

Essay Plan – Social Responsibility

‘How does Priestley present the importance of social responsibility in *An Inspector Calls*?’

Overview of Plan:

- *TOP TIP: When thinking of your points, think of the 3 quotes that would link best first, then make points using the ideas from the quote + word from question*
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- **Point 1:** Without social responsibility, encourages exploitation as displayed by Mr Birling
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- **Point 2:** Gerald is a victim to his social class so is blinded to the importance of social responsibility
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- **Point 3:** Inspector dramatic vehicle to show importance of social responsibility

Key:

- ***Purple words** = my point for that paragraph*
- ***Orange words** = linking back to the question*
- *(make sure you have 1 point per paragraph constantly link back to, this can normally be another key theme but if not use a word/phrase, and then the word from the question)*

Point 1

Priestley exemplifies the importance of **social responsibility** through illustrating that an absence of it, causes the **exploitation** and dehumanisation of the lower social classes. He utilises Mr Birling's lack of **social responsibility**, and consequent **exploitative** attitude, to showcase the detrimental effects of adopting this attitude.

- **Evidence:** *"as if we were all mixed up together like bees in a hive - community and all that nonsense"* Act 1
- **Zoomorphism:** (giving a human animal qualities) to characterise society, particularly the lower classes, to "*bees*"- reflects Mr. Birling's degradation of the concept of **social responsibility** and his mockery towards his **exploitation** of the lower social classes
- He dismisses the idea of intertwining his **social responsibilities** with others and perceives the notion of ending his negligence and **exploitation** as trivial (unimportant) "*nonsense.*"
- **Hyphen:** The deliberate insertion of a hyphen prompts a theatrical pause, compelling the actor portraying Mr. Birling to hesitate before articulating the word "*community.*" This pause emphasises his physical repulsion to the concept of **social responsibility**, suggesting an inability to even verbalise it.

Point 2

Arguably, it could be seen that Gerald is a **victim** to his social class and therefore is blind to the importance of **social responsibility** - he has been bred to embody this aristocratic charming persona and has been indoctrinated by his class.

- **Evidence:** [*the easy, well-bred young-man about town*] (Act 1 stage direction)
- **Animalistic image on 'bred':** evokes imagery of animal breeding, conjuring a metaphorical image of Gerald as a product of meticulous cultivation, much like a carefully bred animal.
- This suggests that Gerald has been groomed from birth to embody the archetype of the aristocratic and charming "*man about town*." Thus, he is a **victim** to the lack of **social responsibility** within his social class that has been ingrained within him - he is unable to escape the persona crafted for him before he even had agency (a choice) over his own identity.
- **Adjective on 'easy':** Gerald easily assimilated (blended) into the higher echelon of society as he is a paragon (perfect example) of social superiority as well as a **victim**. This ease and comfort in his current circumstances foreshadow his resistance to change, as his ignorance to the importance of social responsibility

Point 3

In Priestley's political diatribe, he crafts the Inspector as a **dramatic vehicle** to emphasise the importance of **social responsibility** to both the Birlings and his audience. The Inspector acts as Priestley's mouthpiece, vocalising that a progressive society can only be founded on **social responsibility** and compassion.

- **Evidence:** "We are members of one body" (Act 3)
- **Biblical allusions:** He also directly relays the biblical teaching, used in baptism, that we are "members of his body" in Christ. Thus, the Inspector, alike to Jesus, promotes the union of society, togetherness and being **socially responsible** for one another
- Alike to Jesus providing salvation for mankind, the Inspector's final speech can be seen as being the salvation for the Birlings'. As he is a **dramatic vehicle**, he provides salvation for the audience by emphasising the importance of **social responsibility**
- **Singular image on 'one':** reminder of the profound interconnectedness that binds humanity together. Therefore, he teaches the Birlings it is their moral imperative to be **socially responsible** as this is an important foundation of a progressive society