
LITERARY GENRE

Dialogue in 'How Many Miles to Babylon?' 'Juno and the Paycock' and 'I'm Not Scared'

HOW MANY MILES TO BABYLON?

- The differences in **social class** are made clear by the differences in the way Alec and Jerry speak
 - This adds to the **social realism** of the novel
 - The characters' natures are also reflected in the dialogue: Alec is reserved and cautious while Jerry is more outgoing and easygoing
 - The relationships between the characters is clearly shown by the dialogue between them
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- Key moment: When the boys meet at the lake, Alec sounds more like an adult than a child - his **speech patterns reflecting his social class**, his nature and the fact that he has spent most of his time with adults instead of with children his own age
 - Alec: You're trespassing I could have you prosecuted
 - Jerry: Come on in, why don't you?
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- Alicia's speech is littered with French phrases and expressions.
 - This shows her social class but it also makes her appear rather affected and a little remote / insincere.
 - Key Moment: Alicia explains to Alec that he cannot see Jerry again, saying it's not 'well, comme il faut. I forbid it. Absolutely.'
 - Later, after Alec has met and spoken to Jerry at the races, Alicia tackles him once again
 - 'I won't have you seen with him. Parlons d'autres choses.'
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- Alicia also speaks in **imperatives** when talking to both her husband and son, making it clear that she is not interested in their opinions or desires but expects them to obey her unquestioningly.
 - She talks down to both of them, showing her vague contempt for them and her feeling of superiority.
 - Alicia to Alec: 'Take it to the pantry, there's a good boy'.
 - Alicia to Frederick when telling him - in Alec's presence - that Alec must go to war: 'He has no choice.'
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Relationships

- Alec says that even when alone with one another, his parents 'never raised their voices, the words dropped malevolent and cool from their well-bred mouths.'



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- Major Glendinning despises what he calls ‘wasteful emotions’ and keeps his own in check as much as possible. This is reflected in his speech, which is clipped and tightly controlled, even at moments of great tension.
 - When he is about to risk his life by going into No Man’s Land to see what he can do for a dying soldier, Major Glendinning displays no fear or distress. His language is deliberately casual and he refers to the mission as an ‘outing’ to ‘see to’ the man.
 - The major hides behind words and phrases at times, repeating them as if this gives them greater credibility. Major Glendinning tells Alec that if the men disobey him he will have ‘no scruples whatsoever about meting out the ultimate. Understand. No scruples whatsoever. Ultimate.’ Alec notes that the major enjoyed repeating the word ‘Ultimate’.
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SUMMARY

- Social, emotional and educational differences between the characters are shown through the use of dialogue
 - The relationships between the characters are made clear through the use of dialogue
 - Dialogue and dialect add realism
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JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

- Dialogue is more important in the play than it is in Babylon
 - It plays the same role in JATP that it does in the novel, but as this is a drama we rely more heavily on the dialogue than we do in the novel
 - The dialogue between the characters in JATP is far less reserved than it is in the novel
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- Differences between the characters speech-style emphasises their different natures.
 - The use of dialect adds to a certain amount of social realism in the play, just as it does in the novel, but unlike the novel, there are times when the characters' speeches become more dramatic poetic than realistic. O'Casey's characters, unlike Johnston's are required to be convincing and dramatic only in the theatre. An example of this would be Mrs Tancred's speech when her son is killed, and Juno's when Johnny is killed.
 - Juno: 'Sacred heart o' Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone and give us hearts of flesh! Take away this murdherin' hate, an' give us Thine own eternal love!'
 - Such emotional, vibrant speeches are not part and parcel of Babylon, where the majority of the characters are from a social class which prefers to hold its emotions, and therefore its speech, in check.
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- Boyle's flowery language shows his desire to impress and his belief that he is something he is not
 - Boyle is boastful and lies easily, but he is a rather pathetic and comic figure
 - 'Yogi! I seen hundreds of them in the streets o' San Francisco' (Boyle responding to Bentham)
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- The marriages in *Babylon* and *JATP* are both antagonistic, yet the dialogue between the couples differs greatly. While both Frederick Moore and Boyle are on the defensive while talking to their wives, Boyle adopts an openly self-pitying tone and asks his wife if she wants to ‘drive me out o’ the house’ when she berates him for not having a job. Juno, like Alicia, is impatient with her husband but is far more honest and straightforward when she speaks to him than Alicia is when she speaks to Frederick. Juno tells Boyle that it would be easier ‘to drive you out of the house than to drive you into a job’ and while this may seem harsh, it is far less vindictive and malicious than Alicia’s thinly-veiled contempt for her husband.
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- Like Alicia Moore, Bentham's unpleasant, selfish nature is vividly conveyed by his speech patterns. He is pedantic and his topics of conversation inappropriate, such as when he begins discussing Eastern religions and philosophies. He uses language as way to highlight what he considers to be his superiority: 'Juno! What an interesting name! It reminds one of Homer's glorious storey of ancient gods and heroes'. Although he may be ridiculous and pompous, Bentham's speeches add humour to the play which cannot be said of Alicia in Babylon.
 - Mary and Johnny's constant repetition that 'a principle's a principle' shows how they cling to an ideal that represents a better world than that in which they live. They are similar to Major Glendinning in this way in that they use these phrases as a way of avoiding actual consideration of the topic under discussion.
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I'M NOT SCARED



- Like JATP, dialogue plays a hugely important role in the text.
 - The dialogue in both JATP and INS is far more expressive and outwardly emotional than that in Babylon, where the characters are guard their feelings more carefully.
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- Unlike *Babylon* and *JATP*, the dialogue in *INS* is peppered with swear words and generally coarse language. This is appropriate in the context of the story as the film is set in the 1970s rather than in the early part of the 20th century, like the other two texts. The obscene language adds social realism to the novel and in this it is closer to *Babylon* than *JATP* in that it is an accurate reflection of the way people in this place at this time would be likely to speak. O'Casey's characters are less realistic and their rather overblown and flowery language marks them out as caricatures rather than accurate representations of people of that era.
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- Just as Alec's rather formal way of speaking when he first meets Jerry reveals the influence of adults in his life, so does Skull's coarse and bullying manner when he orders Barbara to undo her shorts and expose herself. While neither boy speaks as one might expect a young boy to do, Alec's threat to have Jerry prosecuted if he does not leave their land lacks the force and violence inherent in Skull's order to Barbara. Both boys, however, reveal much of the world in which they live through the way they speak to those around them.
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- The conversations between Michele and Filippo as they play in the wheat field are similar to those between Alec and Jerry in that they are able to express themselves as children should be free to do. This poignantly highlights the fact that both sets of friends live in a hostile world.
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- Sergio's speech shows him to be a cruel and manipulative man who will do whatever it takes to achieve the desired result. Like Alicia and Major Glendinning, he is revealed to care only about his own plans and to have little regard for the feelings of others. He speaks in such a way as to make his every utterance seem threatening, whether it is something as seemingly innocuous as telling Michele that he likes quiet boys or roaring suddenly at him to 'Piss off'. His crude, coarse language mirrors the cruelty of the world in which the characters live. Of course, the audience would be keenly aware that Sergio is capable of keeping a boy quiet by imprisoning him in a pit and also that he is more than willing to ensure permanent silence if needs be. therefore, his words are sinister and frightening. Sergio's language and manner of speaking is cruder than Alicia or Major Glendinning, but, like them, his speech shows us clearly that this is a ruthless person willing to sacrifice others to achieve his aims.
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- In all three texts, dialogue helps us to understand the characters, their relationships and the world in which they live. The most striking difference between the texts is the fact that the dialogue in JATP is rather exaggerated, contains humour and a hint of the absurd, while the dialogue in Babylon and INS reflects a sadder world with no real moments of levity.
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