nicknamed Yank, who "seems broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest" (*HA* 166). Here, the hero Yank is a representative of a group of people which reminds us of expressionism as opposed to naturalism, in which characters are treated as unique individuals. In scene 1, we have another typical instance of O'Neill's expressionistic style: the utterance of short sentences assigned to a group of people as "Voices," depicting the most

⁴ For Michèle Mendelssohn, "Jones's 'negroid' characteristics emphasize his physicality and thus sustain the racist stereotype of a black predisposition for physical pursuits over intellectual ones. Jones's distinctiveness and 'grandeur' lies in his self-reliant individualism, a hallmark of the idealized American character which is at the root of the crudest capitalism and imperialism" (23).

⁵ Anisul Haque notes that the characters of the plays share an insecurity and protect it with a cynical mode of speech (73), as in, "No use 'n fussin'. When I knows de game's up. I kisses it good-bye widout no long waits" (*EJ* 18).

⁶ As Gene A. Plunka affirms, although later in the play we have again the metaphor of steelworker as beast/automaton imprisoned in a cage, the concept of belonging as beasts in a cage is seriously questioned (39).

common topics of conversation among the stokers such as women, drinking and fighting. For this group, Yank represents the most genuine and developed form of self-expression. In fact, O'Neill explicitly writes that "the treatments of this scene or any other scene in the play, should by no means be naturalistic" (*HA* 165); that is to say, the author attempts to portray a uniform group of people: "All are dressed in dungaree pants [...] All are hairy-chested [...] All the civilized white races are represented, but except for the slight differentiation in color of hair, skin, eyes, all this men are alike" (*HA* 165-6). In *EJ* we can confirm this last statement when we read Jones's description, as contrasted with the rest of "common bush niggers" (*EJ* 20).⁷ Furthermore, Franz Fanon argues that "A Negro behaves differently with a white man than with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question" (17).

Contrasts of characters and settings also create certain impressions in the audience. Jones's somewhat ridiculous image, "he wears a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy golden chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs, etc." (*EJ* 9), accords with the gaudy, decadent palace setting with its pillars and throne, "painted a dazzling, eye-smiting scarlet" (*EJ* 5). In *HA*, scene 5, "a procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankensteins in their detached mechanical unawareness" (201), walk by Fifth Avenue in New York. Yank is not even seen by the well-to-do group, homogeneous by identical clothes and voices. He is now discordant with "a general atmosphere of clean, well-tidied, wide street; a flood of mellow, tempered sunshine; gentle, genteel breezes" (201). Yank is lost in a world to which he cannot relate; he even loses the connection between the past and the present.

All these elements establish a conflict with Yank and also with the jewels and furs displayed in two shop windows, creating an incongruous "background of magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by commercialism" (*HA* 201). Furthermore, a conflict between the individual and the group is also here expressed. In scene 2, the colored setting breaks with the impression in the first one: "the impression to be conveyed by this

⁷ In this regard, Haque (75) observes that O'Neill's description of Brutus "contributes to bringing out the deficiencies in other aspects of the African-American's life, and by counter-effect which is frequent in human processes, it is fed by the African-American's other infirmities. This is what Smithers refers to when he says, 'And I s'pose you think it's yer bleedin' charms and yer silly beatin' the drum that made 'im run in circle when 'e'd lost 'imself [...] stupid as 'ogs, the lot of 'em. Blarsted niggers' " (*EJ* 53).

scene is one of the beautiful, vivid life of the sea all about—sunshine on the deck in a great flood, the fresh sea wind blowing across it" (*HA* 180). This setting matches perfectly with Paddy's character and longing for the good old times: "Oh, to be back in the fine days of my youth, ochone! Oh, there was fine beautiful ships them days—clippers wid tall masts touching the sky—fine, strong men in them—men that was sons of the sea as 'twas the mother for them" (*HA* 173). But the two delicate women are totally out of place in this setting, just as Paddy was in the forecandle: "In the midst of this, these two incongruous, artificial figures, inert and disharmonious" (*HA* 180). Contrasts between characters and settings such as the latter reaffirm O'Neill's messages through a sharp irony, which in turn adds a comic touch to the play.⁸

Tone and intensity of lights and colors enrich the impressions to be produced. In *EJ*, scene 2, the author introduces the scenic image of the forest, which will express, through the changes of light color, Jones's increasing inner tension. We are now surrounded by the forest, in other words, we have trespassed with Jones the limits of his unconscious mind. Darkness and green prepare us for the apparition of Jones's ghosts. The rays of the moon "drifting through the canopy of leaves, make a barely perceptible, suffused eerie glow" (*EJ* 30), and the moaning sound of the wind in the leaves serves not only to "intensify the impression of the forest's relentless immobility, to form a background throwing into relief its brooding, implacable silence" (*EJ* 25), but also to suggest the journey into Jones's obscure mind. Likewise we can distinguish in *HA* the fusion of scenic means. Scene 3 represents the core and main climax of the play. We observe now a skillful combination of expressive means such as lighting, sounds and collective action:

A line of men, stripped to the waist, is before the furnace doors. They bend over, looking, handling their shovels as if they were part of their bodies, with a strange, awkward, swinging rhythm [...] Then from these fiery round holes in the black a flood of terrific light and heat pours full upon the men who are outlined in silhouette in the crouching, inhuman attitudes

⁸ Although for many O'Neill is the grimmest of American dramatists, there are certainly humorous touches in his earlier plays.

of chained gorillas [...] This clash of sounds stuns one's ears its rending dissonance. (HA 187-8)⁹

The relationship between the Irish and the African-Americans is suggested symbolically in this passage, or, when Yank "stands out in contrast to them, a blackened brooding figure" (HA 193).

The encounter of Yank and Mildred in scene 3 is a focal image, where a fusion of expressionistic devices takes place. Tone and intensity of colors and lights mark various contrasts between characters and settings, and create the general impression of this scene through the superposing of significant details. When Mildred enters, dressed in white, which contrasts with the dark surroundings, Yank is not aware of her presence at first. In this regard, John Nickel states that, "by putting Yank in blackface, O'Neill cleverly critiques contemporary arguments for black racial retrogression [...] to convince his audience that degeneration is not biological—or racial—but cultural" (35). The annoying whistle of the engineer keeps him away from work as he curses it in a "sudden fury" (HA 190). He notices something behind him "like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnace doors" (HA 191), and "glares into her eyes, turned to a stone" (HA 191). At the same time, Mildred "has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless" (HA 191). She then faints and is taken away, which makes Yank feel insulted "in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride" (HA 192).¹⁰

The sound of the whistle plays a secondary role in the overall impression to be conveyed. It now plays an ironic effect in the general impression of the scene. We can see this effect of secondary elements in *EJ* in scene 1, where "the wind moans in the leaves" (25). The sound of the wind serves to intensify the general impression to be conveyed, as mentioned above.

⁹ Haque notes that even though O'Neill believed that on account of his Irish heritage, the Irish had also experienced uprootedness, discrimination and economic deprivation, he was better placed to understand something about the African-American problem, he overlooked the burden of color, which prevented him from getting an insight to the African-American psyche (77).

¹⁰ David Roediger relates Mildred's visit into the stokehole to a colonial position, typified as the master-slave relationships in the early part of the twentieth century (39).

The Travel into the Self of the Alienated Anti-hero

Jones's wandering through the forest parallels his travel into his innermost being. From the individual memory, through the generic "little formless fears" (28), and the "Negro Jeff" (30) that Jones killed when he was a Pullman porter, we are led towards the Jungian collective unconscious of Jones and his race. In this respect, Mendelssohn explains that Jones's splitting of consciousness or "Manichean delirium" typifies the post-colonial individual, the person who embodies both the colonizer and the colonized (22). As a consequence, he loses his language and sense of identity. Later, when confronted by his dark side—the shadow of colonized man—Jones's self cracks under the pressure. We can thus establish a correlation between Jones and Yank, since they are both representatives of a group of people. In *HA*, Yank goes from the stokehole to Fifth Avenue in search for his own self. Up to scene 3, most of the emotions have been transmitted through stage directions. In the remaining scenes, however, O'Neill attempts to explain the previous actions, particularly the meeting of Mildred and Yank in scene 3. Yank convinces himself that Mildred is a ghost, and he misunderstands Mildred's expression "filthy beast" for "hairy ape." From here on, he transforms himself into a "hairy ape," as if fulfilling his worst predictions. He carries out a rationalization of emotions, by the restating of the same ideas, through repetitions of words and expressions such as "with abysmal contempt" (196).

As Murray notices, scene four "departs from the realism of the first three scenes: fantastic, dream-like images, like those of Strindberg, overtake the stage" (110). From scene 4 until the end of the play, Yank's monologue becomes O'Neill's means for emotional impact, for the former is pulled apart from his natural surroundings in order to search for his identity, and for his revenge as well. But nobody is concerned about Yank's feelings of "not belonging" until he transgresses the social rules with his actions against society. When he is led into prison, he feels the prison as a community similar to the one in the stokehole of the ship:

the cells extend back diagonally from right to left rear, they do not stop, but disappear in the dark background as if they ran on, numberless, into infinity. One electric light bulb from the low ceiling of the narrow corridor sheds light through the heavy steel bars of the cell at the

extreme front and reveals part of the interior.¹¹ (HA 211)

An electric bulb is set for the lighting as in the stokehole scene. Yank rejects any kind of religious or social solution to his problem, but he realizes after listening to the other convicts, "VOICES (scornfully): Hurrah for de Fort' of July! Pass the hat! Liberty! Justice! Honor! Opportunity!" (HA 216), that he does not even belong there. Yank's rejection of religion and state, as Doris Alexander maintains, may be considered as the projection over his work of O'Neill's reading of Nietzschean philosophy of the Anti-Christ, which made a strong influence on him. Chorus repetitions and sound effects help to evoke the Marxist alienation of O'Neill's heroes. But the tragedy of the proletariat, as Julius Bab states, is stopped at a point where tragic still exists, namely before politics enter in. In existential terms, society, authority, and God all contribute to the design of a meaningless humanity. In a sense, we might say with Murray that, "Yank is a newborn existentialist insisting upon his existence amid his own unfathomable chaos" (110). As we can infer from the last quote, Yank's search for his identity is always associated with the idea of the "cage" with an "electric bulb," where he feels momentarily at ease. The "cage" surrounded by "steel" represents for Yank the means of protection from outer reality. Steel has been his "element" until his meeting with Mildred. The "electric bulb" intensifies the idea that his life is somewhat enlightened by his comfortable feeling of "belonging" in his surroundings. O'Neill suggests that the play is supported by verbal constructs, and repeated images and ideas. Furthermore, scenes are built on incoherent and ceaseless chatter. This is why in the fore-castle, the prison, and the Zoo, where Yank is repeatedly enclosed by the physical space of dramatic reality, we hear "hard, barking laughter." Similarly, Jones feels relieved every time he fires a bullet of his gun.¹² Towards the end, Jones ends up as a "bush nigger" (20), stripped of his clothes, as well as from all

¹¹ According to Bigsby, "In *The Emperor Jones*, the forest closes around the protagonist, driving him back to meet the terrors of his own mind. In *The Hairy Ape* character is reduced to type and compacted into a political, moral and physical space which allows no scope for maneuver" (63).

¹² For Haque (77), O'Neill's paternalism becomes evident in Scene 7, where he suggests that Brutus Jones could regain his self-identity only by acknowledging his African heritage, which simultaneously makes him attractive as an exotic primitive offering a vicarious escape from the mundane concerns. In this sense, the tom-tom works as the background score of the play, a part of African ancestor worship.

his individual and collective frustrations and feelings of guilt, after the two-fold "elimination" of the causing agents of his psychological tension: the formless fears, Negro Jeff, a guard, an auctioneer, and a planter:

As the play progresses, the difference between the "nigger" Jones perceives himself to be—intelligent, rational, colonizer—and the "low-flung bush niggers"—dumb, irrational, colonized—is slowly eroded. The Other is conflated with the Self but remains its antithesis and enemy: the result is a man alienated from his image, one who must live with the otherness within himself. In this sense, Jones's state is epitomized in Rimbaud's famous phrase, "*je est un Autre.*" (Mendelssohn 24)

In prison, Yank reads an "anarchist" paper that contains a critique of the Industrial Workers of the World American Labor Union, and he decides that his future may be there. Later he enters the locale and stays there until, at last, he is kicked out, and he realizes his mistake: "With a growl he starts to get up and storm the closed door, but stops bewildered by the confusion of his brain, pathetically impotent. He sits there, brooding, in as near to the attitude of Rodin's 'The Thinker' as he can get in his position" (225). According to Lillian Herlands Hornstein, The Thinker symbolizes O'Neill's expressionistic projection of Yank's confusion, and it reminds us of Mallarmé's creed that to name is to destroy, to suggest is to create (507). Although he cannot control external force in the posture of The Thinker, Yank learns that he is a self-perpetuated being. It is as if he were now fully aware of his situation in society: he belonged when he was in steel, but now the world controls him because he is no longer in steel. In other words, he is not "conveniently" useful to the rest of society, which may be regarded as the spiritual tragedy of the mechanical age.¹³

The setting of scene 8 in *EJ*, with the Witch Doctor performing an incantation in order to sacrifice a human victim to the god (the crocodile), anticipates Jones ultimate death. I agree with Doris V. Falk when she says that Smither's final comment reflects O'Neill's best explanation of dramatic

¹³ Plunka (1999: 34) notes that O'Neill refers to steel exactly twenty-one times in the first part and twenty-one in the second, because *The Hairy Ape* explores the motif of the dichotomy between Paddy's romanticized view of Nature and the brutal dehumanization of modern industrialization.

tragedy: "Gaed blimey, but yer died in the 'eight o'style, any'ow!" (*EJ* 53). Jones has just performed the ultimate goal of the journey through his mind: the tragic murdering of his own self as a result of the total acknowledging of his stripped inner self that exposed him to his crude reality.¹⁴ Therefore, this action brings us, all of a sudden, back to realism after the circular movement through O'Neill's "forest" of expressionism: the unconscious mind.¹⁵ In *HA*, the last action of Yank's murder by the gorilla is anticipated by the scenic image of a fateful moonlight:

In a sarcastic reaction to Andrew Carnegie's spirit of Social Darwinism, O'Neill allows Yank in the last four scenes, during his quest for belonging, to move from the purity of evolutionary development through modern technology to the fringes of society and finally to animality—a type of reverse Darwinism. As a mockery of Carnegie's perfect society in harmony with modern technology, O'Neill takes the proletarian subrace through a descent from modern industrialism/commercialism at its finest (Fifth Avenue) back to its evolutionary origins (the ape). (Plunka 40)

In scene 8, there is only a dim light and shadows in the setting: "One spot of gray light falls on the front of one cage so that the interior can be seen" (*HA* 228). When the gorilla gives him the "murderous hug" (232), Yank becomes aware that he belongs to nowhere, while even the gorilla still belongs to the world. In setting the last scene of *HA* in the Monkey House of presumably the Bronx Zoo, O'Neill mocks the comparison of individuals of African heritage to apes.¹⁶ At the end of his grotesque death, O'Neill cannot

¹⁴ Following Freud, the Expressionists maintained that the unconscious was the true psychological reality, and that it was as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world.

¹⁵ "O'Neill overlooked the fundamental fact that 'Blackness' was the African-American's most striking feature, and always had a pejorative meaning for the white people [...] As a result every action of the African-American became suspect in the eyes of the white people [...] Institutionalization of rigid social and racial codes abolished human relations and created antagonistic responses in men. So the African-Americans reasoned that the problem had to be solved politically rather than morally" (Haque 78).

¹⁶ According to Travis Bogard (244), in O'Neill's original plan for the drama, Yank returns in the final scene to the stokehole where he no longer belongs and feels completely alienated. In the final version, however, the playwright has Yank, rejected by human society, identified with a gorilla in the Monkey House.

avoid to add his final, genuinely tragic comment: "He slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs" (232). According to Camillo Pellizzi, O'Neill's tragic superiority over other Anglo-Saxon writers might be derived from the fact that a subtle, yet noticeable Catholic outlook, which means the acceptance of the powerful reality of evil and the existence of grace and the miraculous, somewhat permeates his works. Here, the word "perhaps" may have possibly implied something of this sort in O'Neill's mind.

Conclusion

From our modern perspective, we might argue that in *EJ* O'Neill's choice of symbols such as the crocodile and the doctor can be considered childish, for these two elements have become clichés in literature. Likewise, *HA* loses its interest after scene 3, due to the premature climax that releases the main tension of the play from scene 4 on to the end. However, I also believe that the combination of plot and stage directions in *HA* leads logically towards the final climactic death of Yank, the hero, inside the cage of the murderous gorilla. Besides, I think that the selection of stereotypical, scenic elements from *EJ* may be considered as O'Neill's means to facilitate the communication with the audience. It has been already pointed out that both plays are tragic plays. What sets O'Neill's tragedy apart from the classic one is, as Oscar Cargill states, that while in the latter man was confronted by the gods, in the former man struggles against his inner self.

As far as the form is concerned, the circular structure of *EJ* perfectly suits the topic of the play—a journey into Jones's Jungian racial memory, as well as accords with the fundamental scenic images: the forest and the tom-tom. But while *EJ* begins and ends with realistic settings, *HA* reaches a higher level of expressionism through its linear plot. As Murray states, "stylistically Rodin reflects tendencies of Romantics, Realists, Impressionists, and Symbolists, fusing them into the prescience of Expressionism. Completed in bronze in 1880, *The Thinker* hallmarks the intensity of Rodin's emerging stylistic eclecticism" (108).

From another point of view, however, *HA* may as well be seen as having a circular structure regarding Yank's expressionistic journey into his inner self. This structure responds to a theme, which is closer to the audience, for it resumes the main struggle of modern man in the twentieth-century industrialized world. I think that *HA* is certainly superior to *EJ* in terms of O'Neill's craftsmanship. For example, O'Neill needs seven scenes to strip his hero bare in *EJ*; whereas he achieves it in just one single

scenic image in *HA*: "I'm de ting in coal dat makes it goin [...] And I'm steel-steel-steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it!" (177).¹⁷ In this respect, Jones and Yank share a certain naïveté. They both suppose they belong to a society, which despises them. While Jones kills his jailer to escape from jail, Yank breaks into the cage in order to commune with his brother, the murderous gorilla.

In closing, it is O'Neill's well-honed skill of fusing scenic images and expressionistic symbols along with his artistic ability to convey profound yet tangible messages which enable him to offer interesting and enjoyable plays that are in tune with the rhythm of our times.

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¹⁷ As Murray affirms "Expressionism challenges the absolutes of time, space, and action, all of which are immaterial in the worlds created by O'Neill and Rodin [...] Yank identifies himself as part of an overwhelming darkness that pervades all inquiry into the nature of things. This ambiguity exposes the faults of reasoned inquiry and strengthens the imagination" (112).

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