

Gerald - Quote Sheet

BLAME/RESPONSIBILITY

Act 3	<u>"Everything's all right now, Sheila. (Holds up the ring.) What about this ring?"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He wants to rid himself of responsibility by erasing the events of the evening. • The metonymy of "ring" exposes his materialistic and capitalist views- he seems less emotionally invested in the marriage now than at the start of the play.
Act 1	<u>"We're respectable citizens and not criminals"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The upper classes tend to glorify themselves and vilify the poor- yet the play exposes this attitude as ignorant as they have all committed actions which would not be deemed "respectable" • The collective pronoun "we're" portrays this segregative belief as he uses it to unify them against "criminals" it is ironic as Gerald in fact has no true reason to claim that the Birlings are respectable which exposes aristocratic prejudices as ignorant.
Act 1	<u>"I don't come into this suicide business"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He uses the semantic field of "business" to distance himself from the responsibility for Eva's suicide. It also shows his preoccupation with money and wealth, he views everything through the lens of finance thus portraying him as callous.

GENDER

Act 2	<u>"he means I'm getting hysterical now"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hysteria was a diagnosis used to marginalise women, Gerald colloquially uses this to exercise his power and establish a higher status. He also wishes to silence Sheila so he can manipulate the situation to make himself seem less responsible.
Act 2	<u>"you think young women ought to be protected against unpleasant and disturbing things"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is ironic as Eva was exposed to an onslaught of unpleasant and disturbing things, he played a role in this. His 'protection' of women is an example of sophistry as he actually is hurting them. The direct address of the pronoun 'you' is accusatory, it is a reminder from Priestley that the play is not only critiquing the characters within it but also questioning the views of his audience.
Act 2	<u>"she looked young and fresh and charming"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing Eva as "young" connoting innocence and vulnerability, seems predatorial as it introduces a rhetoric of consumption and abusing her vulnerable status. Gerald is acting on primal and lustful desires.

SOCIALISM VS CAPITALISM

Act 1	<p><u>[Mr Birling] "lower costs and higher prices"</u></p> <p><u>Gerald replies "Hear hear! And I think my father would agree to that"</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerald ultimately stands for and supports capitalist beliefs, perhaps even deeming them more important than his marriage and affection for Sheila. He is the product of his parents' beliefs– he has internalised his capitalist upbringing. The exclamation after "hear, hear!" portrays Gerald's overzealous excitement at the prospect of money Priestley ridicules him as he already has an excess of wealth– this highlights the excessive greed associated with capitalism.
Act 1	<p><u>"You seem to be a nice well-behaved family -"</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is ironic as we learn this is not the case. It explores how wealth and reputation are valued over morality by 1912 society.
Act 1	<p><u>"Then it'll be all right. The governor prides himself on being a good judge of port. I don't pretend to know much about it."</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerald is less preoccupied with classism than Mr Birling. In one sense it could show how comfortable and untouchable he is as an aristocrat as he is under less pressure to prove himself and his worth. Alternatively, it could suggest he is more humane and less superficial than the older generation as he willingly rejects symbols of wealth as meaningless. Gerald referring to his father as the Governor is an example of antonomasia, (a literary term in which a descriptive phrase replaces a person's name). He does so to emphasise his social importance, it also portrays how class is the most important aspect of someone's personality in 1912 Britain.

GUILT

Act 1	<u><i>"she didn't blame me at all. I wish to God she had now"</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He puts up a façade of remorse, so he comes across as respectable. • He temporarily seems to understand morality, but we later learn that he doesn't wish for any blame at all and is still actively trying to deny himself responsibility at the end of the play. • This is an example of irony, the audience later become aware that his claims are false which portray him as deceitful.
Act 1	<u><i>'Sorry- I- well, I've suddenly realised- taken it in properly- that she's dead'</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His fragmented speech suggests guilt and shock. We see development in his character as he is no longer euphemising her death as "suicide business". • Alternatively, it is an example of melodrama, he is exaggerating his guilt in order to portray himself as respectable and compassionate.

OLDER/YOUNGER GENERATION

Act 1	<p><u>"<i>young man about town</i>"</u></p> <p><u>"<i>a pretty fortunate young man</i>"</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is irony concerning the repetition of the adjective "young" to describe Gerald. Within the play, youth becomes associated with being impressionable and adopting socialist views. However, Gerald fails to live up to this 'ideal' that Priestley proposes; this reinforces the disappointment the audience feels towards Gerald's character, whilst we almost forgive the Birling parents as a result of their age it seems Gerald is more consciously adhering to the tropes of capitalism.
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