

Murmuring judges and in cold blood

Literature



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Through David Hare's play 'Murmuring Judges' and Truman Capote's 'In Cold Blood' we are presented with men who have gone against the system. This system being the law. The law is enforced in our society to protect and provide boundaries in order to prevent anarchy and systematic splintering of social control and order. So why do we feel sympathy with Gerard McKinnon when he is punished for going against the system? Gerard is the central character in murmuring judges, through Gerard David Hare can show us the audience what the British justice is really like. Gerard is not just merely a criminal but David presents us a real person.

Gerard is a young man striving to provide for his family he has to go against a system to survive within the system. This struggle against the system is a struggle that we the audience can have empathy with. This puts Gerard on the same level as the audience, which will invoke sympathy itself. " She's not my wife actually. But we have two children. One of them has Down's.... and I'm not sure how they'll keep their heads above water. " Through juxtaposition of characters on stage David Hare reveals how brittle the system is and how it relies on prisons to feed the system so that the profession can be paid.

Gerard particularly points this out. What the judges do at work has no effect on them but it can change one person's life. It shows sometimes in the real world that innocent people like Stephen Downing can be imprisoned for years for a crime that he did not commit. One person's error is another person's downfall. " These men, every one of them silver haired, judicious, informed, they will go home to their wives, to wine in fine glasses and the gossip of the bar, they will walk the streets and complain about their lives, and I. and I... "

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Poverty drove him to prison but then what choice did he have between letting his family starve and earning a quick buck. The personal pronoun 'I' puts emphasis on Gerard and will make the audience think of this real person in his metaphorical jail. Gerard is imprisoned because he's young, Irish and didn't want his family to starve. " One big wave and I'm gone. Every week I just survive and no more. Then Barbara was pregnant again. I was asked to do this job; I thought okay, just the once. What every one needs is a lump of money.

And the waves will be up to my chest. In Cold Blood shows this two as Dick and Perry were imprisoned by their situation in life and their family background. Dick coming from a poor farming background didn't want to end up slaving away just to be able to break even. Whereas in life Perry never really stood a chance as his mother was an alcoholic who killed herself leaving Perry to fend for himself in a children's home. Dick and Perry like Gerard are presented to the reader as human beings. Through out the story they make comments and do things that you wouldn't expect criminals to do.

Perry is a key example of this. " A dictionary buff, a devotee of obscure words, he had been intent on improving his companion's grammar and expanding his vocabulary" Gerard appears like Perry to be highly educated and will make profound comments on the judicial system. Gerard shows a great change in this way as at the beginning of the play his speech pattern is fragmented. " I'm standing here, I'm thinking, oh god, it's coming it is coming, it's finally happening, hold on, remember, this is happening to me. "

Then he becomes more confident as he takes on the system and his speech pattern and the comments he makes reflects this. We do not learn about learn exactly what happened that night in the clutter household, Truman capote narrative relies on the reverse order, we are given statements of past life within the text. To learn what happened in the clutter household that night the narrative is passed to Perry.

By doing this Capote fragments the story so the reader never really dwells on the crime but are continually forced to see the hardships of survival that perry has to go through. When he awoke, it was as though he were a feverish, frightened ten year old; his hair was wet, his shirt cold damp and clinging. " Perry has got horrific leg injuries and this makes him very weak. Learning how sensitive and painful these injuries we give him sympathy and understanding. He seems to be dwarfed in the surroundings he's in and does not seem to be the typical big and butch prisoner that is portrayed to us in the media. " his chunky.

Dwarfish legs, broken in five places and pitifully scarred, still pained him so severely that he had become a aspirin junky. This is similar to the way David Hare portrays Gerard when his first enters the prisons he is so out of place and does not how to behave. Gerard is naive and innocent. " Don't you know the procedures haven't? you been in prison before? " " He is frowning at the out size to and trousers, while at the same time trying to stay decent" Both writers use there text as a platform to presents there ideas of the judicial system which we are as the viewers we sub consciously store away when we are deciding on what we think of the characters and how there are treated in society.

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Dick and Perry are strangers and outcasts in society eyes in Middle America. There both have no Jobs and have difficulty when they do hold a job down to stay put. They behave very much like nomad's and wonder around the country trying to find somewhere to fit in. Dick though always seems to have a sudden urge to return home. Perry and dicks story overtakes the clutter family and it cast aside what happened to the clutters and capote manages to make Dick and Perry our main primary thought.