

**In Act 1 scenes 1 – 4, discuss the ways in which David Hare criticizes the legal system in these opening scenes of the play.**

In the play by David Hare called *Murmuring Judges*, Hare criticizes the legal system in the opening scenes of the play (Act 1, Scenes 1 – 4). He does this using many different techniques and methods. These include his characters, speech, social and gender class, stage directions and staging. These are the techniques and methods I shall be analysing throughout this essay, and how effective each one is.

Hare makes Gerard's character sympathetic to the reader; this is an important part to the opening of the play as the reader will feel compassionately for Hares character. The play 'chucks' the reader in at the deep end causing them to be slightly confused and curious to what's actually happened to this character. 'An empty stage. Then from nowhere they're all there'. This shows how everything is rushed into and nothing explained about what the character has done to be in the court. This creates an impression and thought on the reader of whether this man has been accused and brought to justice wrongly. We don't see Gerard again until Act 1 scene 4 where he is in the 'gaol'. We once again are made to feel sympathy for him due to him not knowing about the prison system and he does not know what to do. 'Beckett: Don't you know the procedures? Haven't you been in prison before? Gerard: No.'. This again makes the reader or audience feel sorry for Gerard due to him not being in prison before and the prison guards expecting him to be a re-offender.

By making us feel sympathy for Gerard, Hare is criticising the prison induction system on its poor service and lack of attention to the prisoners. He also begins to build up our dislikes towards the justice system, as the audience begin to feel Gerard has been falsely imprisoned. We are made to feel as the audience sad and sympathetic towards Gerard and so we begin to dislike the prison and legal systems. This achieves Hare's goal of criticising the legal system effectively in the in first four scenes.

Secondly we discover Hares use of dialogue and what this reveals about attitudes and values towards the legal system. We see this firstly see this in act two when Sir Peter is talking to Cuddeford. 'Sir Peter: It was a very trivial affair. (He smiles, unruffled.) I only took a criminal case as a favour. Fair dos, Desmond. I came to it late.' this show's how the lawyers don't want to be associated with criminal justice due to them being to upper class. They also don't have much respect for criminal justice due to Sir Peter stating 'I came to it late'. This show's how Hare wants the lawyers to be portrayed as not bothered about the low class criminals. This technique worked well in the Scene; however we are confirmed of this in Scene three. 'Woody: Yeah. I thought Beaky had made a pretty smart move. He has this sort of allergy. When he hears the words 'legal aid'.' This shows how no one wants to represent lower class criminals and so don't care too much about the outcome of the case. Hare's criticism of the legal system is strongly made here, with the fact that not many people care what happens to him, due to him being no one of any importance or class.

Hare also uses Male Chauvinism in the play to illustrate the fact of a corrupt legal system. This is shown in scene two of the play between Irina, Cuddeford and Sir Peter. Irina was hired by Sir Peter and introduced to Cuddeford in this scene where she is treated badly. This is first seen when Sir Peter does not introduce Irina to Cuddeford but leaves her standing behind him. We again see male chauvinism between Sir Peter and Cuddeford. 'Sir Peter: We regard Irina as quite a catch. Cuddeford: I see that'. This could be regarding to Irina's beauty and so be embarrassing her, however it could also be due to Irina's intellectualness, which would then be perceived as a compliment. This is unclear to the reader and audience however we are left thinking about the sly lawyers and how they meant that speech to be interpreted. This point of the legal system is brought forward by Hare to show the audience how unjust the system is.

Hare has also made social class relevant to the play. This is shown in scene two, where the lawyers didn't want to be associated with the low class criminals and Sir Peter said he had to do it as a favour. Also when Hare uses a character called Beaky Harris to emphasis the point his horse was running in Paris. This is also related to social class, because horse racing was seen as a high social class sport to participate in. This shows how the Lawyers put their own personal lives in front of their work. Hare demonstrates this point well in the opening to the play (Act 1 Scenes 1 – 4) and makes the audience again realise the flaws in the legal system as well as build up sympathy towards Gerard due to his case not being cared about much.

Strict stage directions are also used by Hare to communicate meaning to the directors and the actors in the play. Due to Hare being a director himself he knew what he wanted to achieve in the stage directions in the play, and how he wanted to criticize the legal system. '*(He smoothly introduces IRINA)*' '*(CUDDEFORD smiles slyly at SIR PETER)*'. This shows how the two lawyers show male chauvinism towards Irina. He also uses stage directions to show sympathy towards the different characters, such as towards Gerard in scene four. '*BECKETT seems to show sudden sympathy*' this shows how some of the prison guards do care; but all the same have to be tough due to them being prisoners. This makes us feel sudden sympathy for Gerard also. This means that Hare has well communicated his opinion that prison guards do care about the prisoners, and some still feel sorry for them and show emotion.

In conclusion I believe that David Hare's criticising of the legal system in act 1 scenes 1 - 4 is effective by using the points I have stated above. He has portrayed across to his audience the ideas, concepts and flaws he has seen in legal system, as well as trying to bring about change to the errors he has noticed. He creates this want of change to the legal system by bringing emotion out of the play and to the audience making them feel sympathy for the characters. He also paints a vivid image of how he believes different roles in the legal system have different classes of people; and how those different classes can become corrupt. This includes the suspects, police and lawyers through out the first four scenes. I believe he has created a strong emotive opening to the play, which will lay the foundations for other legal flaws to be detected and resolved throughout the rest of the play.