

“Do Now” Work

16th January 2018

Why does Priestley use dramatic irony?

Be able to identify examples of dramatic irony and explore the effect.

Task:

Read the opening stage directions, and answer the following questions:

- What is the lighting like at the start of the play?
- When does the lighting change?
- How does the lighting change?

Include a quotation in each answer.

Challenge: What might the lighting suggest?

In Silence Please

 **BOURNVILLE**
SCHOOL

Why does Priestley use dramatic irony?

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Answers:

Read the opening stage directions, and answer the following questions:

- What is the lighting like at the start of the play?
The lighting is "pink and intimate" at the start of the play.
- When does the lighting change?
The lighting changes when the inspector arrives.
- How does the lighting change?
The lighting becomes "brighter and harder".

Challenge:

Pink lighting hides people's flaws; it also has connotations of warmth, romance and happiness. When the inspector arrives, he exposes their flaws. The brighter lighting implies that he is putting them and their capitalist views under a spotlight.

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Task:

Read the play up until the doorbell rings on page 10.

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Priestley uses **dramatic irony** to make Mr Birling look unreliable and foolish as he is wrong about the Titanic, war and labour. Priestley does this to make the audience distrust Mr Birling. If Mr Birling is wrong about history, his capitalist views may also be wrong. By making Birling look stupid, Priestley also belittles the views of capitalists.

ironic - it is Mr Birling who is 'silly'

adjective

repeated

There's a good deal of silly talk about these days - but - and I speak as a hard-headed business man, who has to take risks and know what he's about - I say, you can ignore all this silly pessimistic talk. When you marry you'll be marrying at a very good time. Yes, a very good time - and soon it'll be an even better time.

Pronoun 'I' shows he's self-important.

He thinks he can judge what is correct.

↳ dramatic irony - WWI started in 1914.

He thinks being successful gives him authority.

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ironic - Mr B
who is 'silly'

repetition of the
adjective "silly"

There's a good deal of silly talk about these days - but - and I speak
as a hard-headed business man, who has to take risks and know
what he's about - I say, you can ignore all this silly pessimistic talk.
When you marry you'll be marrying at a very good time. Yes, a very
good time - and soon it'll be an even better time.

Self-important
- repetition of 'I'

↳ dramatic
irony - war in
1914

He think that
being successful
gives him authority

→ He thinks he
can 'judge what's
correct

Why does Priestley use dramatic irony?

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Last month, just because the miners came on strike, there's lots of wild talk about possible labour trouble in the near future. Don't worry. We've passed the worst of it.

adjective
- doesn't believe it

Begin to distrust
Birling's views.
He looks foolish.

↓
capitalist
mindset

↓
Imperative
- confidence
↓
dramatic
irony.

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adjective.
doesn't believe
it.

Last month, just because the miners came on strike, there's lots of wild talk about possible labour trouble in the near future. Don't worry. We've passed the worst of it.

Begin to distrust Birling.

↓
He sees strikes as 'trouble'. Shows he's a capitalist as he owns a business.

↳ imperative
↓
over confident.

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We employers at last are coming together to see that our interests – and the interests of Capital – are properly protected. And we're in for a time of steadily increasing prosperity.

→ profit.

Capitalist viewpoint.

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We employers at last are coming together to see that **our interests** – and the interests of **Capital** – are properly **protected**. And we're in for a time of steadily increasing prosperity.

↓
Happy the way things are!

profit,
Capitalist view

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Glad you mentioned it, Eric. I'm coming to that. Just because the Kaiser makes a speech or two, or a few German officers have too much to drink and begin talking nonsense, you'll hear some people say that war's inevitable. And to that I say - fiddlesticks! The Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war, except some half-civilised folks in the Balkans. And why? There's too much at stake these days. Everything to lose and nothing to gain by war.

will happen.

He doesn't agree.

dismissive tone.

dramatic irony - WWI in 1914.

ironic - Mr B who is talking nonsense

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ironic - he is the one talking nonsense.

Glad you mentioned it, Eric. I'm coming to that. Just because the Kaiser makes a speech or two, or a few German officers have too much to drink and begin talking nonsense, you'll hear some people say that war's inevitable. And to that I say - fiddlesticks! The Germans don't want war. Nobody wants war, except some half-civilised folks in the Balkans. And why? There's too much at stake these days. Everything to lose and nothing to gain by war.

will happen.

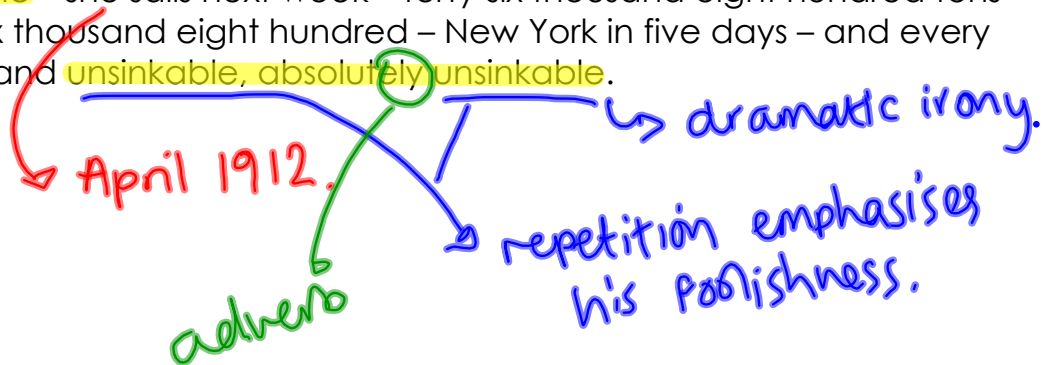
He disagrees - dramatic irony as he's wrong. He looks foolish.

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Priestley manipulates the audience

Look at the progress we're making. In a year or two we'll have aeroplanes that will be able to go anywhere. And look at the way the auto-mobile's making headway – bigger and faster all the time. And then ships. Why, a friend of mine went over this new liner last week – the **Titanic** – she sails next week – forty-six thousand eight hundred tons – forty-six thousand eight hundred – New York in five days – and every luxury – and **unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable**.



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April
1912

adverb -
confidence.

repetition -
emphasises
his foolishness

dramatic
irony.

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In twenty or thirty years' time – let's say, in 1940 – you may be giving a little party like this – your son or daughter might be getting engaged – and I tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that will have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and all these silly little war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere – except of course in Russia, which will always be behindhand naturally.

→ WWI started in 1939

→ adjectives - dramatic irony.

→ Labour in power in 1945.

→ alliteration

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adjectives
 Labour in power in 1945.
 WWII started in 1939.

In twenty or thirty years' time – let's say, in 1940 – you may be giving a little party like this – your son or daughter might be getting engaged – and I tell you, by that time you'll be living in a world that will have forgotten all these Capital versus Labour agitations and all these silly little war scares. There'll be peace and prosperity and rapid progress everywhere – except of course in Russia, which will always be behindhand naturally.

→ dramatic irony.
 Can't trust his viewpoint.

↳ He is wrong.

Emphasised by the alliteration.

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But this is the point. I don't want to lecture you two young fellows again. But what so many of you don't seem to understand now when things are so much easier, is that a man has to make his own way – has to look after himself – and his family, too, of course, when he has one – and so long as he does that he won't come to much harm. But the way some of these cranks talk and write now, you'd think everybody has to look after everybody else, as if we're all mixed up together like bees in a hive – community and all that nonsense. But take my word for it, you youngsters – and I've learnt in the good hard school of experience – that a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own – and – We hear the sharp ring of a front door bell.

Selfishness

simile

Interrupted

capitalist/selfish view.
↓
class system

Timing

Socialists
adjective
Selfish

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We hear the sharp ring of a front door bell.

Selfish

↳ doesn't think he should care about others.

↳ Socialists

↳ interrupted -
Priestley wants
the audience to
think he's wrong.
- Timing is important

Self-confident

↳ like an alarm -
shows he's
saying
something
wrong.

“Do Now” Work

- On page 10, **who or what** interrupts Mr. Birling?
- **What** is he talking about when he's interrupted (include a quotation in your answer)?
- **Why** do you think Mr. Birling is interrupted at this moment?

Challenge:

- **Why** do you think Mr. Birling is interrupted by this character (prediction)?
- **Would** the audience trust Mr Birling? Why?
- **Why** might J. B. Priestley **want** Birling to look foolish?

In Silence Please



- On page 10, **who or what** interrupts Mr. Birling?

The "sharp ring" of the doorbell (inspector).

- **What** is he talking about when he's interrupted (include a quotation in your answer)?

"a man has to look after himself and his own and -" Selfish, capitalist view - he only cares about himself.

- **Why** do you think Mr. Birling is interrupted at this moment?

Priestley disagreed with this view as he was a socialist, so he cuts him off to show it's wrong.

Challenge:

- **Why** do you think Mr. Birling is interrupted by this character (prediction)?

The inspector is a socialist. He interrupts Mr Birling as he will disagree.

- **Would** the audience trust Mr Birling? Why?

No, because the dramatic irony means he is wrong about historical events.

- **Why** might J. B. Priestley **want** Birling to look foolish?

If he's wrong about history, his political views may also be wrong.

Priestley doesn't want the audience to trust Birling.

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How does Priestley present **Arthur Birling** in *An Inspector Calls*?

[30 marks]

AO4 [4 marks]

How does Priestley present **selfishness** in *An Inspector Calls*?

[30 marks]

AO4 [4 marks]

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Description of Birling	Quotation
Worried about his social status	"provincial in his speech" and his wife is his "social superior" but tells Gerald he may get a "knighthood". He worries that Lady Croft thinks Gerald may have done "better" than marrying Sheila. He "clearly relaxes" when Edna leaves.
Sycophantic	"it's exactly the same port as your father gets."
Self-important	Repetition of "I" - "I'm talking as a hard, headed practical man of business."
Selfish	"A man has to look after himself..."
No sense of responsibility	"Community and all that nonsense."
Personifies capitalism	The engagement is "one of the happiest nights" of his life, but it is because "Crofts and Birlings" will be "working together".
Patronising	"You two young fellows"
Tension with Eric, his son	Eric: Yes, I know - but still - Birling: Just let me finish, Eric
Wrong about history (dramatic irony)	"Titanic... unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable."

10th January 2018

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Through his selfishness and self-important nature, Birling personifies capitalism. When speaking of Gerald and Sheila's engagement, he says that this is "*one of the happiest nights of [his] life*" but this is actually because it will mean the merging of "*Crofts and Birling*" rather than the joy a marriage would naturally bring to the family. Birling describes himself as "*a hard-headed practical business man*" (notice the similarity to hard-hearted) and believes a "*man has to make his own way*". Priestley uses dramatic irony to make Birling look stupid and therefore belittle the views of capitalists. He says that the Titanic is "*unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable*", that war is "*impossible*" and "*nonsense*" and there will be no more "*Capital versus labour agitations*" - all of these happened and so makes Birling's view unreliable. This would have been particularly powerful with the original 1946 audience who had just lived through two world wars and the strikes and Titanic sinking would have been, for some of the audience, in their lifetime. Priestley is criticising this complacent mind set and Birling represents a section of society that thought it was indestructible.

