

KEY WORDS

Proxy/ taking on the Inspector's role once he leaves

Sheila Act 3

REJECTION OF THE PATRIARCHY

- An integral part of how Sheila was defined in Act 1, was through her engagement to Gerald- symbolising a typical relationship within a patriarchal society. Priestley utilises a **cyclical structure** throughout his play, most **visibly** through an Inspector arriving at the beginning and the end. However, he also uses this through the **cyclical presentation of Gerald and Sheila's engagement**
- Beginning of Act 1: Sheila is overjoyed about her engagement calling her ring **"perfect"**, which consequently makes her feel **"really engaged"**.
- End of Act 3: Gerald **[holds up the ring]** to which Sheila replies **"No, not yet. It's too soon. I must think."**

- Although Sheila does not completely reject the idea of marriage, it would have been **atypical** at the time for a woman to be doubtful about marriage: even in the case of **infidelity** and especially when their spouse belonged to a higher class as Gerald did. Sheila's hesitation shows her freeing herself from the **societal concepts that constrained her**- the patriarchy and capitalism.

COMPARISON

Sheila goes from being presented as naïve and sheltered to directly shaming her parents for their sheltered and **"childish"** views. She critiques their immaturity, despite ironically being part of the older generation, when she says **"[flaring up] If you want to know, it's you two who are being childish- trying not to face the facts."**

ACTS AS THE INSPECTOR'S PROXY

- Sheila acts as the Inspector's proxy after his final speech, relaying his message word from word: **"What he made me feel. Fire and blood and anguish"**.
- Her **emulation**, and precise repetition even of the **polysyndeton** on "and", illuminates Sheila is desperately trying to reinforce the **belligerent and relentless** consequences of having **no social conscience**.
- Sheila provides a **moralistic example** for her family to follow, showing her development of empathy as she now "feels" remorse, but also an understanding on the **detrimental** impact capitalists have on society.
- Sheila is **angered** by the **dismissive** nature of her **obviously exploitative** and **unscrupulous** parents, urging them to stop **'pretend all over again'** as they all individually contribute to what **"drove that girl to suicide"**.
- As much as the Inspector is used by Priestley as a **dramatic vehicle**, he uses Sheila as a **recipient of his message** and his **mouthpiece** as she takes on the Inspector's socialist ideologies- the identical ideologies that were possessed by Priestley.
- Thus, Sheila becomes a symbol of hope for a 1945 audience; **ignorant** and **parsimonious** (selfish) individuals in society are capable of **repenting** and **reforming** when provided with a moral example. This providing hope that society can continue to progress and avoid **regressing** into the **stagnant** societal ideas of 1912.

Talk about stage directions in your essays. This shows the examiners you know how to talk about the form of the play- something that is often not very well included by students). You will be hitting A02 (Analyse the language, form and structure)



TOP TIP

TOPIC SENTENCES

Sheila transmogrifies into a moral compass for both her family and the audience. This is clear through her relaying and emulating the Inspector's final words on collective responsibility- she has developed her social conscience and aims to ensure her family does the same.

Atypically, she breaks her confining role of being a docile woman in 1912 patriarchal society. She becomes uncertain about her engagement to Gerald as she begins to realise the reality of her oppression.

LIBERATION REFLECTED THROUGH STAGE DIRECTIONS

THE LIGHTING

- In Act 1, the lighting is ***[pink and intimate]***, this being reflective of the rose-tinted and distorted view Sheila had on the world around her.
- In Act 1, once the inspector arrives, it becomes ***[hard and bright]***. This symbolises how the Inspector has shown Sheila the ***[hard]*** and harsh reality of capitalism, in an attempt to 'bright'en her views on morality.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

- Act 1 ***[Trying to be light and easy]***, showing how is she is trying to play into the expectations of her. She also is ***[excited]*** as she is yet to see the truth
- Act 2 her tone changes, speaking ***[bitterly]***. This highlights the beginning of Sheila's scorn for capitalism and the ideas that they support. Gerald is also speaking as she is ***[cutting in]***, reinforcing how she has a gained a voice and is even interjecting in the man she was supposed to obey
- Act 3, to her father ***[protesting]*** and ***[scornfully]***. She goes from ***[bitterly]*** to ***[scornfully]***, showing her open criticism to her fathers exploitative and dehumanising ways.



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