

Abigail's party

Finance, Investment



It could be said that Mike Leigh uses the comic convention of disguises at the end of Act 1 to show Beverly's change of attitude from her disguise back to her real self. This is shown when Beverly suggests "[getting] pissed" after having an argument with Laurence. The use of the word "pissed" as a colloquialism for drunk could be seen as being symbolic of Beverly's true social class seeping through the performance she continuously puts on throughout the night.

This is humorous for the audience as Beverly spends a great deal of time and effort in the first part of Act 1 making sure that she is able to impress guests like Angela and Tony and try to feel in the same social class as Susan. She does this by adding a copy of "[placing] a copy of Cosmopolitan magazine in the magazine rack" and "[putting] on a record (Donna Summer: Love to Love you" among other things yet after one small spat shall we say with her husband represses back to having the personality the audience believes she's trying to hide.

Some might also say that Leigh's use of fools near the end of Act 1 is to create after a very tense moment. An example of this would be after Laurence makes quite a long speech which gives us an idea of his views about people as he says that people often "just drift through life, without any real aims". He also describes these people as being "weak". Both these points are extremely serious and also quite angry.

This means that when Angela tells a story about the time "[she] went to a party" right after these serious points, the audience feels sorry for Laurence as no one seems to be listening to him, but they also can't help but laugh at Angela's complete vacancy of points Laurence was making. This makes <https://assignbuster.com/abigails-party/>

Angela a clear example of a natural fool as she has no real knowledge about when she is making an irrelevant point. It could also be said that the comic convention of foolishness is used when Angela and Beverly doesn't know when she is saying something inappropriate or hurtful.

An example of this would be when they try to reassure Susan about her daughter Abigail's party but end up doing the exact opposite by Beverly saying that "teenagers get over-excited" to which Angela add that "it all starts with one kiss". This is humorous as while trying to do one thing, Beverly and Angela end up doing the exact opposite without realising it which is a classic example of a natural fool. This part of the play could also be seen as cringe comedy because of the sympathy the audience feels for innocent Susan who has been kicked out of her house by her daughter only to e made to feel even more uncomfortable in Beverly's house with her continuous points about teenagers and their rumoured carelessness which, including the gin and tonics Beverly gives Susan, causes her to be physically sick at the very end of the act. Hypocrisy could be considered to be another comic convention that is shown at the end of Act 1. This is particularly something that Beverly shows more than anyone else as when she is describing teenagers as having "a drink in one hand, a cigarette in the other [and] they're having a bit of a dance".

The hypocrisy of this is that Beverly throughout the act is continuously refilling people's drinks, offering cigarettes to everyone and is described on page 42 as "[proceeding] to have a dance solo in front of the others". This is humorous as it makes it plainly obvious that Beverly is a natural fool because she is, in many ways just as childish as the teenagers that were in Susan's

house. This is another case of the audience feeling superior to the characters on stage as they when seeing the play would mostly be middle class and therefore they would also probably not be as childish as Beverly or Angela.

Leigh's uses of comic conventions are, in my opinion, used to establish a social ladder change between when the characters are first introduced and when the act finishes which is shown with Susan coming to the house with a bottle of red wine and ending up being sick in the toilet. Leigh's clear use of comic conventions such as hypocrisy is also to breakdown the difference between sophistication and childishness. Mostly though, Leigh uses comic conventions to get the audience to question where they stand on the social ladder and if it really matters in this world.