

Essay Plan - Guilt

‘How is guilt shown 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
- Point 1: Higher social classes absolve themselves from guilt (Mrs Birling)
- Point 2: Sheila feels guilt as empowered by socialism (Sheila)
- Point 3: Encouraging them to feel guilt to allow them to develop a collective social conscience

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

Mrs Birling is a marionette (puppet) of her class, she operates ignorantly within her **superior social class** believing this allows her to absolve (free from) the burdens of **guilt** and responsibility.

- **Evidence:** [enters briskly and self-confidently, quite out of key] (Act 2)
- **Her entry into act two:** conducted entirely under the arrogance of her **social superiority**. Her ostentatious (showy) display of class renders her character discordant (not fitting) within the narrative of **grief**, guilt, and suicide.
- **Adverb 'briskly':** indicates that Mrs. Birling believes her **superior social class** allows her to be exempt from the adverse effects of her family's unscrupulousness (immorality) as she is keen to absolve herself from any feelings of **guilt**.
- Her demeanour is conceited (vain) and calculated, typical of someone of her **superior social standing** who might typically easily navigate such situations where they're forced to face their **guilt** effortlessly with rehearsed social grace.

Point 2

Priestley constructs Sheila to develop **guilt**, compassion and morality as a consequence of being **empowered by socialism**. Through his political diatribe, he illustrates how socialism leads to the inevitable development of **guilt** and compassion – desirable qualities for a progressive society.

- **Evidence:** *"What he made me feel. Fire and blood and anguish"* (Act 3)
- **The Inspector's proxy (taken on someone's role when they leave):** Sheila serves as the Inspector's proxy, exemplified by her precise emulation, including the deliberate repetition of the polysyndeton on "and."
- This illuminates Sheila's **empowerment through socialism** and desperate attempt to emphasise the relentless consequences of lacking **guilt** and compassion to her obdurate (stubborn) parents.
- **Personal pronoun:** Sheila is now a moral compass to her family, showcasing her evolution towards empathy as her use of the personal pronoun "me" shows she now experiences genuine **guilt** since her moral **empowerment through socialism**.

Point 3

Priestley crafts the Inspector as his mouthpiece to vocalise the desperate need for society to feel **guilt** and empathy. The Inspector tries to elicit this from the Birlings, microcosms (something small representing something larger) of **guiltless** capitalists, to try to make them develop a **collective social conscience**.

- **Evidence:** *"As if she were an animal, a thing, not a person"* (act 3)
- **Beastly image on 'animal':** Eva serves as a microcosm for the exploited lower class- the Inspector presents a beastly image to elicit **guilt** from the Birlings about the dehumanising treatment endured by those at the bottom of the social hierarchy.
- **Asyndetic listing:** The use of an asyndetic list (listing with commas instead of 'and') conveys a sense of relentless repetition, vividly illustrating how Eva endured relentless marginalisation (treated insignificantly) and exploitation both due to her lower societal status.
- The Inspector tries to make the Birlings develop a **collective social conscience** by highlighting the extent of dehumanisation and objectification endured by a single individual at the hands of the Birlings, aiming to elicit a cathartic (purge of emotions) response of **guilt**.