

The Hairy Ape Literary Device

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Figures of Speech

- **Metaphor:** Definition: When one thing is directly compared to another without using like or as. Example: Yank is repeatedly called the "Hairy Ape." Explanation: Yank is actually a human being, but metaphorically he is referred to as an animal. This suggests that the industrialized society has degraded the working class from human beings to beasts. Even though Yank's strength, body, and labor are the foundation of civilization, he is not given human dignity. This metaphor symbolizes the dehumanized condition of the working class in modern society.
- **Irony:** Definition: Irony occurs when the opposite of what is expected happens. Example: Yank believes that he is the real power, that he drives civilization forward. But in the end, he is killed by a gorilla. Explanation: The irony is that the very man who thinks the world runs on his strength is destroyed by a brute animal. To society, he is not a human but a beast, yet without his labor civilization's machines cannot function. In this way, irony exposes the exploitation and loss of identity of the working class.
- **Symbolism:** Definition: When an object, character, or place represents a deeper meaning or idea.
- **Stokehole:** Symbol of imprisonment, slavery, and the inhumanity of industrialization. The coal room is like a cage where workers live like trapped animals.
- **Fifth Avenue:** Symbol of the luxury and pride of the wealthy class. It represents arrogance and separation from ordinary people.
- **Prison:** Symbol of social oppression and inhuman law. Here, Yank feels like an animal in a cage.
- **The Gorilla:** Symbol of blind strength, violence, and the animalistic side of man. Yank thinks the gorilla is his companion, but it kills him. This shows that blind force only leads to destruction.
- **Yank (character):** Symbol of the working class. Although strong, he has no place in society.

- **Mildred (character):** Symbol of the false sympathy of the wealthy class. She pretends to care for workers but ultimately despises them.
- **Paddy (character):** Symbol of the old days of freedom and human values.
- **Long (character):** Symbol of political struggle and the dream of workers' unity.

Moral Lessons from The Hairy Ape

- Blind pride leads to downfall.
- Strength without respect is meaningless.
- Industrial society dehumanizes workers.
- Class division creates isolation.
- Losing identity brings ultimate destruction.