

Worksheet 9 – Act 1: Sheila is Implicated

Review: Lecture 8

In the previous lecture of the unit, Prof. McRae discussed the Inspector's interrogation of Mr Birling and the introduction of Eva Smith as a character.

- ✓ You may have come across some new vocabulary in the lectures so far. For each word below, write down a definition and use it in a sentence:
- Implacable
 - Complacent
 - Portentous

Challenge: Which character(s) could each adjective be describing? Why?

Recall: Lecture 9

Answer this question after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

- Why did Sheila have Eva Smith fired from her job at Millwards?
 - Because Sheila found her rude
 - Because Eva Smith stole from her
 - Because Sheila was angry at Gerald
 - Because she was jealous of Eva's prettiness

Analysis

- Each extract below is taken from the moment where a character recognises Eva Smith. For each character, explain what their reaction reveals about them as a person:

- Mr Birling

INSPECTOR

I think you remember Eva Smith now don't you. Mr Birling?

BIRLING

Yes, I do. She was one of my employees and then I discharged her.

ERIC

Is that why she committed suicide? When was this, father?

BIRLING

Just keep quiet, Eric, and don't get excited.

- Sheila

He moves nearer a light – perhaps standard lamp – and she crosses to him. He produces the photograph. She looks at it closely, recognizes it with a little cry, gives a half-stifled sob, and then runs out. The inspector puts the photograph back in his pocket and stares speculatively after her.

- Gerald

INSPECTOR

...she changed her name to Daisy Renton

GERALD (*startled*)

What?

INSPECTOR (*steadily*)

I said she changed her name to Daisy Renton.

GERALD (*pulling himself together*)

D'you mind if I give myself a drink, Sheila?
SHEILA merely nods, still staring at him, and he goes across to the tandalus on the sideboard for a whisky.

Evaluation

3. In his lecture, Prof. McRae mentions how moments of **recognition** have long been used for dramatic effect in plays. He mentions a link to ancient Greek theatre where recognition, or *anagnorisis*, is used when a hero realises something about their relationship with another character:
- Read the extract from an **academic article** below about *anagnorisis*.
 - Write a paragraph explaining to what extent you believe Priestley may have been influenced by the conventions of ancient Greek theatre.

Anagnorisis, (Greek: “recognition”), in a literary work, the startling discovery that produces a change from ignorance to knowledge. It is discussed by Aristotle in the *Poetics* as an essential part of the plot of a tragedy, although *anagnorisis* occurs in comedy, epic, and, at a later date, the novel as well. *Anagnorisis* usually involves revelation of the true identity of persons previously unknown, as when a father recognizes a stranger as his son, or vice versa. One of the finest occurs in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* when a messenger reveals to Oedipus his true birth, and Oedipus recognizes his wife Jocasta as his mother, the man he slew at the crossroads as his father, and himself as the unnatural sinner who brought misfortune on Thebes. This recognition is the more artistically satisfying because it is accompanied by a *peripeteia* (“reversal”), the shift in fortune from good to bad that moves on to the tragic catastrophe.

[Britannica, “anagnorisis”, <https://www.britannica.com/art/anagnorisis>, accessed 10/05/22]

Glossary

- **Culpable (adj.)** – deserving blame.
- **Intrusive (adj.)** – something that goes where it doesn’t belong; something unwelcome.
- **Moralising (adj.)** – being overly critical about the ideas of right and wrong; someone who implies that they are more moral than other people.
- **Officious (adj.)** – needlessly asserting authority over minor issues; domineering.
- **On tenterhooks (adj. phrase)** – in suspense; anticipating a future event.