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ART IN TENSION WITH TECHNOLOGY: EXPLORING THE HUMAN DILEMMAS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

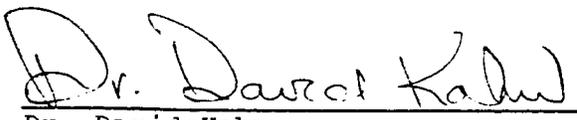
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ABSTRACT

ART IN TENSION WITH TECHNOLOGY: EXPLORING THE HUMAN DELEMMAS

by Dana Victor Andersen-Wyman

This thesis explores *The Hairy Ape* (1922) by Eugene O'Neill, and *The Adding Machine* (1922) by Elmer Rice. It examines specific theatrical choices of signification each playwright utilized to illustrate the de-humanizing effects of technology.

Research on this subject reveals that the general categories of abstraction, anti-romanticism and violent parody were vital in establishing the de-humanized characters of Yank in *The Hairy Ape*, and Zero in *The Adding Machine*, through the use of language, narrative and visual devices. Yank and Zero can be seen de-evolving from humans, to virtually an automaton in Zero's case, or to a gorilla in Yank's case.

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Chapter I

Art and Technology

The Adding Machine (1922) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922) dramatically explore what it means to be human by implicitly and explicitly comparing humans to machines. Consequently, and secondarily, they also allow audiences to assess the positive and negative values of technology. *The Adding Machine* shows what happens when people function like machines, become clones of one another and isolate themselves from change and difference. *The Hairy Ape* explores the conflicts that arise when the technological foundations that supported Yank's sense of belonging and worth crumble beneath the weight of another reality. This thesis will explore the problem of how two distinguished dramatists (Elmer Rice and Eugene O'Neill) in American theatre of the nineteen-twenties responded to humanity in an increasingly technological society and will investigate the relationship between human identity and technology in a work by each of these dramatists that is contemporary with the other.

Critical Perspectives On Similarities Between *The Adding Machine* and *The Hairy Ape*.

Both plays portray a man becoming lost as an individual due to his own approach to himself and to his mechanized society. Many critics see these plays as being anti-technological, to one degree or

another. Frank Durham comments that the world of *The Adding Machine* is one where "technological advance is accomplished by human retrogression [and] . . . man could and should be the master, not the slave of technology."¹ Zero is clearly a slave, though whether he is a slave of technology *per se* is questionable. Robert Hogan calls *The Adding Machine* "a grim and black comedy dissecting the soul of machine conditioned man and finding nothing there."² The problem with Zero is not that he let machines replace his human skill and feelings, but that he functions as a machine, letting his natural human skills, or inventiveness atrophy.

Virginia Floyd comments that *The Hairy Ape*, "captures the mood of pessimism that prevailed in the 1920s following man's discovery that while the industrial world provided him with material benefits, it also crushed and threatened to obliterate his humanity."³ While it is true that *The Hairy Ape* did capture a "mood of pessimism," it does not show technology "crushing and obliterating man's humanity." It shows, rather, that humans are the source of their own destruction and that of one another. This "human obliterating effect" is evidenced from the snobs failing even to acknowledge Yank's presence in scene 5, to Yank being rejected by and ejected from the union hall by the members of the I.W.W. after trying to join their ranks in scene 7. Yank contributes to his own

¹ Frank Durham, *Elmer Rice*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 51.

² Robert Hogan, *The Independence of Elmer Rice*. (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois press, 1965), 31.

³ Virginia Floyd, *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, A New Assessment*. (New York: Unger, 1987), 239.

destruction by displacing his sexual, familial and filial feelings onto a machine. The only time that Yank is content is when he is interacting with the ship--through its stokehole--and not with humans, a point Floyd seems to miss. She refers to Yank as a man who has had his faith dismantled and can find nothing to replace it: "Yank represents twentieth-century man who, after his faith in the machine is shattered, can find nothing in himself or his world that can replace this lost faith."⁴ This statement would be more accurate if she stated that Yank represents a type of man, not all of twentieth-century humankind, and that his loss of faith is as much in himself as in his ship. Although this loss of faith is a universal human experience, what one places faith in and becomes disillusioned with differs tremendously between individuals. Yank is the type of man who places all his faith and energy in one specific world view and *raison d'etre*, as would a member of an extremely fundamentalist group or political party. Yank's faith happens to be invested in himself as part of a machine. He sees himself as running the world, until he gets an inkling that power lies in money, and with those that possess it, and this means for Yank that the rich, not Yank, truly run the world. Floyd does not take into account how vulnerable having only one reason for living leaves Yank (or anyone).

O'Neill himself commented on the nature of the times. In a letter to Marjorie Griesser dated May 5, 1922, he stated, "the play is

⁴ Floyd, 238-9.

also very much a protest against the present."⁵ Travis Bogard links *The Hairy Ape* to *The Adding Machine* when he suggests that they represent similar versions of a dramatic myth. He writes:

The thesis which O'Neill develops is an easy one, characteristic of much American political thought in the 1920's and 1930's. As the theatrical myth has it, materialistic America distorts and deforms the individual's spirit, destroying man's creative potential by divorcing him from those qualities of humanity which give him dignity and the sense of manhood. The materialistic system is his enemy and the core conflict of the fable is his battle with the exponents of that system. A year after *The Hairy Ape* was produced, Elmer Rice developed the same fable in a more truly expressionistic mode in *The Adding Machine*, and the concept was shortly to become a staple commodity in the work of John Howard Lawson, Clifford Odets and Sidney Kingsley. Most recently the fable has served Arthur Miller to notable effect.⁶

If Bogard were to replace the word "materialistic" with "technological" in the second and third sentences, then his critique would be more relevant to this thesis's research of *The Adding Machine* and *The Hairy Ape*. Materialism is generally seen as a quest for possessions. While materialism may be the result of technology, or vice versa, the two are separate and not necessarily related. As it is, the statement is a generalization about a certain type of theater in those two decades, and not necessarily an accurate commentary on *The Hairy Ape* and *The Adding Machine*. Bogard also

⁵ Eugene O'Neill, *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill*. ed. Travis Bogard. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 166. (cited hereafter as O'Neill's let)

⁶ Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time. The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 249.

assumes that Zero and Yank have those "qualities of humanity which give them dignity and the sense of manhood." Bogard is correct to link the plays thematically, but it is the human response to technology, not materialism, in tension with humanity, that is the vital link.

Both plays also address the subject of identity and the problem of reality. Hubert Zapf illustrates through the use of reversed Hegelian dialectics that Yank's sense of identity is an illusion. Each time Yank has an encounter with society, he sacrifices another part of his identity until, in the end, he has no idea who he is.

This reversed dialectical pattern is repeated throughout the different stages and aspects of Yank's encounters with society, illuminating the broken relationship of subjectivity and objectivity in the modern world, and being defined by the sequence of synthesis + antithesis = loss/impossibility of synthesis.⁷

I agree with Zapf's basic premise that Yank doesn't have the capacity to interact with society in general. Whenever he attempts to, he loses more of his individuality and consequently more of his sense of belonging.

A final area where the themes of the two plays overlap has to do with the problem of "belonging." The theme of belonging is mentioned in nearly every piece of critical analysis or review of *The Hairy Ape*. For example, "the somber O'Neill thesis prevails . . . that

⁷ Hubert Zapf, "O'Neill's *Hairy Ape* and the Reversal of the Hegelian Dialectics." *Modern Drama* 31.1 (Mar. 1988): 37.

man has lost his place and his belief in himself and god."⁸ Timo Tiusanem explains that O'Neill uses "the chorus and sound effects to bring closer to us the the feeling of alienation experienced by the hero."⁹ Frederic I. Carpenter states that "the play marks the beginning of O'Neill's long war with the soul-destroying materialism of American society. . . [and] describes the failure of the undereducated American to 'belong'."¹⁰ Undereducation is Yank and Zero's basic problem, and Carpenter is right on the mark when he points it out in his critique. But, like Bogard, Carpenter links materialism to the root of the problem. I can find no evidence that either play is an indictment against materialism *per se*. Many reviews of the two plays also agree that they both broke standard conventions of staging in their attempts to portray dehumanization. Stark Young described the staging of *The Hairy Ape* as "less entertaining but more unique . . . magnificent and unique"¹¹ Charles Morgan, reporting from London, states that "the force of *The Hairy Ape* arises, I think, from its extraordinary freedom, its complete independence of ordinary accepted theatrical conventions."¹² In a special cable to the New York Times, the reviewer from London mentions that the audience was impressed with the "expert staging."

⁸ Floyd, 239.

⁹ Timo Tiusanen. *O'Neill's Scenic Images*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 120.

¹⁰ Frederic I. Carpenter, *Eugene O'Neill*. (New York: Twayne, 1964), 99-100.

¹¹ Stark Young, "The Hairy Ape." *The New Republic* 22 Mar. 1922 : 112-3.

¹² Charles Morgan, Performance Review. *New York Times* 2 Feb. 1928.

¹³ Alexander Woolcott observed that "O'Neill unbridled, set them [the actors] a merry pace in the eccentric gait of his imaginings."¹⁴

As for *The Adding Machine*, even though he disliked the play because he thought Rice was too inexperienced and that his use of expressionism was obvious and amateurish, John Corbin said *The Adding Machine* was "further from the Broadway norm than any of the foreign pieces herein discussed. . . . The production as it was is an interesting and courageous work."¹⁵ Charles Morgan, reporting from London, stated that *The Adding Machine* "is valuable as an experiment in dramatic technique."¹⁶ In 1970, Mel Gussow mentions that "the play was considered to be adventurous--a rare example of Broadway expressionism. . . [and praised Rice] for his prescience about the effects of automation and his willingness to experiment with form."¹⁷

The above reviews give a surface view of a specific performance, but they do not delve deeply into the themes of the plays or into questions of authorial intent. Reviewers, being primarily interested in the execution of those themes and intentions through the media of production and performance, relate their impressions of what they see on stage, critiquing the performance as a text, thus rendering reviews not as useful a tool for critical

¹³ "Play Review." *New York Times* 12 Mar, 1931. 29:4.

¹⁴ Alexander Woolcott, "Eugene O'Neill at Full Tilt." *New York Times* 10 Mar. 1922. 18:2.

¹⁵ John Corbin, "Play Review." *New York Times* 25 Mar. 1923. VIII:1:1.

¹⁶ Charles Morgan, "Play Review." *New York Times* 29 Jan. 1928. VIII: 2:6.

¹⁷ Mel Gussow, "Play Review." *New York Times* 5 Dec. 1970. 40:1.

inquiry into the plays as are the methods of literary criticism. It will therefore be useful at this point to consider each of the two plays in turn, more closely and more critically.

Critical perspectives on *The Adding Machine*

In an article for the New York Times in 1938, Elmer Rice stated that "there is nothing as important in life as freedom . . . freedom of the body and mind through liberation from political autocracy, economic slavery, religious superstition, hereditary prejudice and herd psychology . . ."18 This theme of "freedom" recurs in articles on *The Adding Machine*. Zero would like to be free of his wife, who is the cause of his misery: "it is that bossy wife, not the machine that is brow-beating Mr. Zero."19 Durham points out that in scene six Zero loses his chance for freedom because he wants to belong to the respectable crowd, and is "frightened of the disapproval of his peers--what will people say?"20 Durham sees scene five as an important statement on freedom and how individuals become de-humanized because of their environment. They are unable to grasp the freedom of spirit when it is presented to them: "man [on earth] has chosen to create a system which denies him the freedom of the will . . . he can no longer choose."21 Durham

18 C. W. E. Bigsley, *American Drama 1900-1940*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 127.

19 Gussow, 40:1.

20 Durham, 49.

21 Durham, 49-50.

is making the assumption that everyone wants to be free and individualistic. He does not seem to take into account that there exist people who are happy, content and fulfilled because they are, and have chosen to be, part of a collective whole. They get their identity not from being unique, but, being a part of the group. Individualism is not universally ideal.

Choudhuri sees identification as a major issue in *The Adding Machine*; not only personal, but social identity as well. Choudhuri theorizes that society and therefore the individual (Zero) is unable to distinguish what is real from what is illusion, and that illusion will eventually crumble. Choudhuri says Zero's world is "a world where the individual has lost his dignity and identity, a world which he himself has created and is now serving as a slave. . ."²² He goes on to state that Rice's vision "projects a symbolic picture of a society in the grip of an illusion, a community living in a unreal world."²³ All the 'get rich quick' schemes, such as land speculation, the frenzied ups and downs of Wall Street and its eventual crash, people living on the installment plan, spending more than they make contributed to what Choudhuri calls "society in the grip of illusion."²⁴ For Choudhuri in 1979 to describe Rice's *The Adding Machine* as an overt prophetic vision of the future Wall Street Crash of 1929 in 1922, is like projecting the score of a football game

²² A. D. Choudhuri, *The face of Illusion in American Drama*. (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), 55.

²³ Choudhuri, 49-50.

²⁴ Choudhuri, 49.

after its been over for two years. Choudhuri finds it is easier to defend a future position after the fact.

Choudhuri also calls the *The Adding Machine* a series of "brilliant visualizations of the yearnings and questions of illusion ridden existence."²⁵ Although at first glance, Choudhuri appears to suggest that the fable is concerned with the problem of being able to separate what is real from what is illusion, what he is really saying is something different altogether. Choudhuri likens reality and illusion to the quest for material possessions and wealth. What Choudhuri really suggests is that the Zeros of the world could be fully human if they did not try to better themselves economically. If, on the other hand, they have the ability to see into the future, and, for example, see the crash looming ahead, they won't be fooled by that "illusion of real wealth" (land and stock market speculation) and would have anchored their investments in government bonds, or stock in insurance companies, or some other safe investment. This view gives Rice more credit for future economic perception in 1922 than is his due. It also emphasizes wealth in a way the text of the play simply does not. All we know about Zero's finances is that he rents an apartment (we must assume), he bought his furniture on a payment plan, and he has not had a raise in a long time. It may be, as Choudhuri suggests, that social identity is falsely aligned with money in this play as well as in society as he sees it. Since Zero does not have much money, his name could be seen to reflect his

²⁵ Choudhuri, 48.

social status and bank account all at once. Yet what he seems to lack in this play is exactly what Choudhuri valorizes as opposed to money; i.e., completeness of humanity, the power to attain his desires, the ability of self-realization.

An essay by Russell Brown explores the meanings of the names in *The Adding Machine*. Unfortunately, he does not spend much time on the ramifications of Zero's name, perhaps because its levels of meanings seem too obvious. A thorough examination of the names could provide a least one coherent reading of the play; but Brown does not do this. Rather, he examines particular names to interesting but disjunctive ends. Brown points out that only unmarried people in the play have real names. After marriage it seems that the characters take a number and thereafter lose their individual identity. Brown points out that the names Shrdlu and Amaranath are products of "the new technology of mechanical writing."²⁶ Brown uncovered the fact that the standard linotype machine has the letters SHRDLU in a vertical row on the left hand side of the keyboard. If a mistake was made, the typesetters would brush those letters as a signal to the proofreader to delete the line. As Brown pointed out those lines "were sometimes overlooked, so that the word often crops up in newspapers and magazines."²⁷ As for Amaranath, Brown says, typewriter aligners use a "secret" seven word sentence to check the machine's typing: "Amaranath sasesusos

²⁶ Russell E. Brown, "Names and Numbers in *The Adding Machine*." *Names* 34 (3) Sept. (1986): 270.

²⁷ Brown, 268.

Oronoco initiation secedes Uruguay Philadelphia."²⁸ Both Shrdlu and Amaranath are meaningless mechanical words used by "insiders" of the technological world. Though Brown does not make this connection, Shrdlu has more in common with Zero than the fact that they both committed murder. Both names mean the same thing: nothing. Shrdlu and Zero are both zeros, brothers, abstracted images of each other. Both are searching for the same thing in the afterlife: punishment. Shrdlu seeks punishment because he killed his mother; Zero expects it because that is what society awards murderers.

Critical work on *The Adding Machine* is clearly limited in both quality and quantity. I hope to improve it in both ways in offering a reading of my own below, in chapter II. Critical work on *The Hairy Ape* abounds, however, and it is to that which I would first like to turn.

Critical perspectives on *The Hairy Ape*.

Linda Ben-Zvi argues that Yank wants to remain where he is. He is not looking for anything. He is content in the forecabin as king of the stokers. He is at home. It is the home he has traded for the unhappy one of his youth. Ben-Zvi says his desire is "not to travel forth, but to remain in place."²⁹ She reasons that this is

²⁸ Brown, 270.

²⁹ Linda Ben-Zvi, "Freedom and Fixity in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill." *Modern Drama* 31:1. Mar. (1988): 19.

because the male characters of O'Neill's fables are concerned with the problems of finding a center for themselves. She uses the term "fixity" for their goal, which can mean: "enduring heat without evaporating or becoming volatile, or, the desire for permanence in a situation."³⁰ Although I think she intends the latter meaning, the former definition also applies to Yank in a literal sense: his job exposes him to extreme heat in which he remains centered and controlled. For Ben-Zvi, Yank is just trying to find a new home, a place of "fixity" for himself after Mildred shatters his "fixity" in the fore-castle. I agree for the most part with her view of this aspect of the play. Yank spends the first three scenes happy and content with his lot. He spends the last five scenes trying to recapture that sense of self-contentment; but along with his loss of "home," he loses "family," work and identity.

Ann Massa argues that O'Neill's theme of *The Hairy Ape* is "Life is hell and that all men are appallingly and animalistically equal but that the brotherhood of 'man' is an illusion,"³¹ and that O'Neill's message in the fable is: "only Paddy has a viable response to life."³² She argues that although Yank is in the same place as Paddy, he does not see what Paddy sees. She says everything that Yank sees as real (steel, power, steam, etc.) is illusion, and what Yank sees to be Paddy's illusions and dreams of the past are in fact the only reality

³⁰ Ben-Zvi, 18.

³¹ Ann Massa, "Intention and Effect in *The Hairy Ape*." *Modern Drama*. Mar. (1988): 49.

³² Massa, 50.

that Yank should strive for. Massa's arguments work only if we assume Yank is truly incapable of learning, and changing his perception of reality. Even so, Massa only looks at change and reality from one perspective, not taking into account other levels of reality, and different perceptions of change. She doesn't take into account that the stokehole may be undesirable and ugly, but those facts do not render it unreal. Yank's way of thinking before Mildred interferes makes those facts pleasure rather than pain to him; and who is to say the illusion he creates about them is dehumanizing? Perhaps the very fact that he can, for awhile, create his own comforting myths about his situation, make the ugly beautiful, shows him to be quite human. As for the brotherhood of man being an illusion, it seems rather to be a very firm reality in this play, providing Yank with all kinds of possibilities. Massa doesn't seem to acknowledge that Yank simply does not want to be a part of any group he understands (e.g., Paddy and those who go along with him) and he does not understand the others (e.g., Long and the union men). Brotherhood is less an illusion in this play than something Yank is simply unable to imagine, and therefore to recognize, until the end. In this respect, Massa's interpretation is somewhat narrow and limited.

Horst Frenz sees the theme of *The Hairy Ape* as "the alienation of the central figure in a dehumanized, hostile world."³³ He sees Yank as a symbol of the state of mankind in tension with the

³³ Horst Frenz, *Eugene O'Neill*. (New York: Unger Publishing, 1971) 37.

indifferent and detached world that he lives in. He stresses that the crucial problem is not with Yank's many problems with society, but with his relationship to "some superpower, to god."³⁴ Because he has problems relating to his god, he loses his sense of belonging. In contrast to Frenz, I do not see Yank as a symbol of the state of mankind. The most that can be said for Yank being a symbol is that he may represent a small part of the state of mankind. Because the only thing that Yank cares about is the strength, power and speed of machines, I can only assume that Yank's "superpower or god" is the technology of the world in which he lives. If this is true, then Frenz has missed the mark when he says Yank has trouble relating to it. Yank has no trouble at all relating to machines. He understands them, he likes them. He might even favor them over humans. Yank does have trouble relating to humans. The farther away from his social strata they are, the more difficult it is for him to relate to them.

Travis Bogard writes that "*The Hairy Ape* deals with what may loosely be called 'anthropological' subject matter, expressed in terms of a search for the origins of life . . . [and] man's attempt to come into harmony with his world, to find to whom, to what he can belong."³⁵ Setting aside whatever puns Bogard may or may not have intended, according to him, O'Neill is digging down to man's core to understand the war his individualism is waging against a

³⁴ Frenz, 34.

³⁵ Travis Bogard, *Contour in Time, The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 242.

mechanically developed and dominated society. Bogard blames (as do other critics) technology as the root of Yank's problem. Yank's problems arise when he tries to, as Bogard says "come into harmony with his world." He says this is the core concept of *The Hairy Ape*: If there is anything to what Bogard says, and I would like to think there is--even if I do not follow his direction exactly--then I would argue Yank "finds himself," or his roots, in the last scene with the ape.

In summary, the critics noted here all say basically the same thing about *The Hairy Ape* and *The Adding Machine*: the plays deal with the problem of individual human identity becoming lost in a technologically dominated society, and they all suggest that the plays are about de-humanized people. The critics indicate that these plays are meaningful works of American drama because, among other things, they provide an enduring illustration of de-humanized mankind in the characters of Yank and Zero. What is not explored in any of the previous critical analysis is what specific modes of signification Rice and O'Neill, as artists, utilize to expose de-humanization. This thesis explores and analyzes the plays through specific devices that Rice and O'Neill employ to illustrate and construct the de-humanized character. The signifiers of de-humanization I have chosen to explore are, 1) abstraction, which will include the categories of types, geometrization and repetition; 2) Anti-romanticism which will include the categories of machine imagery and the devaluation of love, sexual and otherwise; 3) violent

parody. I will discuss how A) language, B) narrative, C) visual devices are employed in each of these categories, in so far as they apply, to illustrate how the authors constructed the de-humanized characters of Yank and Zero.

Chapter II

The Adding Machine

This chapter will explore *The Adding Machine* by Elmer Rice using the criteria cited above, namely abstraction, anti-romanticism and violent parody as they apply. In order to understand first how the play defines and confronts the problem of dehumanization, it will be useful to consider some of the techniques and rhetorical devices Rice uses.

The Adding Machine

Synopsis:

The Adding Machine is a play organized into seven acts. It is about a man, Zero, who has had the same job at the same desk, sitting on the same chair for twenty-five years. On the anniversary of his twenty-fifth year of service, without missing a day's work, he is fired in the name of progress and efficiency; the boss has bought a new machine that adds faster than Zero can, and can be operated by anyone. Zero kills his boss, is arrested, tried, executed and buried. Zero then rises from the grave, meets a fellow murderer, also dead, and travels on to the Elysian fields where he rejects his chance to find happiness. He finally ends up in a clearing house for souls where he is stationed for twenty-five years before he is sent back to earth, or life, to go through it all over again.

In the first scene Zero is forced to listen to a litany of complaints, desires, frustrations and accusations from his wife of twenty-five years, without getting to say one word in his own defense.

The second scene finds Zero at work where he and his counterpart, Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore, add columns of figures in ledgers. They argue with each other, suppressing their desires for and fantasies about each other. These feelings emerge, along with others in a self-objectifying scene where their parallel monologues are mingled with their dialogue. At the end of the scene they lose what turns out to be their last chance to make a 'living' connection with each other when Daisy tries to say something honest to Zero, and he is too busy to listen. When Zero finally gets up the nerve to attempt to communicate honestly with her, she is gone. The apparent and momentary possibilities for intimacy are crushed in an instant by the relentless mechanical habits and demands of mundane living. Directly after this, the Boss enters and fires Zero, who then kills him because "he won't shut up." Zero's apology is as hollow as it is interminable.

In scene three Zero comes home to a party with the neighbors: Mr. and Mrs. One through Mr. and Mrs. Six. At the end of the party, where everyone discusses the same thing, including the weather, Zero is arrested for murdering his Boss.

Scene Four consists of Zero's defense of himself. He rambles on and talks about everything from his neighbor the prostitute to

throwing bottles at umpires. At the mention of a number, he starts to add out loud until he forces himself back on track. He appeals to the jury to see him as just like them, as a regular guy. They find him guilty.

Scene five finds Zero as a newly dead person, just rising from the grave where he meets a fellow murderer who helps Zero make the transition from the living to the dead, while relating, in detail, his murder of his mother. He lets Zero know that where they are is not the end.

The next scene finds Zero in what is called "a pleasant place."³⁶ Here, he meets his dead companion from the previous scene, and they comment on how pleasant it is here. Zero also meets up with Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore in this place. She killed herself after he died, because she had nothing left to live for. They finally talk and in doing so discover that they like and care for each other, and have secretly wanted each other for a long time. They kiss, hear the music that only the blessed hear, dance and for a few minutes find happiness. But Zero's conditioning about what is, and is not proper asserts itself, and he has to leave because he does not want to hang around "with a lot of rummies an' loafers . . ." (Rice p.118).

The final scene finds Zero seated at a desk pulling the lever of an adding machine. Lieutenant Charles and Joe pry him off the machine that he has been manning for twenty-five years and prime him for the return trip to earth. Zero learns that his soul has been

³⁶ Elmer Rice, *The Adding Machine*. (New York: Samuel French, 1922), 83.

recycled for thousands of years. And each time his soul gets re-used it gets a little bit worse for wear. Zero is told that "the mark of the slave" (Rice p. 132) has been on him from the beginning. He refuses to return to go through it all again, when thunder and lightning cow his spirit, and at the end he is tricked into returning to continue the cycle.

Abstraction

Types 1: Language

Zero represents the under-educated, sexually repressed, conformist, dead end lower working class man. Language is one device that Rice uses to isolate Zero's class from the upper classes. Zero's bad grammar, ("Maybe she don't even know it's me." Rice p. 12), mispronunciation, ("Your face is gettin all yellor." Rice p. 12), and misunderstandings of what others express, (" . . . you oughta care. You don't want him to think you ain't a refined girl, do you? He's an awful moral bird he is" Rice p. 113) are examples of the language skills Rice ascribes to Zero that help to identify him as being under-educated and narrow minded or unimaginative. Rice uses language that allows Mrs. Zero to vent her frustrations over the loss of her life's expectations. "If you was any kind of man you'd have a decent job by now an' I'd be gettin' some comfort out of life-instead of bein' just a slave, washin' pots an' standin' over the hot stove" (Rice p. 6). Rice uses the discourse of the nagging wife to show 1) they are not happily married, 2) there is litte contact between them-- they do not communicate enough even to argue, 3) they are not well off because she is still "suffering," 4) marital infidelity is on her mind as much as it is on his, and is an equally unacceptable option for her.

Another example of Rice's use of language to identify Zero's economic, educational and psychological standing occurs in scene

five between Zero and Shrdlu. Shrdlu, while attempting to understand his own motives for committing murder, recounts an event of his youth: "A companion lent me a profane book . . . It was called *Treasure Island*. Ever read it? To which Zero replies: "No, I never was much on readin' books." (Rice p. 74) The difference between Shrdlu's language and Zero's differs strikingly. Where as Shrdlu is able to explore an abstract line of thought (he saw the book as the genesis of his wickedness that culminated in the murder of his mother) from inception to a logical conclusion, Zero can only reply somewhat lamely that he was never big on books. This illustrates that Shrdlu is much more educated (at least more widely read) and articulate than Zero. A final example of the differences of class between Zero and Shrdlu is illustrated when Shrdlu asks Zero if he " . . . ever carved a leg of lamb?" Zero replies: "Corn beef was our speed" (Rice p. 77). Leg of lamb is a more expensive and tender piece of meat, while corn beef is a cheap, tough piece of meat that has to be pickled, and boiled to be edible. From Shrdlu's description of the formal dining that occurred as a matter of course during his life, one can infer that he has had a more privileged upbringing in a more affluent surrounding than Zero. Zero represents those who will always be kept in their place because, if for no other reason, they do not have the ability, or the skills, to talk themselves out of the immobile existence they endure.

A final example of Rice's use of language as a device to isolate the classes occurs in scene four. One can only speculate why Zero

didn't hire a lawyer to defend him. Perhaps he thought that if the jury could see that he was, "just a regular guy like anybody else. Like you birds, now" (Rice p. 59), they would be able to understand his motives better. But unfortunately for him, he is unable to connect, control and channel his thoughts into a clear coherent oral defense. He keeps jumping from one subject to another and then on to another, and then back and forth. We might imagine that they find him guilty just to stop his uncontrolled flow of language.

Types 2: Narrative

A character type is a device used to isolate and/or embody the function of the character. One device Rice uses to construct these types is language. The character types in this play, because of their relation to each other, and because of the way they are cloned from each other help drive the drama to its conclusion. Zero is a character type. Like the medieval morality play *Everyman* (1485) where names are symbols which govern the characters' function, Zero's name symbolizes his position in society's hierarchy, as well as his economic status and work function. He is a cipher. Within the play, Zero's limited knowledge of geography would lead one to assume that he did not apply himself to his studies.³⁷ His attitude

³⁷ When Charles asks him in scene six if he had ever heard of the pyramids, Zero replies that, "I seen a picture of them in the movies (Rice p. 93)." The implication is that Zero only knew of them through film at the movies. And he isn't completely sure that he knows what they are then. At least not until he asks Charles if they are, "Them big pointy things?" . . . and Charles replies (*nodding*) "That's it." (Rice p. 132).

toward learning has allowed him not to have to exert himself, but at the same time it has ensured that others do his thinking for him. Zero typifies a lower class snobbery, and for him, respectable means always being and doing what he thinks society expects. He does not want, nor does he like the unusual, uncontrolled, unexpected or eccentric. Rice illustrates this in Zero's actions in scenes 2, 3, and 4. He has one emotional, uncontrolled outburst at the end of scene 2 (killing the Boss with the billfile) but immediately in the next scene he re-channels himself back into the groove by returning home and waiting for the police. He even saves evidence for them. In scene 4, Zero freely admits his guilt, and re-affirms society's controlled, predictable response to his action: "What I say is if one bird kills another bird, why you got a right to call him for it" (Rice p. 54). Other characters that act as types are Mr. and Mrs. One through Six, and the Boss, Mrs. Zero, The Policeman, the jury and the Young Man in scene five.

Rice makes the Policeman a functionary. He has no individual character traits. His actions and responses are stereotypical of policemen. "I'm lookin' for Mr. Zero . . . Come along . . . I got you covered . . . All right, come along" (Rice p. 48-9). Though the Boss is equally undeveloped and also exists as a functionary, he is a symbol on many levels. First, he signifies impersonal management in the work place. He can't remember Zero's name a minute after Zero tells him: even after twenty-five years, the Boss does not remember ever seeing him around the store. The boss also symbolizes capitalism's

dehumanizing push for technological advance, seeking efficient new methods of production regardless of the human consequences.

Mrs. Zero, like Zero, has embraced the "system." Although she blames Zero for her unhappy life, she won't step over the lines she thinks society has drawn for her to make a better life for herself. She says that she has "stood it for twenty-five years an' I guess I'll have to stand it twenty-five more" (Rice p. 6).

Mr. and Mrs. One through Six are clones of Zero and Mrs. Zero. Even their names follow the cloning pattern; naming later models after the prototype in sequence. Each of the characters have identical responses, attitudes and outlooks. By giving these characters numbers instead of names, Rice de-humanizes them further. Zero is a cipher, both literally and figuratively. If the others are clones of Zero, then they too are ciphers of one sort or another. They are all in the same class. They all talk, eat, drink and sleep the same thoughts, hopes and fears. They are symbols with some attributes of humanity, but they are not complete.

Judy O'Grady, the prostitute, functions as the antithesis to the Zero type of character. Where Zero is constrained by the limits that his environment and his psyche have placed upon him, Judy acts almost like a free spirit. She does not seem to be concerned with conventional morality, she is not sexually repressed and she likes to do things impulsively, as is evident in her desire to have sex on the grave of the man (Zero) who reported her to the police. Judy O'Grady could be seen as the Mr. Hyde to Zero's Dr. Jeckyll.

Shrdlu might at first appear to be a unique character in a play of types, but as mentioned earlier, his name indicates his position and function. Just like Zero, it means delete, make it not there, make it a zero, an empty line. His job in life was a proof reader, for which profession the word "Shrdlu" was made. In addition, until the unpremeditated murder of his mother, he was the dutiful, law abiding son. He was as conditioned as Zero. The only difference was that his conditioning was of the fundamentalist Christian kind that would make him a "virtuous, respectable, and God fearing man" (Rice p. 73). His conditioning was as mechanically rigid as Zero's, down to the fact that he was always served, and expected, leg of lamb for supper on Sunday, which he always carved the same way.

The character of Lieutenant Charles functions as the honest, but disillusioned civil servant who does his job, even though he finds it distasteful. He is like Zero in that he tells Zero that there is nothing that Zero can do to alter the situation. "You can't change the rules--noboby can--they 've got it all fixed." (Rice p. 134) Rice reduces Charles to a bureaucratic cipher because he, like Zero, does what is expected of him regardless of its rightness. He has allowed others to make his decisions for him, thereby abdicating the very human quality of free choice. He has accepted the *status quo*, as is, without any attempt to alter it. His last line illustrates his frustrations, but it does not say he is going to do anything about it, "Hell, I'll tell the world this is a lousy job!" (Rice p. 143).

Visual Devices

Rice gives us an example of a visual device that represents a type in the first scene. His description of Zero's *"small room containing an 'installment plan' bed, dresser and chairs. An ugly electric light fixture over the bed with a single glaring naked lamp"* (Rice p. 1) clearly indicates something about the characters. The first is that they do not appear to be well off. That is indicated by three visual signifiers. First, they have only one electric light, with no shade. Someone was either too cheap to replace it, if it was destroyed, or too cheap to install one in the first place. Secondly, they have "installment plan" furniture. The fact that Rice emphasizes that kind furniture is showing us something. It is showing us that they have to get furniture on time because they can't afford to purchase it outright. And if they can't afford to buy, we can assume that they can't afford to make huge payments either. So, the furniture would be cheap, ugly (perhaps that is one reason it is cheap) and functional. The third device that Rice uses is the size of the room itself. He specifies a "small" room. The size of the room can be viewed as a symbol of the Zero's life together. They never grew. They stayed small, petty and ugly, and their room grew to mirror them.

Rice has used typologies to abstract the characters and separate them from their human qualities. He uses language to de-humanize Zero through his inability to communicate with the other

characters, to illustrate how the types function in the play and to physicalize the separation between Zero's class and the Boss's class.

Geometrization 1: Language

In scene two, Rice objectifies and abstracts Daisy and Zero's thoughts and actions through the language of their dialogues; that is, by blending their interior and exterior monologues and making them audible. Zero and Daisy carry on two dialogues simultaneously, which are arguably also monologues. Zero talks to himself about Daisy and Daisy talks to herself about Zero. Meanwhile, they argue with each other about work, punctuating this dialogue with their monologues and with insults and misunderstandings. The "dialogue" in this scene is therefore bifurcated in several ways: 1) on a structural level, the aspect of their dialogue which is audible to both is bifurcated within each of them, as well as for the audience, by their "interior" monologues; 2) on a semantic level, what they actualize to each other in their language does not reflect what they fantasize to themselves, which is more "true" than what they actually say to one another, rendering further disjuncture and bipolarization in the dialogic symmetry; 3) on a psychological level, their abstractions of each other--the "other" that each of them creates and presents to him- and herself--contribute to their inability to communicate.

Geometrization 2: Narrative

Rice constructed *The Adding Machine* as a sequence of scenes rapidly following one after another. Each scene is a stage of development that Zero, the protagonist, utilizes to travel from one stage of his devolution to another. It is that narrow focus on the development of the character or events which directs, and in effect, drives the play forward to the end. This allowed Rice to utilize abstract and unrealistic settings such as the graveyard and The Elysian Fields. These two scenes, occurring in tandem, act as foils for each other. One is dark, closed in and uncomfortable, while the other is wide-open, pleasant and comfortable.

Geometrization 3: Visual devices

Scene two illustrates a vivid example of geometrization. Geometrization is a mode of signification that is used to de-humanize the characters by separating and isolating the characters from each other, their setting and reality in general. Rice places the men on one side of the room and the women on the other. Each member's costume is the same, except of a different color. They all talk about the same thing. The women discuss relationships, who is cheating on who, and family. The men all discuss the weather and business. All the conversations are lifeless chatter and stock

conversations. Everything said in this scene is distilled to the cliché and common.

The courtroom in scene four is another example of scenic geometrization. It is an abstraction of a "real" courtroom. It is closed in except for a single door off to the side. The walls are bare white. The walls are a hard, flat, monochromatic surface that will reflect and bounce back whatever is projected onto it. This can be viewed as: no one is listening to Zero, or if they are, they are not understanding him, because of the distortions caused by the echos his voice makes bouncing off the walls. The walls parallel, reflect and objectify the characters' attempts to communicate in the play up to this point. No one seems able to make contact; they function like these walls for one another. We know that the courtroom and the jury will hear little and understand none of what Zero has to say. His doom is objectified in the set. Rice thus also uses this abstract unrealistic setting to project Zero's future. It has only one color, white. There is no other side of the issue. The single door can signify that he has only one route open to him, regardless of his desires.

Scene five takes place in a graveyard with dead people. Death can be seen as the ultimate manifestation of de-humanization. This scene is abstracted in a couple of ways. First, it has the living and dead in one scene, separating them and the worlds of the play. The living (Judy) enter at the beginning of the scene and the dead (Zero) leave at the end. Another way this scene is abstracted is that it is

completely different from the next scene in almost very detail, from night to day, to Zero being stiff , to Zero dancing with Daisy.

Scene Six, identified as a "A Pleasant Place," falls into the category of geometrization because it is nothing like any other scene in the play. It is the only scene that is outside, and in a pleasant place. It is the only scene that Zero shows any tender feelings for anyone. Zero is also casual and relaxed. In the scene before, Zero was dead and had risen from the grave. The setting was dark, cold and uncomfortable for him. Shrdlu leads him and us to expect that the next stage of their progression will be the "real" thing. He is talking fire, brimstone and punishment for their actions: "Do you think this is the end? . . . We're doomed to suffer unspeakable torments through all eternity" (Rice p. 78-9). But the scene that Zero steps into is "a pleasant place" (Rice p. 83) of warm, balmy weather, green grass and trees. Rice sets us up to expect that Zero and Shrdlu will be citizens of hell for a very long time, and then instead of following through with the expected, he slips in a view of heaven (or close). He separates Zero's (and ours) expectations from the reality. This shaking up of expectations keeps the scene whole, separate and in tension with the others.

Scenes one through four are all closed interiors. Those closed interiors represent the "real" world of the play. Space is controlled, confined and ordered, as are the people. Scene five is outside. However, it takes place at night. Darkness can have the same effect as walls. It's a boundless void that can cause a sense of being closed

in. One has no depth perception. With these five scenes of closed, oppressive settings before it, scene six appears out of the "norm" for the world of this play. Meadows, fine old trees, rich grass and fields of flowers are as incongruous and fantastical to Zero's life experience as Zero taking tea with the Queen.

Rice uses geometrization to keep the characters separate from each other and their surroundings. This separating of the individual from a sense of social community and from the beauty of the world acts as another de-humanizing agent that affects the characters.

Repetition 1: Language

Instances of cyclical dialogue wherein characters repeat themselves, returning to the same thoughts and phrases like an engine performing the same action over and over again reflect the human spirit behind the words. Zero's vocabulary as well as his mental patterns are cyclical. For example in his defense (scene 4), Zero returns to the same five subjects: killing, lawyers, figures and numbers, his work, and women or sex. He spends his defense going round and round these subjects, returning to each as though on a treadmill. He talks about killing, then about lawyers, then he gets off on figures (numbers), then his work, then back to killing, then a return to numbers, then killing again, next, the boss's wife (as with much of his dialogue about women, it presents him as being sexually repressed to the point of obsession), then he returns to his figures,

then killing again, and again the boss is inserted, then killing again, etc., etc., etc. This speech illustrates Zero's inability to move beyond the constraints that have been placed upon him by his society. He is a machine, an adding machine, and in his defense he is trying to get the sum of his life, work, hopes and fears to add up to a justified rationalization for his one uncontrolled action.

Unfortunately he has most of the limitations a machine has; that is, he is only as potent as his construction will allow him to be. Zero can't move beyond those boundaries. He can't really think for himself, therefore his defense keeps returning to one of his few points of reference, one of the few ideas to which he can relate.

Rice employs the phrases *I don't, I like, I think, I guess, I nearly, I gotta, I want, I notice, I was, I'd like, I ain't, I bet, I won't, I've put up, I won't, I've been* and *I'll have* a total of thirty-nine times in approximately one hundred and forty lines of approximately 1500 words. That works out to roughly 4% of the time. Oscar Wilde uses *I was, I will*, etc. only twenty times in as many lines in *The Importance of Being Earnest*,³⁸ and Sophocles only uses the same word combinations twenty-four times in the same number of lines in *Oedipus the King*.³⁹ These other plays, picked arbitrarily, employ the phrase less than 2% of the time. Rice uses the same type of phrase 4% of the time in the same amount of lines. Mrs. Zero's phrases,

³⁸ Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest. Eight Great Comedies*. Ed. by Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman and William Burto. (New York: Penguin. 1958) 290-3.

³⁹ Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*. Trans David Green.(Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1942), 11-17.

coupled with other phrases like *an' she* and *and she give*, give the dialogue a very repetitive, cyclical flow. She always returns to the word *I* and forges on from there for a few lines, but ending at the beginning. The first word of her long monologue of scene one is the word *I*, and in the second to last sentence she uses it three times. Rice uses this repetition to de-humanize Mrs. Zero by structuring her speech into machine-like patterns. She (a machine) states (performs) one concept (function) and returns to the beginning to start the process over.

Another instance of repetition, on a purely auditory level this time, occurs in scene two between Zero and Daisy. When they recite their added figures, they are in small syllabic groupings that roll off the tongue with a machine-like drone. They have a constant flow and rhythm. The phrases are between three and six syllables, and their sequence has a rough pattern. In the first exchange, individual phrases broken into syllables go: first phrase, four syllables; second phrase, four; third, five.; fourth, six; fifth, three; sixth, four; and the seventh, five. This three-four-five, or four-five-six pattern is repeated with an occasional string of three-three-three-three inserted to add a element of speed to the exchange.

Rice's use of repetitive language has the effect of helping to de-humanize the characters by giving them machine-like patterns in their use of language.

Repetition 2: Narrative

The basic story of Zero's existence from the creation has been one of repetition. He has been performing the same type of lower-class/slave manual labor since he climbed out of the tree and left that cute little red headed monkey. Rice tells us that there has never been hope for Zero, and that he has always been a slave. Charles states that he is "a waste product, a slave to a contraption of steel and iron." (Rice p. 138) We can see from the first scene that Zero's daily life has fallen into a repetitive rut. Every morning entails getting up and listening to the wife complain about the rotten deal she got when she married him. Then we know he goes to work, where he fights with his co-worker. After that, he goes home to a cheerless dinner and goes to bed listening to his wife repeat herself from the morning. The only diversion he seems to allow himself is going to the ball game. Even that seems to have taken on an air of repetitiveness about it.

Repetition 3: Visual Devices

For some reason Rice does not seem to use repetitive visual devices for abstractive effect. He does use a mix of symbols such as the numbers on the wall in the first scene, Zero and Daisy tallying their numbers in ledgers in the second scene, and all the adding machine tape in scene seven to abstract the characters.

As noted above, Rice employed various modes of signification to illustrate types, geometrization and repetition. These abstractions all helped to devalue, or de-humanize the the characters within the play by separating them by language, class and action.

Anti-Romanticism

Anti-romanticism, when coupled with abstraction, helps to present an appearance of de-humanization through repetition (just discussed) by contributing to machine imagery. This is the next area this thesis will explore.

Machine Imagery as an Ugly View of Life 1: Language

Rice makes direct references to humans being thought of as machines. An example of this is Zero's line, "what do you think I am-a machine?" (Rice p. 19). Daisy uses the imagery of a machine-powered assembly line which varies its speed according to output needs to tell Zero that he doesn't know what he wants: "First it's too slow an' then it's too fast" (Rice p. 20) Their whole speech here is much like an assembly line. They are doing a production type of work that, like the assembly line doesn't have a beginning or an end.

Charles tells Zero that he has always functioned as a machine of one sort or another. Zero functioned as a truck when he was "hauling stones for one of those big pyramids in a place they call Africa" (Rice p. 132). Then Zero was a boat motor on a Roman galley. His next machine function was to be a backhoe in the middle ages where he was "digging up other lumps of clay" (Rice p. 133). Zero

mentions that he is going to get a "Buick, no Tin Lizzie for me." (Rice p. 24) And finally, Charles tells Zero in scene eight that he will be running a super-hyper adding machine. And in response to Zero's comment that the adding machine of the future which awaits him will be, "Some machine, won't it?" (Rice p. 137) Charles replies,

Some Machine is right. It will be the culmination of human effort--the final triumph of the evolutionary process. For millions of years the nebulous gasses swirled in space. For more millions of years the gasses cooled and then through inconceivable ages they hardened into rocks. And then came life. Floating green things on the water that covered the earth. More millions of years and a step upwards-an animate organism in the ancient slime. And so on-step by step, down through the ages-a gain here, a gain there-the mollusc, the fish, the reptile, them [sic] mammal, man! And all so that you might sit in the gallery of a coal mine and operate the super-hyper-adding machine with the great toe of your right foot . . . You're a failure, Zero, a failure. A waste product. A slave to a contraption of steel and iron. (Rice p. 137-8)

This speech surely gives us an ugly, un-romantic and de-humanizing view of the future. It is ugly because all he is offering is a future with a purpose to the great toe of Zero's right foot. And that is going to be in a coal mine. Not an appealing prospect. Secondly, Zero is not offered any kind of companionship, sexual or otherwise. And thirdly, Zero knows that his use will be reduced to a big toe. The rest of him is unnecessary.

Machine Imagery as an Ugly View of Life 2: Narrative

All through his various lives, Zero has always performed machine-like functions: pulling, rowing, digging and lastly, adding. Simple repetitive actions, performed the same way day after day; this is part of what makes Zero the non-person that he is. Technology is arguably the evolutionary direction that the characters have embraced. With their actions, words and deeds, the characters in *The Adding Machine* have become slaves to a mechanized society. In Zero's case, he is becoming a willing slave. An example of this willingness to embrace technology is illustrated in his excitement in scene seven when he finds out that he will be running a "super" adding machine. Rice's logic seems to be that if Zero embraces the machine, he will become part of a machine, and lose all humanity; at least in his last life, he had to "use his head" to perform his job--now all he will have to do is push a lever with the "great toe" on his right foot. This is what Charles warns him about. In each life, Zero uses less and less of what is valuable in a human.

Rice casts Zero as a symbol of the social, spiritual and physical atrophy of humanity resulting from dependence upon and acceptance of societal expectations, constraints, and opportunities. In this case Rice uses the adding machine as a symbol of the technology that is robbing the Zeros of the world of what little

humanity that may be available to them. They lose dignity, as well as mental and physical strength, even as they embrace ease without reservation or thought. By introducing a simple hand-operated machine at the end of scene two that is capable of faster, more accurate computations than can be done by Zero, and which can be operated by anyone, Zero is deleted. In scene seven, Rice introduces a machine that Zero can operate, which he does non-stop for twenty-five years. Finally Rice gives Zero a glimpse of his evolutionary place and function in the future. The machine evolves, but Zero gets worse with each life. It is as though the audience actually observes a human atrophying. Zero's big toe will be the only useful part of him in the next life. It will evolve only far enough to meet the demand of the super-hyper adding machine. Another comparison dehumanizes Zero even further. Charles tells Zero what he does do (eat, drink, produce, excrete, etc) is performed just as well by any "microscopic organism" (Rice p. 138). This is how Zero, as well as the Zeros of the world are doomed to forever be the non-thinking, boorish, un-original cogs in the machine that makes and is human life.

Machine Imagery as an Ugly View of Life 3: Visual Devices

Scene One is described as, "A small room containing an 'installment plan' bed, dresser and chairs. An ugly electric fixture over the bed with a single glaring naked lamp. One small window . . ." (Rice p. 1) Scene two isn't much better, being described as, "An

office in a department store. Wood and glass partitions" (Rice p. 7). Scene three is the Zero dining room, and while there are no specific directions relating to its appearance, we can speculate that it looks similar to the bedroom, full of "installment plan" furniture. Scene four's location is, "A hall of justice. [It has] Three bare white walls without door or windows except for a single door in the right wall" (Rice 4). Scene five is, "A grave-yard in full moonlight. It is a second-rate grave-yard--no elaborate tombstones or monuments" (Rice p. 63). Although none of these settings is "machine-like" *per se*, they smack of the cheap, sterile, and efficient objects and means which result from a machine-mentality and which contribute to the environment created by a mechanized society.

A visual device Rice uses to contribute to the sense that a mechanized society is taking over the world of the play, or at least Zero's world, is his recommendation for the use of adding machine tape which fills the room in scene seven. The tape: "Flows steadily from the machine [and] . . . the room is filled with this tape--streamers, festoons, billows of it everywhere. It covers the floor and the furniture, it climbs the walls and chokes the doorways" (Rice p. 123). This is after Zero's death, and the tape seems to function as cemeterial ivy in the tomb of his purgatorial office; only the scene lacks any of the natural qualities of earth, mould, or ivy. Poor Zero seems too far de-humanized to even be subject to decay.

Rice's use of machine imagery contributes to de-humanize the characters in general, and Zero in particular, by isolating their

human qualities and offering only mechanical thought, movement and ideology as a substitute.

Devaluation of Love 1: Language

Besides using machine imagery to contribute to an anti-romantic, or ugly, view of life, Rice employs the overtly anti-romantic device of devaluating love of any kind.

Zero's lack of communication, first between himself and his wife, and then with Daisy in the office illustrate how love (if Zero ever did love) becomes de-valued. Zero never communicates to his wife on any level in the first scene. He doesn't respond verbally to her. He doesn't respond physically to her. He doesn't even respond to her by going to sleep. He just lies there. He doesn't do anything, good or bad. He does zero. Language functions as an alienating force between Zero and Daisy in scene two. They only bicker, back and forth at each in a mechanical repetitive way. We get the impression that they say these same things to each other every day.

It is the language of Judy the prostitute that supplies, or supplements, some understanding of Zero's psycho-sexual make-up for the audience, though Zero himself never comes to any kind of self-knowledge. Scene five takes place in a graveyard at night. Of the two people to arrive at the beginning of the scene, the last of the living people we see in the play, one has come to this spot to have sex. Because she has frequented the graveyard before, it must

hold some attraction for her. Perhaps the attraction is as much in the transgression it presents as in the act itself: one is not supposed to even step on a grave, and here the prostitute wants to ply her transgressive trade on one. She seems to fear death and social proprieties no more than she fears sex. Judy's last line in scene five states, "You nervous men sure are the limit" (Rice p. 67). The Young man, like Zero, adheres to expected limits, and though he will violate some, he will not violate them all. He will embrace sex to a certain limit, but he will not embrace it to the death or to the point of losing himself in the experience of another. The Young Man is frightened of his own humanity. He is afraid of the unknown, the spontaneous, the different. He sees the grave-yard, not as a spot that might add a little adventure (macabre though it might be) to his life, but as a place that reminds him of limits--the limits of propriety and the limits of his mortality. He fears death and the dead. When Judy asks him, "What's wrong with this place?" and he replies, "A cemetery!" (Rice p. 64), his reply is not a question about the irreverent act to be performed, it is an expression of his own fears. Zero does not even get this far into an understanding of his own humanity and his relation to others, even after death no longer poses a threat.

In scene seven, when Zero finds out that the Elysian Fields are not what he expected "heaven" to be, he leaves in a hurry. Daisy, who has followed him into death to be with him, tries to get him to stay with her, to love her, but he will not because of his "limits":

Zero: That's enough. I heard enough. [He seats himself and begins putting on his shoes.]

Daisy: What are you going to do?

Zero: I'm goin' to beat it, that's what I'm goin' to do.

Daisy; You said you liked it here.

Zero [looking at her in amazement]: Like it! Say you don't mean to say you want to stay here, do you, with a lot of rummies an' loafers an' bums? . . . What's the quickest way out of this place?

Daisy [Pleadingly]: Won't you stay just a little longer?

Zero: Didn't you hear me say I'm goin'? Good-bye Miss Devore. I'm goin' to beat it. (Rice p. 117-118)

In rejecting Daisy's love, Zero rejects heaven. With his departure, the last hope of any kind of salvational love for him dies. Zero is too conditioned to take the chance; or, he chooses the rigidity of the known over the abyss of the unknown. He still has to do what he thinks the "regular folks" would expect him to do. He will never be able to find love and happiness until he lets go of those pre-programmed thoughts.

Devaluation of Love 2: Narrative

If there is a driving force in the play it is sex. There is not one scene in which sexual fulfillment is not overtly an issue. In scene one, Mrs. Zero makes her first references to sex only five lines into the scene. Her descriptions of the films she either wants to see, or has been told to see are all about sex. Later, in her tirade about the "dirty bum" (Judy) who walks around without clothes on, and has men in the same house with "respectable people" like her, is directed at Zero. She seems to know Zero has been peeping at Judy, and lusting, even as he denounces Judy. Mrs. Zero tells him she can live with all the disappointments of life, all the broken dreams. But, what she cannot, and will not do, is put up with Zero being with another woman. The unspoken discourse between them is one of unfulfilled desire, especially sexual. The intimation is that there is little if any sexual rapport between them. The limits of law, not love, keep the Zeros together.

In scene two, Zero is nearly consumed with thoughts of sex, from the lines in which he relives his erotic voyeurism that includes spying on his neighbor, to the complaint to himself that Daisy "don't wear them shirt waists any more with the low collars. When you'd bend down to pick somethin' up--"⁴⁰ He then has a fantasy where

⁴⁰ Elmer Rice, *The Adding Machine*. (New York: Samuel French, 1922), 13.

Daisy (or some other woman) moves into Judy's now vacant room, but only so he can continue his voyeuristic lifestyle. When Zero is finally finished dreaming, thinking and planning about sex, Daisy starts dreaming about it too: "I wonder what it feels like to be really kissed" (Rice p. 22). Both Zero and Daisy have unrealistic fantasies about what a real sexual relationship entails. For Zero, it is forbidden, wrong and a little scary. For Daisy, it is all romantic, matinee idol sweetness. In both cases, it is a one way street. The pleasures they fantasize are all directed at themselves. There is little thought given for the other's pleasure, and no indication that they will ever attempt to fulfill their fantasies.

In scene three, Mrs. Six alludes to Mr. One's possible affair with an unknown woman, and he replies that he doesn't want trouble (with his wife) and he tells her "That was my sister." To which Mrs. Six replies: "Oho! That's what they all say" (Rice p. 40). This is a variation of the same theme with which Mrs. Zero ended the first scene: husbands get in the worst kind of trouble if they are caught cheating on their wives, and they usually want to cheat. Marriage appears to be a particularly unerotic and de-humanizing legal arrangement in this play because all of the married people seemed to have traded any individuality they might have had, as well as their names, for a number and a mate who may not even love them.

During Zero's self-defense speech, where he attempts to justify the murder of his boss, he returns obsessively to the woman (Judy) who used to live across the way and walk around in nothing

but a nightshirt. He talks about "them birds" (her customers) grabbing her just like he saw in the pictures. He gives us a little insight into his personality when he says a few lines later that he has seen "lots that I'd like to grab like that, but I ain't got the nerve--in the subway an' the street an' in the store buying things" (Rice p. 57). He is clearly not sexually "dead," though his deference to "law" represses him. His desire is also clearly not for his wife, but for the abstracted stranger, for someone who looks better (to him) and who has never put him down or made demands upon him. He wants to "grab" these women, appropriate them, whether they like it or not. He hates the objects of his desire which he will not allow himself to have ("Women make me sick. They're all alike." p.11) and reduces them to ciphers--the only thing over which he has any control. In his confession in the courtroom scene he admits that numbers look like people and people like numbers (p. 55). The violence which ensues from his repression and his inability to make human contact, results not only in the death of his boss, but in his fantasies about killing his wife and marrying someone else--Daisy or the Boss's wife.

In The Elysian Fields during scene six, both Zero and Daisy attempt to bridge the gap of their sexual frustrations, and they do succeed for a brief minute after they kiss and dance. They are lying under a tree, Zero's head in Daisy's lap, dreaming about how nice it would be to stay where they are. Daisy asks, "Just imagine if we could stay here all the time--you an' me together--wouldn't it be

swell?" (Rice p. 110). A bit later Zero's sense of what is, and is not proper, is outraged and he storms off. His inability to let go of what he sees as propriety, his rejection of sex and love, facilitate his demise and final de-humanization.

The last scene is also driven by sex. It is the final enticement that Charles uses to get Zero to return to earth, to life, in order to begin the whole cycle over again. Zero won't go peacefully for fear of God's wrath (the thunder and lightning), but he can't be stopped from running after what appears to him as a blond bombshell. He cries, "Say, she's some Jane! Oh you baby vamp! . . .Wait for me! I'll be right with you! I'm on my way!" (Rice p. 141-142).

Sexuality is a driving force throughout *The Adding Machine*. There is no scene where sex isn't a force, either driving the characters or the play forward to its climax. We can assume that Daisy is still a virgin, because she has never even been kissed properly until she is dead. Of Zero, it can be assumed that being married, he has engaged in sex with his wife. But because of the relationship his wife establishes at the beginning of the action, we can probably assume that it has been a very long time since they have had sex together. On more than one occasion in the second scene Zero laments being married, being tied down and unable to have the freedom to pursue his fantasies, sexual and otherwise: "I was a fool to get married" (Rice p. 20). He even wishes his wife was dead: "maybe she'll die soon. I noticed she was coughin' this morning" (Rice p. 17). But Zero is wise enough to know that even if

'the wife' croaked and he got together with Daisy, or someone else, it would be the same as it is now. He sneers, "Marry you! I guess not! You'd be as bad as the one I got" (Rice p. 20).

Devaluation of Love 3: Visual Devices

In scene six, Zero and Daisy neck (a dream fantasy for them both), then they dance "with gay abandon" (Rice p. 109) and Zero ultimately removes his collar and tie. Within the context of the play's world, this scene's dream-like quality is unreal. Zero and Daisy act differently (initially) towards each other than they have in the previous scenes. They no longer deny, or repress their feelings towards each other by using incommunicative verbal combat. The action takes a bizarre turn at the end of the scene because of Zero's notion of propriety. As in a dream, one thought sets off the turn of events that eventually causes Zero to fly from the Elysian Fields when he discovers that no one cares what he does. There is no outside control in his life. The visual devices that Rice uses in this scene are cyclical. It starts with Zero entering tired, stiff and stuffy. He meets Shrdlu and unwinds a bit by taking off his shoes. Then he is reunited with Daisy, and for a few minutes while they dance and kiss, they are in heaven, which is signified by them hearing the music that only the most favored hear. The scene ends when Zero finds that he can not stay in a place like that. He tightens up again, becomes stiff and "limps off" (Rice p. 119)

Finally, Shrdlu seems to begin to understand "heaven," and when we last see him we are left with the impression that he may well stay. He is trying to understand its economy, which is not that of "earth," and may thereby break the relentless cycles of his soul's use. He may find peace and happiness. Zero, however, does not care to expand his mental boundaries sufficiently to understand. He chooses the only economy he knows, and is thereby recycled to earth. But if it is possible for one to change, then it is possible for another, and we are left sorry--because of Shrdlu, and perhaps Daisy--that Zero chooses to imprison himself further.

The devaluation of love is one of the major factors in presenting a very ugly view of the world of the play. Who would want to live in a world where nobody cares for anybody, and one's sense of worth is determined by how well one follows all the rules. This could very well have been on Rice's mind, and could have been the reason why he chose to show us what that kind of a world would be like.

Violent Parody or Morbid Comedy 1: Language

The use of violent parody/morbid comedy help to categorize the play. The comedy is not wholesome, and the violence isn't really gruesome. When one abstracts the terrible things that happen to people and presents them in an unrealistic context it draws our attention to it, but it doesn't make that the focus of the play. It

becomes sort of a symptom of any problem, and not the problem itself.

The Young Man in scene five is unable to perform a sexual act with Judy, nor can he seem to say anything but, "Nix on this place for me . . . Come out of here . . . Come out of here. I don't like this place" (Rice p. 64-67). These lines are all location specific and show that the young man is concerned that everything be as it "should" be. Being in a graveyard at midnight to have sex with a prostitute is trespassing over the limits of the young man's sense of propriety. After engaging a prostitute for her services, there are certain generally accepted rules to follow. Certainly, it is not normal to travel to a cemetery, in the middle of the night and perform the act on the grave of someone that you knew.

Shrdlu's language when placed in tension with Zero's language shows that cultivation doesn't necessitate self-actualization. Shrdlu's language is on a much higher level than Zero's. He has had a more formal, higher standard of living than Zero has had. He had more education than Zero also. But higher command of language, higher standard of living and more education did not make a difference. Both men commit murder because they are not able to tell their victims what they need to. Zero says he couldn't tell the boss to shut up (it wouldn't be acceptable) so he kills him. Shrdlu kills his mother because he was unable to tell her to let him live his own life. It would be ungrateful and disrespectful.

Violent Parody or Morbid Comedy 2: Narrative

Zero kills his boss because he won't shut up, and Shrdlu kills his mother because she won't let up. They both expect to be punished for their actions, but they're not. They are allowed to stay in a pleasant place if they choose to. This reversal of their expectations isn't funny but at the same time it certainly can't be viewed as serious, or tragic. Daisy wants to die for lack of Zero's love in scene two, and does in fact follow him to the after-life. When she still doesn't get his love, she wants to "die to life" by going back, saying "I might as well be alive" (Rice p. 119)

Violent Parody or Morbid Comedy 3: Visual Devices

The last of the living characters have exited by line 46 of scene five and at that point , "Zero's grave opens suddenly and his head appears." (Rice 5.47) Other stage directions include , "He rises out of the ground, very rigidly . . . [Zero is] walking woodenly" (Rice p. 67). Twenty lines later Zero is still a "walking stiff" (both literally and figuratively) when he tries to follow Shrdlu's example by sitting down: "He [Shrdlu] seats himself easily on a grave. Zero tries to follow his example but he is stiff in every joint and groans with pain"(Rice p. 69). This action is certainly out of the ordinary, and becomes bizarre because of the time and location. The same directions, "walking stiff" "woodenly" or "rising rigidly" would be

completely normal and not bizarre or grotesque in the least, if the action took place in a locker room after a hotly contested football game. But because of the location and to some extent the time, Zero's actions, as well as the scene itself can be seen as not only comic, but morbid.

Scene seven also can be viewed as a scene of morbid comic spectacle, especially as it relates to stage setting. The description of the adding machine tape that fills the room alienates the setting from its norm by making sure that the tape, "*flows steadily from the machine [and] . . . The room is filled with this tape--streamers, festoons, billows of it everywhere. It covers the floor and the furniture, it climbs the walls and chokes the doorways*" (Rice 7.0). The stage directions describing Lieutenant Charles portray a man that is "*middle aged and inclined to corpulence . . . He is bare-footed, wears a panama hat, and is dressed in bright red tights which are a very bad fit--too tight in some places, badly wrinkled in others*" (Rice p. 123). It is almost as if Rice is describing a clown's costume. The incongruity of the setting and the characters that dwell there help to make this scene a little silly.

Rice's use of violent parody and morbid comedy help to maintain the play's de-humanizing effect. The fact that a mosquito can bother a dead man and he has to smoke a cigarette to defend himself against them alienates us from the reality of the fact that he was put to death for a murder. These comic situations reduce,

trivialize and de-humanize the tragic and ugly things humans sometimes do to others.

The Adding Machine: Conclusion

To summarize, most of the critical analysis of *The Adding Machine* paints a pretty grim picture for Zero. He has allowed himself to become de-humanized by his view of society and is afraid to take a chance with anything out of the ordinary. "It's a black comedy, dissecting the soul of machine conditioned man and finding nothing there."⁴¹ "Materialistic America distorts and destroys the individual's spirit."⁴² "Man should be the master [of machines], not the slave."⁴³ Zero wants to belong as part of the crowd. He doesn't want to be different from the rest of society. His sense of belonging is social. If that means that he is less of a total human, that is a willing price he will pay. He is uncomfortable with the exotic and unfamiliar. Rice shows us a world where no one really cares enough for anybody but themselves. He shows us a world where love, when it is finally uncovered, has no salvational powers. He shows us a world where no one in their right mind would want to live.

⁴¹ Hogan, 31.

⁴² Bogard, 249.

⁴³ Durham, 51.

Chapter III

The Hairy Ape

This chapter will explore Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* by employing the same methods of investigation used to facilitate the above discussion of *The Adding Machine*.

Performance of *The Hairy Ape*, was to be, in O'Neill's own words, "by no means naturalistic."⁴⁴ *The Hairy Ape* is a play about Yank, a man who has found his place in the world, is happy, contented and has found, "not nobility [but] a life of purpose."⁴⁵ *The Hairy Ape* is comprised of eight scenes, and from the end of scene three the remaining scenes are devoted to Yank's quest to redefine his place or purpose in the world. Yank experiences what J. M. Ritchie calls *Entscheidungsdramen*, "a crucial decision for the course of a whole life is made."⁴⁶

Synopsis of *The Hairy Ape*:

The first scene finds Yank and the rest of the stokers in the forecabin of an ocean liner discussing life in general. Paddy asserts that life was much better in the old sailing days when, "a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together, and made it all one."⁴⁷ Yank tells him that that

⁴⁴ O'Neill, 39-88.

⁴⁵ Ben-Zvi, 17.

⁴⁶ J. M. Ritchie, *German Expressionist Drama*. (Boston: Twayne, 1976), 21.

⁴⁷ Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*. *Nine Plays*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1941), 46.

kind of thinking is all dead. It is a new world, a world of machines, progress, and strength. Long, another stoker, tries to insert a Marxist view of their situation, to which Yank replies that he better stop laying on that, "Salvation Army-Socialist bull."⁴⁸

The second scene is a contrast to the first on a couple of levels: 1) it takes place in the open air, outside where it is clean and bright; 2) the characters, Mildred and her aunt, appear to be used up, dried out and display only facades of real people. Mildred says of herself, "I am a waste product in the Bessemer process--like the millions. Or rather, I inherit the acquired trait of the by-product, wealth, but none of the energy, none of the strength of the steel that made it" (O'Neill p. 52). To satisfy her urge to explore how the underprivileged live, she makes arrangements to visit the stokehole. In scene three Mildred appears just in time to witness Yank in a fury waving his shovel at the overhead with one hand while pounding his chest with the other and daring the engineer to come down where real men are so he can, "knock yer brains out" (O'Neill p. 58). Mildred's reaction to Yank is that she faints dead away, after calling him "a filthy beast" (O'Neill p. 58). After Yank's brief meeting with Mildred, he finds himself more and more isolated from his core, his values and the self-assured world where he belongs and which he controls. And he searches in vain to join that "ting" that is under or before him. Scene four finds Yank back in the fore-castle attempting to understand the insult. By the end of the scene, Yank has come to

⁴⁸ O'Neill, 44.

the understanding that his center, his home, his ideals have been destroyed. The remaining scenes find Yank moving from one station of development to the next in his quest for revenge and to secure another kind of "fixity."

From scene four onwards, Yank's motivation is twofold: first is to avenge himself because, "she done me doit!" (O'Neill p. 65); second, to re-center himself. He acts in the belief that if he can take revenge on her, or someone of her class, or the entire class, his self-esteem will return and his world will have order once again. In scene five, he tries to battle Mildred's class with the only weapons he has--his fists--and is defeated by their total indifference to his existence. The only time they even acknowledge his presence is when he causes one of the "nobs"⁴⁹ to miss his bus. The nob calls out for the police to help, who then arrive in multitudes and proceed to beat Yank to the ground and haul him off to jail. As soon as the nob cries for the police and they enter, Yank ceases once more to exist in their eyes. "The crowd at the window have not moved or noticed this disturbance" (O'Neill p. 72).

Scene six is located in a jail cell. Yank is taunted by the other prisoners when he tries to "tink" about a way to get even. Someone hands him a newspaper with an article in it where a senator rails against a particular union as being a terrorist gang. Yank decides that if they want to blow up the steel mills, that's where he can belong. Scene seven finds Yank in the union hall, completely

⁴⁹ I use the word "nob" to describe those persons of wealth and social standing.

misunderstanding their purpose. After he tells them that he wants to blow things up for them, they toss him out into the street.

The last scene finds Yank at the zoo, talking to an ape. Through his monologue, Yank realizes that what Paddy told him in the first scene was right: "I seen de sun come up. Dat was pretty, too- . . . I got it aw right-what Paddy said about dat bein' de right dope-on'y I couldn't get *in* it , see?" (O'Neill p. 85). He also understands that he can't be a part of the "new" world he sees because of his limitations, and he cannot be part of the ape's world because of his advancements. "I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em" (O'Neill p. 86). This is an understanding of his true situation, and from here he has some choices. The first is to return to the stokehole and pretend that he is still the same man. Another choice open to him is to continue to learn, to continue to grow and to think more deeply. The other option, the one he takes, is to chuck it all and toss in the towel. This solution presents Yank with another set of problems, beginning with how to "go out."

Few people can choose the time, place and method of their death, but in a final attempt to gain control, Yank does so. Because Yank has more of an affinity with the ape than he does with his fellow man, he chooses him as a companion with whom to go out fighting. "Pardon from de governor! Step out and shake hands. I'll take yuh for a walk down Fif' Avenoo. We'll knock 'em offen de oith and croak wit de band playin'" (O'Neill p. 87). Yank opens the cage to

free the ape, who accepts the offered freedom, and then crushes Yank and tosses him into the cage. Whether Yank intended it or not, he gives the ape final control over his life.

Abstraction

Types 1: Language

O'Neill utilizes language to isolate the three classes of humans in the play. The first class is the stoker class, which includes Yank, Paddy, Long and the rest of the firemen aboard the liner. The second class includes Mildred, her aunt and all of the high class snobs in scene five. The third class that is isolated in the play is the middle-class, worker and professional. These are exemplified by the Second Officer on the liner in scene two, and the Secretary of the I.W.W. in scene seven. Each of these classes of people has a distinct type of speech that isolates them within that class.

Yank can be used as an example of the first isolating type of speech that O'Neill uses. Yank is the king of the stokehole. He has that position because he is the most primitive of the stokers. He is the strongest, and he has the least amount of social graces of any of the stokers. He is the farthest from the upper class. Yank can be identified as a uneducated laborer from his physical presence, but even more so each time he opens his mouth to speak. He uses common contemporary slang of the day: "pipe de heine on dat one" (O'Neill p. 70), mixed with street vernacular: "me for somepin' wit a

kick to it! Gimme a drink one of youse guys" (O'Neill p. 41). Long and Paddy both speak in a dialect peppered with street slang.

When Long asks the crew who is responsible for their plight, he shows us he is more intellectually aware of the class differences than Yank. "And who's ter blame, I arks yer? We ain't. We wasn't born this rotten way. All men is born free and ekal. Thats in the bleedin' bible, maties" (O'Neill p. 43 - 44). Unfortunately for Long, he is hampered by his lack of an articulated, clearly enunciated form of language. O'Neill places Paddy in the same class with Yank and Long. But where O'Neill makes Yank barely articulate, and Long only somewhat more so, he gives Paddy the ability to clearly articulate some rather complex philosophies of life.

Yerra, whats the use of talking? 'Tis a dead man's whisper. 'Twas them days men belonged to the 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. (O'Neill p. 46)

Where Yank and Long use abbreviated words and slang, Paddy uses complete words with completely articulated endings, though he, too, has an accent. The accents of the stokemen identify them as being socio-economically marginal either because they are underprivileged natives, like Yank, or because they are foreigners who have been excluded from socio-economic opportunities because of the prejudices of the "ruling" class.

The second strata of society that O'Neill isolates through the use of language is the upper class world of Mildred and the Aunt.

The Aunt signifies the upper crust of a pretentious society that is not connected, emotionally, spiritually or sympathetically with anyone beneath her economic and social status. She never utters a word that contradicts her station in life. She is unable to relate to anything that is not of her position in life. At one point, Mildred accuses her aunt of being naive, and insinuates that she isn't in touch with the reality of getting along in the world:

Mildred: . . . So I had to tell them that my father, the president of Nazareth Steel, chairman of the board of directors of this line had told me it would be all right.

Aunt: He didn't.

Mildred: How naive age makes one! But I said he did, Aunt. I even said he had given me a letter to them . . . (O'Neill p. 52)

Mildred also demonstrates her position when she tells her Aunt: "Please do not mock at my attempt to discover how the other half live" (O'Neill p. 51). In both of those exchanges there is only one contraction, and no slang at all. The language is all very proper, precise and at the same time somewhat lifeless and stiff. In this play, the upper class almost always speak in an artificial and affected manner. Mildred's first line, "How the black smoke swirls back against the sky! Is it not beautiful?" (O'Neill p. 50), is mock poetic. She is making fun (in a gloomy way) of one the ugly "by-products" of her father's business. The comment does show she is familiar with the romantic poets, and intimates that if the world were right, it would be more like that of Paddy and the romantic poets, a world of beautiful, unmarred nature. In scene five the

"Gaudy Marionettes" also speak in a stiff and formalized way. "Dear Doctor Caiaphas! He is so sincere . . . We must organize a hundred percent American bazaar . . . the proceeds to rehabilitating the Veil of the Temple" (O'Neill p. 69).

O'Neill places Yank in direct tension with this upper class, and in their world, where one destroys one's enemies with words more often than with fists, Yank is completely at their mercy. Yank is battling a much larger and more unyielding windmill than Don Quixote ever thought of tackling. Quixote battled evil and ignorance, but Yank is battling indifference.

Look at me, why don't youse dare? I belong, dats me! . . . See de steel work? Steel, dat's me. Youse guys live on it and tink yuh're somep'n. But I'm in it, see! . . . de inside and bottom of it! Sure! I'm steel and steam and smoke and de rest of it! It moves-speed-twenty-five stories up- and me at de top and bottom-movin'! Youse simps don't move. Yuh're on'y dolls I winds up to see 'm spin. Yuh're de garbage, get me-de leavins-de ashes we dump over de side! Now what 'a' yuh gotta say? (. . . *they seem to neither see nor hear him . . . He turns in a rage on the men, bumping viciously into them but not jaring them in the least bit. Rather it is he who recoils after each collision . . . [after a few more snarling remarks from Yank] . . . without seeming to see him, they all answer with mechanical affected politeness*): I beg your pardon." (O'Neill p. 71)

The third class that can be identified by their use of language is the middle class clerk or professional. They use no nonsense, practical language that is mostly free of literary hyperbole and slang. They use language to conduct business, and have trouble when they have to use it for passing the time of day. The Second Engineer

in the second scene is an example of this class of human. He does fine while he is performing his duties, but stumbles along when he has to make small talk. "A fine day we're having . . . a nice warm breeze . . ." (O'Neill p. 53). When he is performing his duties, he has no trouble expressing himself.

Excuse me, mam, but are you intending to wear that dress? . . . You'll likely rub against oil and dirt . . . I have an old coat you might throw over [she insists that she will wear the dress she is wearing]. . . No offence meant. It's none of my business. I was only trying to warn you. (O'Neill p. 54)

A final example of this middle class use of language can be found in the secretary of scene seven. Like the Second Engineer in scene two, he uses language to do business, so his control is functional, not artificial (affected) like Mildred's, or guttural (inarticulate) like Yank's. "There's literature on the table. Take some of those pamphlets with you to distribute aboard ship. They might bring results" (O'Neill p. 80).

Types 2: Narrative

O'Neill uses types in the play which are not the standard "type" of character. They embody some characteristic that O'Neill is interested in pursuing, such as Long being a Marxist and seeing everything as a class struggle, and interpreting everything in life as such. Because of the brevity of the individual scenes, there is no real time to develop the minor characters, and he doesn't seem to be interested in doing so. O'Neill distills easily recognizable aspects of a particular type of character. They are immediately established and, with the exception of Yank, they don't deviate from their "norms" of established behavior, dialogue or emotional make-up for their particular caste.

O'Neill makes Long a symbol of the unrest in society. Where Yank is completely at home in the stokehole, content with making things move, regardless of the rest of the world, Long wants something better. The only problem with Long's philosophy is that he is unable to stand up for his convictions. Yank at least will take action, ineffectual though it might be. But not Long. For example, in scene five, his only counsel to Yank is: "treat 'em wiv the proper contempt. Observe the bleedin' parasites but hold yer 'orses " (O'Neill p. 69). Long exits, one might even say "slinks away," almost as soon as the nobs enter, leaving Yank alone with them.

Paddy, too, is a character type. He is the typical, "old, wizened Irishman who is drunk . . . his face is extremely monkey-like" (O'Neill p. 42). In addition to the stereotypical parts of Paddy the Irishman, there is Paddy the philosopher, Paddy the dreamer, the teacher, Paddy the realist, Paddy the unafraid and Paddy the ape. He is the philosopher and teacher in his speech in scene one. When he remembers the way things were in the not so distant past, he is attempting to show that all "progress" isn't for the best, and machines don't necessarily make for a better world. He philosophizes about the beauty and truth in the sailing days gone by. For Paddy, the truth or meaning of life was the sun, the sea, a ship and a man all becoming one together. He is realistic enough to know that his world is gone and he can not resurrect it, although he can re-live it and attempt to share the beauty of that lost way of life with those too young to know. Finally, because his world is gone and he fears the future, he is unafraid to challenge Yank's strength and philosophy. So, Paddy acts as a character type (drunken Irish sailor who sings the old songs of the sea), but he also functions as a three dimensional character. He has a past. He has emotions. He is not inserted in the play to perform a function (the worker) or act as a symbol of greed (as the Aunt could arguably be seen), or hate, or the follies of drink, etc., but emerges as a fully developed character that at the same time has some of the characteristics (mentioned above) of a character type. Finally, his "monkey face" connects him with

whatever reality Yank finally embraces in the features of the gorilla.

The most successful character types in *The Hairy Ape* are the Upper-class "nobs" from Fifth Avenue in scene five. They signify the exploiter class that Long hates, those he sees as traveling first class at the expense of the working class. It is O'Neill's use of Yank in ineffectual tension with these types that drive him further down his self-destructive path.

Types 3: Visual devices

Each class of character is as distinct in appearance as they are in speech. O'Neill describes the stokers as "neanderthal" in appearance and "hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small resentful eyes" (O'Neill p. 39). Mildred's aunt, as an example of the upper class, is described as "a pompous and proud--and fat--old lady. She is a type even to the point of a double chin and lorgnettes. She is dressed pretentiously, as if afraid her face alone would never indicate her position in life" (O'Neill p. 50). The stage directions for the Second Engineer in scene two, as well as the description of the Secretary for scene seven are almost nonexistent. They are average, everyday middle-class people: the Second Officer is described as "a husky, fine-looking man of thirty-five or so" (O'Neill p. 53). The secretary is not described at all, except to mention that an "eye shade casts his face in shadows."

O'Neill's employment of types contributes to abstraction because he is able to isolate and utilize only specific qualities that he wants to explore in the characters. This abstraction dehumanizes because it only takes into account a part of the whole being.

Geometrization 1: Language

O'Neill uses dialogue to separate and compartmentalize the classes. For example, when Yank confronts the nobs in scene five, the only response he gets is a cold, "I beg your pardon" (O'Neill p. 70), which he gets from two completely different, but identical men. Yank's second monologue in scene five consists of two parts that both have the same goal. On the surface Yank is looking for trouble, but an underlying tension in him is the need for confirmation of his worth from the nobs. His language separates, and isolates him from the rest of the humanity present in this scene. Yank's use of language separates him from his fellow workers in the stokehole. Long's use of language is more detailed and advanced than Yank's, while Paddy's use of language is even more advanced and articulate than Long's. Each of these character's command and use of language places him in a category unto himself within the world of the stokers.

Geometrization 2: Narrative

Yank is acknowledged king of the stokehole by those who are of his world, but Mildred's appearance, and her reaction to him puts a crack in his perception of himself as such, and makes him aware

that his world isn't impenetrable. Yank's reason for being becomes to repair that crack before it becomes a gaping hole. To bridge the separation between worlds, for which Mildred becomes emblematic, Yank must have satisfaction by fighting them, having them fear his strength and ultimately even acknowledge that he exists. Only then can he, in his own estimation, return to his world in peace, with his ego repaired and strengthened to continue his "ploughin' trou" with the march of progress.

Both Mildred and Yank see each other as symbols of "the other world". They see these worlds as alien worlds. When Mildred sees Yank's world, she sees the beast un-caged and is shocked, swoons and is carried out. When Yank sees Mildred, his contented and solid world is shattered. Mildred signifies an ending for Yank. His centered life is ended. His sense of belonging is ended, and his pride in his performance is gone. O'Neill shows us both lifestyles, and his picture isn't flattering to either one. Mildred's world is a sterile, shallow and bloodless world. Yank's world is a world of hot, dirty hard labor where there is little sympathy for tender feelings.

Geometrization 3: Visual Devices

O'Neill uses some blatant as well as subtle visual devices to geometrize *The Hairy Ape*. He employs the image of the cage in every scene but one. It is either described, or it is implied by the action or dialogue. In scene one, the stage directions state: "*The*

lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage." In scene two, Mildred tells us that she has been placed inside a cage by her environment: "I would like to be of some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? I would like to be sincere . . . but I have neither the vitality, nor the integrity" (O'Neill p. 51). Scene three has no implied or stated images of a cage in it. Scene four is the same as scene one. Scene five finds Yank being surrounded by the nobs of Fifth Avenue, and then he is surrounded and caged by policemen at the end of the scene. Scene six is described as: "*a row of cells in the prison of Blackwell Island.*" Scene seven is described as, "*some dingy settlement boys' club.*" Yank is caged in by humans in this scene too: "*he makes a sign to the men, who get up cautiously one by one and group behind Yank.*" The final scene takes place at the monkey house at the zoo where: "light falls on the front of one cage so that the interior can be seen" (O'Neill p. 84).

All these different forms and expressions of cages serve to separate people from one another and abstract or stratify them into identifiable categories, none of which could be called "human being." Not only do the cages separate humans from any unified human community, but the very bars dismember and fragment the individual behind them. The geometrization produced by the image of the cage is very much of parts and very little of whole.

Repetition/Redundancies 1: Language

The word "steel" is found twenty three times on eleven pages. That's one fourth of the total pages, or just over two lines per page. "Steel" and "belong" appear as a direct complement to each other on the same page, if not the same speech, four times out of the eleven, and they appear within a page of each other twice. Yank identifies his sense of humanity with "steel." It goes through the same growth, (or de-humanization, depending on one's view) that "belong" does. When Yank is on top of the world and sure of his place in the scheme of things, "steel" and "belonging" buttress each other, and him. "I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel-steel . . . All de rich guys dat tink dey somep'n, dey ain't nothin'! They don't belong" (O'Neill p. 48). When Yank is searching for the answers, because he has lost his center (steel, belonging, strength of convictions, etc.) the lack causes him to lose his anchor completely. "So dem boids don't tink I belong, neider . . . Aw, to hell wit em! . . . Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now, I ain't steel, and de woild owns me . . . Man in de Moon, yuh look so wise, gimme de answer, huh?" (O'Neill p. 83). As a final defiant gesture Yank uses the two again to regain his center: "A little action, dats our meat! Dat belongs! Knock 'em down and keep bustin' 'em till dey croaks yuh wit a gat-wit steel! Sure! Are yuh game? "

(O'Neill p. 86). *Move, run and speed* are found eighteen times in *The Hairy Ape*. They are connected to Yank's sense of belonging in relation to the technological world he has embraced in the beginning of the play.

O'Neill's use of repetitive language illustrates Yank's inability to adapt to a new world. He keeps returning to the same concepts, the same base that he found not to be solid at all.

Repetition/Redundancies 2: Narrative

A recurring visual device that O'Neill uses is the manner that Yank approaches any problem. If it's women, "treat 'em rough [foes]. . . . knock 'em off de face of de oith." (O'Neill p. 43) Yank repeatedly moves with the force of a juggernaut, an uncontrolled and unfocused juggernaut. This is Yank's strength as well as his weakness. He is strong enough to deal with the others in the stokehole in the manner that they respect, brute strength. In this respect, Yank is the acknowledged king of the stokehole. However, this strength, when outside of the stokehole, becomes a liability. He finds that he can not fight the nobs on Fifth Avenue with fists. They simply do not respond, and when he inconveniences one of them, they call in the police to do their physical fighting for them. Yank keeps trying to figure it all out and can't, no matter what he tries (listening, thinking, acting, reading, fighting, joining a group). He constantly misunderstands, miscommunicates and is misunderstood. The effect

of all this repetition of trying different tacks to belong, is for Yank, fatal.

Repetition/Redundancies 3: Visual Devices

Besides the repetitive use of cages described above, visual devices O'Neill repeatedly uses are: Yank standing alone against the rest of the world, and Yank being different from the rest of the world. Yank stands alone in each scene that he is in. In the first scene he somewhat lightly challenges any and all comers to fight him. In the third scene he alone challenges the engineer at the whistle. He won't follow some other person's time-table, but goes at his one speed. In the fourth scene he again challenges the rest of the stokers, but this time he is not issuing the challenge in fun. In the fifth scene he tries to fight the entire city of nobs. In the sixth scene he challenges the world in general, the other prisoners and guards in particular. The seventh scene finds him alone against the union and in the final scene he is alone against the forces of death.

Anti-Romanticism

Machine Imagery 1: Language

Paddy's monologues are constant throughout. He doesn't change. His thoughts are of a pleasant, slower paced past where men were "better" than now, and of the horror of the machine and the machine mentality of the present which he fears will ruin the

future. As he is relating the glories of the past, we are confronted with the world of the present. He says,

We make the ship to go, you're saying? Yerra then, that Almighty god have pity on us . . . Oh, to be back in the fine days of my youth . . . there was fine beautiful ships them days . . . brave men they was, and bold men surely . . . whats the use of talking? 'Tis a dead man's whisper. . . '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. Is it one wid this you'd be Yank-- . . . the bloody engines pounding and throbbing and shaking-wid divil a sight of sun or a breath of clean air . . . chokin our lungs wid coal dust . . . caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the zoo. (O'Neill p. 45 - 46)

Yank's first monologue is a response to Paddy's dirge about the state of the world, to which Yank responds with his view of the world and how it really is. This world is a world of machines, a world that moves, and he is controlling the machine (progress).

All dat tripe yuh been pullin'-Aw, dat's all right. On'y it's dead, get me? Yuh don't belong no more, see . . . I belong and he don't . . . I'm part of de engines. . . Dey move, don't dey? Dey're speed, ain't dey? Dey smash trou, don't dey? . . . Dat's new stuff. Dat belongs . . . He's old and don't belong no more. . . I'm young! I'm in de pink! I move wid it! It, get me! I mean de ting dat's de guts of all dis. De engines and de coal and de smoke and all de rest of it! He can't breathe and swallow coal dust, but I can, see? Dat's fresh air . . . Dat's food for me! I'm new get me? Everyting else dat makes de woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move witout somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! . . . I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron into steel!

Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel-steel-steel!
I'm de muscle in steel, de punch behind it. (O'Neill p. 47 - 48)

O'Neill gives Yank a view of life that when one stops performing, one stops existing: "I belong and he don't. He's dead but I'm livin'. Listen to me! Sure, I'm part of de engines! . . . Dats new stuff, dat belongs! But him, he's too old" (O'Neill p. 44).

"Plough trou", "drive trou" and "push trou" are all phrases that are tied together to the concept of progress and moving, which in turn, is connected with the concept of steel, which is connected with the concept of belonging. Each of these interconnected images are symbols of progress as Yank perceives it. And that progress is progress of a mechanical nature. He doesn't think much of the past slow way of doing, or moving. He states on more than one occasion that she (the ocean liner) will do, "twenty-five knots an hour! Dats movin' some!" (O'Neill p. 47). In Yank's view of the world, the absence of movement and the lack of brute strength is the cause of evolutionary atrophy. Yank has hitched himself to the star of mechanical progress. He perceives that this particular kind of progress will have all the answers, will solve the problems of the world. He says,

Dey move, don't dey? Dey're speed, ain't dey? Dey smash trou, don't dey . . . Dats goin' some! Dats new stuff! Dat belongs! But him? [Paddy] Hittin' de pipe of de past, dat's what he's doin'. He's old and don't belong no more. But me, I'm young! I'm in de pink! I move wid it. It, get me! I mean de ting dats de guts of all dis. It ploughs trou all de tripe he's been sayin'. (O'Neill p. 47)

The auditory effect of much of the language used in these scenes contribute to a comparison of mechanical noises versus the more natural sounds of language. In scenes one and three, Yank, Paddy or Long make comments which include a word like *tink*, *love* or *law* in it. The response that their shipmates make to that particular word is a very mechanical sound through the use of a specific stage direction that identifies, and attempts to emulate the machine.

Yank: . . . Can't youse see I'm tryin' to tink?

All: (*repeating the word after him as one with cynical mockery*) Think! (*The word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns.*) (O'Neill p. 42)

This stage direction is used five times. Once in scene one and the rest in scene three. Just as Stromboli turned the bad little boys into donkeys, O'Neill de-humanizes men in the stokehole into machines.

O'Neill uses a few specific words that act as a mechanical metaphors for human emotions. They are, "Choke off dat noise!, I'll be square wit her, I'll get square wit her!, [and] De punch, dats me every time, see! I'll drive yer teet' down yer troat"(O'Neill p. 41, 58, 63, 65, 69). The mechanical symbols in the above phrases are: *choke*, *square*, *punch* and *drive*. A choke is used to throttle a gasoline engine. A square is used to get true angles and levels. A punch is used to mark a spot in a fabric, or a piece of metal to act as a jig to facilitate the drilling of holes.

In scene eight Yank examines life from the perspective of the confused and bitter. He ends his speech with a Quixotic gesture of futility. Because he doesn't belong to the society of humans, he attempts to revert to the primates. Yank is obsessed with the notion of "belonging." Up until now Yank had always believed that he belonged, that he was an important, pivotal part of society. His last monologue is a futile attempt to understand what went wrong with his world, and it ends with a desperate act. Unfortunately for Yank, he aligned himself with "speed," with "steel," and with "ploughin' throu." By the time he discovers that to really belong, one has to occasionally be sensitive to beauty, to care for something other than "progress," and to accept the fact that one is only a part of nature and not its dominator, he gives up trying.

[to gorilla] . . . So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white faced tart! . . . I was you . . . On'y outa de cage. . . She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too-worser'n yours-sure-a damn sight-'cause was pretty . . . all red and pink and green . . . De sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was a breeze blowin'. Sure it was great stuff. I got it all right-what Paddy said about dat being de right dope-on'y I couldn't get in it, see? . . . Yuh can't tink, can yuh? Yuh can't tink neider. But I can make a bluff of talkin' and tinkin'-a'most get away wit it-a'most-and dats where de joker comes in. I ain't on oith and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in di middle tryin' to separate 'em, and takin' all de woist punches from bot of 'em. . . . T' hell wit it! A little action, . . . dats our meat! Dat belongs! . . . Are yuh game? Dey've looked at youse, ain't dey-in a cage? Wanter git even? Wanter wind up like a sport 'stead of croakin' slow in dere? . . . (Yank takes a jimmy from . . . under his coat and forces the the lock on the cage door) Pardon from . . . de governor! Step out and shake hands. I'll take yuh for a

walk down Fif Avenue. We'll knock 'em offen de oith and croak wit de band playin' . . . Shake . . . *with a spring he [the gorilla] wraps his huge arms around Yank in a murderous hug. There is a cracking snap of cracking ribs . . . The gorilla lets the crushed body slip to the floor; stands over it uncertainly, considering; then picks it up, throws it in the cage, shuts the door, and shuffles off . . .* Even him didn't tink I belonged. Christ where do I get off at? Where do I fit in? . . . Aw, what de hell! Croak wit your boots on! . . . (O'Neill p. 85 - 87)

This speech by Yank can be analyzed not only as an example of anti-romanticism, but also serves as an example of abstraction as well as morbid comedy. His use of slang, "stead of croakin" and inarticulation of some words, "On'y outa de cage . . ." places him within a specific type of class, the lower working class. This passage also has elements of geometrization within the language. Yank makes a statement, then asks a question, then makes an emphatic statement followed by another question. These shifts separate, and isolate Yank's thinking. He also states that he is physically, as well as mentally not in the ape's world, or the world of humans. His line "I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em and takin' all de woist punches from bot of 'em . . ." is an example of morbid comedy. The image of Yank being tossed about by both worlds is tragic, but also has an element of a crude comic violence about it.

In scene two Mildred complains that she is in a cage imposed by her position in society. She complains that she doesn't have the ability to, "be sincere, to touch life somewhere" (O'Neill p. 57), because all the energy has been sapped from her clan long before she was born. She, too, valorizes steel and only listlessly,

apathetically, acknowledges that it is the source of her anemia. Steel drains and weakens her as it fills and strengthens Yank, before their encounter. Their language about steel intimates that it comes between them and others. Not only does it function in a number of ways as cages, but it supplants their familial relationships. Steel is Mildred's legacy from her father. The stokehole, existing because of that steel, is Yank's surrogate mother and wife. Yank refers to it in an almost tender way "feel her move! Watch her smoke! Speed, dat's her middle name! . . . Give her coal . . . Drink it up baby! Lets see yuh sprint" (O'Neill p. 56).

Machine Imagery 2: Narrative

The use of "belong" is meaningful because the play questions what does one has to do, or be, to belong. Yank is the character that uses the word most of the time. It is interesting that O'Neill uses "steel" and "belong" to signify the same thing for Yank, whether it is in his cocky attitude of the first three scenes, his searching and questioning of the middle four scenes, or his disillusionment and death in the final scene. "Steel" and "belong" are his alpha and omega of "progress." They work for Yank, or against him, depending on his stage of development.

O'Neill uses stage directions as well as words to symbolize work, or the result of work, which is the product. O'Neill gives the stokers and the nobs a machine quality when he describes the stokers working with, "a mechanical regulated recurrence, All the men jump up mechanically, [and the nobs are described as] A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet something of the relentless horror of Frankensteins in their detached, mechanical unawareness" (O'Neill p. 49, 69).

O'Neill also utilizes stage directions to isolate and define a machine dominated world. Machine sounds can be found in the stage directions for the ship's bells vibrating in scene one, the whistles blowing, the stokers shoveling rhythmically and the brazen clang of

the doors in scene three. Except for scene two, each scene shows Yank's devolution (de-humanization) in stages from the self-assured, centered and contented "king" of the stokehole, to the confused and desperate wanderer.

The play's structure allowed O'Neill to keep one central image before the audience at all times. In five of the eight scenes the image of a cage is explicitly represented on the stage by the stage directions. In the other three scenes the image of a cage is implied by language or action.

Because of their position in society, the Aunt views Mildred as a traitor to their class. The Aunt sees her actions arriving, not out of a sincere desire to help the less-privileged, but as a form of entertainment for a bored over-indulged, spoiled young woman. She is not sincere in actions, words or thoughts and therefore she is a "poser" in relation to being a true member of the American aristocracy. Everything the aunt says about Mildred is true. Mildred symbolizes that class of people who "must organize a hundred per cent American Bazaar" (O'Neill p. 69). She is, as she admits, a "by-product" of the steel industry.

Machine Imagery 3: Visual Devices

O'Neill uses many visual devices to illustrate the world of the machine. The third scene takes place in the boiler room of an ocean-liner. In this scene the men of the stokehold are seen as automatons.

They work mechanically, like a machine, feeding the larger machine.

They are described as:

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 of terrific light and heat pours full upon the men who are outlined in silhouette in the crouching attitudes of chained gorillas. (O'Neill p. 55)

Another example of machine images is illustrated in scene five, when the upper-class nobs are described as being "*Frankensteins in their detached mechanical unawareness.*" (O'Neill p. 69)

These images of people becoming machine-like help to establish and re-enforce the ugly de-humanizing view of the world. People walking like stiff Frankensteins, or shoveling coal into a furnace four hours at a stretch is not a very inviting world.

Devaluation of Love 1: Language

In the first scene Yank becomes nearly violent when one of the other stokers starts to sing a song about the girl he left behind. Yank tells him that women will double-cross him and any man the minute that the man is gone. The best way to have a relationship with a woman, according to Yank, is to "treat 'em rough" (O'Neill p. 43). In scene four Paddy accuses Yank of being in love with Mildred. To which Yank replies: "Love, hell! Hate, dat's what. I've fallen in hate, get me?" (O'Neill p. 60). Yank has as strong an emotion as love driving him, but it's hate, not love.

Mildred does not have a love life. It is not that she doesn't want to have one. It just seems that she doesn't have the energy for one. She is a tired, empty shell of a person who has not really experienced life. She would like to experience an intimacy with someone, but feels that her millions are a barrier. "But would that my millions were not so anemically chaste" (O'Neill p. 54). Her aunt accuses her of being able to "drag the name of Douglas in the mud" (O'Neill p. 54) for nothing more than a lark. Love for the Douglas family seems to be limited to social status and money, and not much more.

Devaluation of Love 2: Narrative

Mildred's swoon on seeing Yank at the end of scene three is not from love, or even a pleasant emotion, but rather from horror. The would-be standard romantic moment when the two "lovers" meet to embrace and connect with each other, giving their strength to each other, becomes a moment of fragmentation and fear (for both) rather than a moment of cathexis and delight.

Another example of the de-valuation of love can be evidenced in the play's final embrace. It is not a soft, warm, caring, beautiful, loving woman that Yank embraces, but a large, strong and wild gorilla.

Yank's death at the hands, and arms of the gorilla is not for love--requited or not--but for a lack of human community that Yank

was never able to connect with in his entire life, from the time he was a little boy, being beaten by his parents, to living in the bowels of ships, where the only measurement of worth is brute strength. At some point in Yank's life, he gave up on humans, and transferred his allegiance to machines and the technological world.

Devaluation of Love 3: Visual devices

O'Neill makes Mildred, the would-be romantic heroine, a bloodless leach who sucks the contentment out of Yank with her eyes--instead of the colorful (if fair) lover--she is, for Yank, the color of death.

Yank is seen in scene three stoking a hole in a ship's boiler and enjoying it, instead of feeding a baby or making love to a woman. O'Neill takes sex and family and alienates, if not devalues, it entirely.

O'Neill has taken the concept of human caring (love) and de-humanized and brutalized it. He de-humanizes it through Yank's affection for the ship's technology in the shape of the boilers. He brutalizes it on a couple of levels. First, there is Mildred's reaction to him and his to hers. He never gives up on his desire for a chance to "bust de face offen her." (O'Neill p. 64) The second level of brutalization of love occurs in Yank's advice on how to go about having a relationship. "Treat 'em rough, . . . to hell wit 'em" (O'Neill p. 43).

Violent Parody/Morbid Comedy 1: Language

O'Neill provides an sample of morbid comedy in scene two, when Mildred says "I would like to be of some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? . . . When a leopard complains of its spots, it must sound rather grotesque . . . In a cage, they make you conspicuous" (O'Neill p. 52). Mildred is trying to make her sheltered, sterile life seem a little harder than in fact it is. She wants her aunt (and us) to feel sorry for her, the poor-little-rich-girl.

The first part of Yank's monologue in scene five is a series of sophomoric attempts to provoke a fight: "Holy smokes, what a mug! [and] Gee, pipe de heine on dat one!" (O'Neill p. 70) These are examples of Yank's not so subtle tact when confronting, or attempting to confront the "baggage" as he calls them. The fact that he is unable to reach any of these nobs with his crude stratagems appears to be comic. But that's only on the surface. To see a strong man repeatedly bump into, shout at and try to connect with someone, anyone, might look silly in a slapstick sort of way, but it is a sad state for Yank to be in.

The word *ape* almost always appears in reference to Yank's perception of how he thinks people see him:

Yank: "Say, is dat what she called me-a hairy ape?"

Paddy: She looked it at you if she didn't say the word itself.

Yank: Hairy Ape, huh? Sure! Dats de way she looked at me aw right. Hairy ape! So dats me huh? (O'Neill p. 62)

This is ironic because Yank never thought that way about himself before, even though the stage directions describe him as having a marked abundance of the ape-like qualities ascribed to the other stokers.

Morbid Comedy/Violent Parody 2: Narrative

The whole play can be seen (as per the above discussion of devalued love) as a violent parody of a standard theatrical "romantic comedy"--boy finds girl, loses girl, finds her, finds fortune, and at the end, marriage. Yank doesn't find girl, she finds him, then she flees from him. Yank never sees her again, but he does look. He does, however, find her class of people, which for him is just as good. Yank loses his most valued possession, his own self worth. At the end, Yank finds not a marriage celebration, but his own death.

Morbid Comedy/Violent Parody 3: Visual Devices

A clear example of violent parody occurs in scene five, when Yank is surrounded by a physical cage of garish, uncaring, and unresponsive people. The stage directions read, "*he turns in a rage on the men, bumping viciously into them but not jarring them in the least bit. Rather it is he who recoils after each collision. . . a whole platoon of policemen rush in on Yank from all sides*" (O'Neill p. 71).

The nobs in scene five are so far removed from the world of the worker that, for example, Yank's attempt at revenge (in the form of starting a fight so he can "molder the bums") is completely lost on them, simply because they do not acknowledge Yank's physical existence. They are described as,

enter[ing] from the right, sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to the right nor left, talking in toneless, simpering voices. The women are rouged, calcimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in Prince Alberts, high hats, spats, canes, etc. A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankensteins in their detached, mechanical unawareness. (O'Neill p. 69)

They all do, say, and act the same. When one of them says something, the rest mimic the words exactly, or the equivalent. When a woman sees the monkey fur in the furriers, she exclaims, "Monkey fur!" Then the entire crowd of men and women, "*chorus after her in the same tone of affected delight*" (O'Neill p. 70).

In scene eight Yank says of the gorilla after the gorilla crushed his ribs, and tossed him into the cage to die, "I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged" (O'Neill p. 86 - 87).

These visual devices that O'Neill utilized to illustrate violent parody and morbid comedy help to show what an ugly world Yank lived in, and how society failed Yank as much as he failed himself.

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Conclusion

Within the first generation of the twentieth century, America moved from the age of the horse and buggy to the age of the automobile. The automobile industry changed from hand-crafted production to a machine-paced assembly line system almost overnight when Henry Ford adapted his entire operation all at once in 1913. One of the by-products of any major social change, in this case the advent of "advanced" technology, is human confusion and the need to readjust.

Some people saw machines and technology as a threat. Among them were some expressionists who, according to their critics, wanted to, "return to a golden age of humanity before its disappearance in the modern age of the machinery."⁵⁰ Expressionists used various established (sometimes archaic) theatrical practices, such as the use of masks, and *stationendrama* to objectify the protagonist's inner workings. Both Elmer Rice and Eugene O'Neill utilized expressionistic practices to warn audiences that as humans we must take personal responsibility for our own humanity. Zero allows himself to be bullied, pushed around, molded, and ground into his generic non-being. It doesn't make much difference whose fault it is; Zero can't break away from the collar he has been wearing since the time of the pharaohs. The few times that Zero takes responsibility for himself, he becomes alive. The moment Zero kills his boss, he has taken control of his destiny. He doesn't do anything

⁵⁰ Ritchie, 58.

with the opportunity, but for a short time his options are varied. In scene six, after he and Daisy kiss, they both hear the music (which only the "most blessed" hear). They are both doing what they really want. They have taken charge of their lives, through violence, even if it is for only 70 lines. Clearly, there are recurring opportunities for even the most "stuck" to break out of rigidity. Rice's concern in *The Adding Machine* is with people embracing anything completely without thinking. Technology isn't the problem in *The Adding Machine*. Life is the problem, and how one approaches it. People have to think and make choices. They can think for themselves, or they can become Zeros, where all they want to do is fit in, do their jobs, go to the ball games on Saturday and mark time. Perhaps all Zero ultimately wants to do in the end is to lose what little is left of his humanity and become one with the super-hyper adding machine.

I think O'Neill was concerned with people thinking that technology, wealth, position or any one particular item has all the answers. Yank is at the crux of what O'Neill is saying with *The Hairy Ape*, when he is looking for "belonging." When we attach our entire sense of self worth to any one thing, we are leaving ourselves open to having that one thing taken away, leaving an unfillable void.

Rice and O'Neill were two very different type of men. O'Neill was born into a theatrical family where as Rice acquired his love for the theatre from attending plays. *The Hairy Ape* and *The Adding Machine* are different on many levels. Yank attempts to solve his

problems through force and taking charge, whereas Zero tries to remain unobtrusive and in the background. Yank is trying to get out of his cage and Zero is trying to stay in his. *The Hairy Ape* ends with little hope for any kind of redemption for Yank and his kind, but Zero is offered another chance, through the actions of Daisy and Shrdlu in scene six of *The Adding Machine*.

Neither O'Neill nor Rice see technology as bad *per se*, but these plays evince a fear that humans were beginning to view machines as the vehicle towards enlightenment, or as substitutes for a kind of salvation. Both plays say that machines can make work easier, faster, and more accurate perhaps, but machines--like computers and adding machines--will only do what humans make them do. Human problems lie in human individuals and how they choose to live in their given social contexts.

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