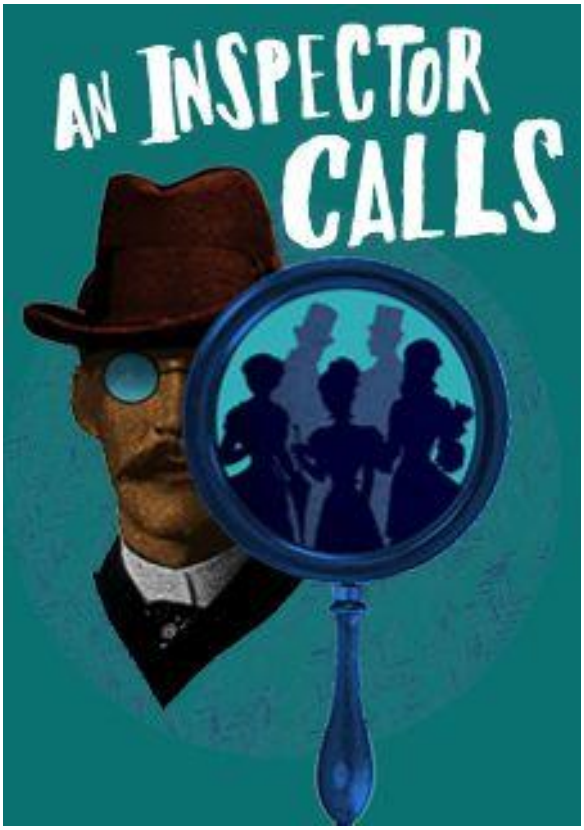
An Inspector Calls
Aim Higher



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Contents

How to use this booklet

As you read each article, use the discussion questions at the end to consider:

- How is this relevant to the play?
- How could I apply what I have just read to particular characters or themes?
- Which particular scene or moment within the play could be used as an example to explore these ideas?
- How might Priestley have reacted to your interpretation or evaluation of the play? To what extent might he have set out with the intention of evoking particular ideas or reactions that you have explored?

An Inspector Calls and J B Priestley's political journey

- Article by:Alison Cullingford, Published:7 Sep 2017

Alison Cullingford explores how J B Priestley's childhood in Bradford and experiences during two world wars shaped his socialist beliefs and fueled the anger of his play *An Inspector Calls*, a work that revolves around ideas of social responsibility and guilt.

An Inspector Calls poses troubling questions: how can people live together? To what extent are individuals responsible for others? Gareth Lloyd Evans described the play as 'perhaps the clearest expression made by Priestley of his belief that "no man is an island" – the theme is guilt and social responsibility'.[1] This article explores how and why J B Priestley came to this belief.[2]

'Substantial and heavily comfortable': Bradford before the War

Priestley was born in 1894 in Bradford, in Yorkshire's West Riding. Bradford was an industrial town soon to become a city (in 1897), which had grown very quickly around the wool and dyeing industries. Young 'Jack' Priestley himself found work in the wool trade, as a junior clerk with Helm and Company, whose offices were in the (now demolished) Swan Arcade.

Jack found this work dull, but otherwise, for a youngster who enjoyed sport, landscape, literature, music, art and socialising, Bradford had much to offer. In his novel *Bright Day*, he looked back from the austerity of 1946 to a golden age of freedom, plenty, hospitality, conviviality, generosity, solid comfort and strong community, where, at Christmas,brass bands played and choirs sang in the streets; you went not to one friend's house but to a dozen; acres of rich pound cake and mince-pies were washed down by cataracts of old beer and port, whisky and rum; the air was fragrant and thick with cigar smoke, as if the very mill chimneys had taken to puffing them.[3]

The bright young lad realised even then, though, that Bradford was not perfect. Working and living conditions had improved from the hellish days of the 1840s, when cholera and starvation were serious threats, but many still lived in poverty. Priestley's political views were heavily influenced by the West Riding's strong Nonconformist socialist traditions, embodied by the*Bradford Pioneer* newspaper and epitomised by his schoolteacher father, Jonathan.

Jack also noticed that the city's respectable folk could be smug, even hypocritical: 'badly-divided men' were pompously religious on Sundays, but on Saturday nights 'coarsely raffish',[4] ill-using young women. In *When We Are Married* (1937), Priestley made great

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comedy of turning the world of three respectable couples upside down when it emerged that they had not been legally married. *An Inspector Calls* also shattered the world of such a family, this time, however, revealing the true social and political consequences of the selfishness of the Birlings and others like them.

AO1 AO2 Interpretation and analysis

1. **Find five words that Cullingford uses to describe the 'golden age' of young Jack Priestley's experience of Bradford:**

   1.

   2.

   3.

   4.

   5.

2. **Which characters could the 'badly-divided men' have perhaps been templates for when Priestley wrote the play, and why might he have thought it important to include such characters?**

3. **Priestley described such men as, 'coarsely raffish;' raffish defined as slightly disreputable, especially in an attractive way. Why is this choice of word particular fitting? Why not simply disreputable?**

The First World War: men thrown away for nothing

This world was itself shattered by the Great War, which broke out in August 1914. Twenty-year-old Jack, drawn to prove himself, went alone to Halifax to volunteer for the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment. He served in the British Army for five years, as a private and lance-corporal, and, much later, as an officer with the Devonshires.

Despite being buried alive by a trench mortar explosion and gassed, Priestley survived relatively unscathed physically; but the experience of war changed him forever. He bore witness to the horrors of the front and his realisation of the implications of social inequalities that went far beyond what he had seen in his home city. As he wrote in his memoir, *Margin Released* (1962):

> The British command specialised in throwing men away for nothing. The tradition of an officer class, defying both imagination and common sense, killed most of my friends as surely as if those cavalry generals had come out of the chateaux with polo mallets and beaten their brains out. Call this class prejudice if you like, so long as you remember … that I went into that war without any such prejudice, free of any class feeling. No doubt I came out of it with a chip on my shoulder; a big, heavy chip, probably some friend's thigh-bone.[5]

Bradford could never be the same for Priestley after the war: so many of his friends had been killed, many of them in the 'Bradford Pals' battalions destroyed at the Battle of the Somme. After a venture into academia, taking his degree at the University of Cambridge, he decided to focus on writing and moved to London. The 1920s were years of hard work to make a living. We have the sense that he had a kind of survivor's guilt: he had to make something of his life when so many better men had been killed.

His 1929 bestseller, *The Good Companions*, gave him the financial security to experiment with new literary forms. Priestley turned to drama with great success: he was to re-use the thriller form of his first effort, *Dangerous Corner*, in *An Inspector Calls*.

Celebrity also gave him a platform to share his increasing social concerns. In *English Journey*(1934), he described what he saw when travelling around England by motor coach: the remnants of old rural England, the shocking deprivation of the declining industrial cities and the glamour of the modern Americanised world of arterial roads and cinemas. Of the 'grimy desolation' of 'Rusty Lane' in West Bromwich, he said:

> There ought to be no more of those lunches and dinners, at which political and financial and industrial gentlemen congratulate one another, until something is done about Rusty Lane and West Bromwich. While they exist in their present foul shape, it is idle to congratulate ourselves about anything.[6]

Priestley confronted his own wartime past at a regimental reunion in Bradford. He was outraged to learn that some of his fellow veterans were too poor to afford evening clothes to

attend the event. They had given their health, their futures, everything they had, for a society that did not care. This righteous anger would be seen again in *An Inspector Calls*.

AO1 AO3 Interpretation and Contextual Understanding

1. **What graphic imagery does Priestley use to compare the disregard that the Officers had for soldiers of lower ranks? Explore this choice of analogy.**

2. **How did Priestley feel that successful businessmen were behaving hypocritically?**

3. **What evidence do we have of Priestley's outrage at the contrast between those with plenty and those with little within the play?**

The staggering power of broadcasting

During the Second World War, Priestley's fame rose to new heights, largely thanks to his BBC radio broadcasts, the 'Postscripts'. In his first Postscript, of 5 June 1940, he helped create the narrative of the Dunkirk evacuation as mythic victory, paying tribute to the frivolous little steamers which saved so many lives. Throughout that momentous summer and early autumn, Priestley continued these weekly broadcasts, boosting morale through homely, often funny, reflections, musing, for example, on a pie which survived the bombing of Bradford and some happy ducks in a pond.Priestley took an active part in a debate that went on in Britain throughout the war: was it appropriate to discuss what should happen afterwards, and if so, what should that be? He used the Postscripts to influence opinion on this issue, calling for a better, fairer society after this war was over. Carefully gauging what might be acceptable to broadcast, Priestley used everyday examples likely to be familiar to his listeners to make his points. His most outspoken Postscript, of 6 October 1940, uses the problem of the 'idle rich' occupying scarce hotel rooms from which bombed-out families could benefit to make the point that:

> We are floundering between two stools. One of them is our old acquaintance labelled 'Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost', which can't really represent us, or why should young men, for whom you and I have done little or nothing, tear up and down the sky in their Spitfires to protect us, or why should our whole community pledge itself to fight until Europe is freed? The other stool … has some lettering round it that hints that free men could combine, without losing what's essential to their free development, to see that each gives according to his ability, and receives according to his need.[7]

The wording of that second stool, which as Priestley reminded his listeners was the stuff of Christian sermons, is almost exactly Karl Marx's famous 'from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs' which appeared in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

It is often stated that the then Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, had Priestley 'taken off the air' as a result of this sort of discussion, and for using the Postscripts as a platform for sharing his views on building a better world post-war. Certainly, Priestley's radio talks worried many politicians and journalists; the end of the Postscripts was, however, at least in part his own decision and the hand of the Prime Minister cannot be definitely traced in it.[8]

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AO1 AO2 Interpretation and analysis

1. **What was Priestley's role during his time on the radio?**

2. **To what extent do you think Priestley was a controversial figure to have on the radio during the war effort?**

3. **How does Priestley take the idiom, 'every man for himself' and applied it to his experience of the treatment of men participating in the war effort?**

4. **Priestley quoted Karl Marx, theorist to state, 'to see that each gives according to his ability, and receives according to his need.' Explore the meaning behind 'ability' and 'need' here; what is Priestley saying about the entitlement of such men?**

A new and vital democracy?

Away from the airwaves, Priestley could be much more candid about his views. *Out of the People* (1941) came out of his role as chairman of the 1941 Committee, a group of writers and politicians whose statement 'We Must Win' called for a declaration of national 'ideas and objectives after the war'. In *Out of the People*, Priestley outlined the need for a 'new and vital democracy', an end to the waste and unfairness of social inequalities, a world in which everyone was responsible for others. The upheaval of war was shattering old systems and bringing people together to work for a common goal. Why not build on this, rather than going back to old failed systems as had happened after the previous war?

Priestley's Postscripts and other broadcasting and writing certainly played their part in encouraging people to think about the shape post-war society should take, and thus helped pave the way for Clement Attlee's Labour Party to sweep to power in the general election of July 1945. The Labour mandate was to create a 'welfare state' and a national health service, eliminating the shocking poverty observed by Priestley and so many other reporters.

However, the new government was not quite what Priestley had in mind. He disliked the centralised planning and bureaucracy that became synonymous with state socialism in the 20th century. Indeed, he stood unsuccessfully as an independent candidate in the 1945 election!

Footnotes:
[1] Gareth Lloyd-Evans, *J B Priestley: The Dramatist* (London: Heinemann, 1964), p. 184.
[2] Parts of this piece are based on blog posts by the author, from the University of Bradford sites *100 Objects Bradford* and the Special Collections blog.
[3] J B Priestley, *Bright Day* (London: Heinemann, 1946), p. 81.
[4] J B Priestley, *Margin Released* (London: Heinemann, 1962), p. 63.
[5] J B Priestley, *Margin Released*, p. 137.
[6] J B Priestley, *English Journey* (London: Heinemann and Gollancz, 1934), p. 115.
[7] J B Priestley, *Postscripts* (London: Heinemann, 1940), p. 90.

[8] Alison Cullingford, *Postscript Sunday 20 October 1940*, https://specialcollectionsbradford.wordpress.com/2010/10/20/postscript-sunday-20-october-1940/ Blog post summarising what is known about the end of the Postscripts and linking to further sources of information on this still controversial issue

AO1 AO3 Interpretation and Contextual Understanding

1. **What major national institution resulted from the success of the Labour Party?**

2. **Why did Priestley still disagree with the way in which the country was being conducted?**

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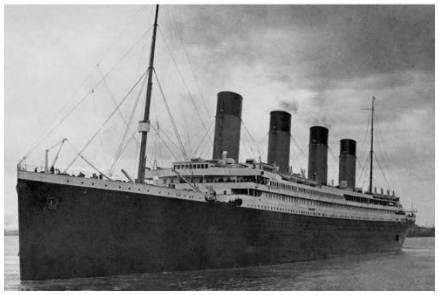
3. **What key ideas do you think would have been the main objectives for Priestley's election campaign?**

History Extra: 4 revelations about the Titanic disaster (edited)



After more than a century of research and debate, what more is there to be learned about the sinking of the 'unsinkable' liner? The expert authors of a comprehensive book on the disaster share some of the latest revelations.

April 13, 2018

On the night of 14/15 April 1912, a brand-new, supposedly unsinkable ship – the largest and most luxurious vessel in the world at the time – collided with an iceberg and sank on her maiden voyage. Of the 2,208 people aboard the *Titanic*, only 712 were saved.One of the most comprehensive and detailed books on the topic, first published 2012, offers fascinating insights into how the tragedy unfolded. Using rarely seen and previously unpublished accounts of the sinking, *On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic* examines the ship's design, construction and maiden voyage, and considers why so few of those aboard the ship survived.

1

Captain Smith and White Star chairman Bruce Ismay have been the subject of much derision and criticism – but the record suggests that both men have been treated unfairly by history

The two men have often come under fire for their actions during the voyage and the sinking. Captain Smith drove his ship at full speed into an ice field he knew was there; once the ship hit the berg, he's been accused of being rather detached from the evacuation, and of not taking a strong position as a leading figure when he was most needed.

Ismay, meanwhile, has often been assailed for allegedly driving Captain Smith to increase speed through dangerous waters, and of ordering the ship to resume course after the collision, thus endangering lives. He has even been criticised simply because he survived.

However, the historical record clearly shows that Captain Smith's decision to increase speed that evening, though clearly questionable in hindsight, was nothing extraordinary at the time. Indeed, the Cunard liners *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* (British ocean liners launched in 1906) regularly sped through those same waters, and even through known ice fields, at even greater speeds, and continued to do so even after the *Titanic* disaster. Clearly, Captain Smith cannot be condemned any more than every other captain of a passenger liner on the Atlantic at the time. Captain Smith was simply the unlucky one.

Additionally, it has been suggested that Smith was 'in a daze' and ineffective in the face of the disaster. This notion has surfaced in many books and even on film, but there is virtually no evidence to support it. The source of this belief may be the ship's Second Officer, Charles Lightoller, who in his book described having to approach and ask the captain for permission to begin loading women and children into the lifeboats. However, the aggregate accounts show that Captain Smith was resolutely in charge, and that he was a captain of action during the crisis.

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Smith, who was aged 62 at the time, was seen moving from one place to another, giving careful and thoughtful orders. Off-duty when the iceberg was struck, Smith quickly took charge, personally making two inspection trips below deck to look for damage, and preparing the wireless men for the possibility of having to call for help. He even erred on the side of caution by preparing the lifeboats for loading *before* he was certain that the ship was sinking. Smith was observed all around the decks, personally overseeing and helping to load the lifeboats, interacting with passengers, and striking a delicate balance between trying to instill urgency to follow evacuation orders while simultaneously attempting to dissuade panic.

The eyewitness accounts also indicate that Smith continued to work to save others until water literally reached the deck beneath his feet, at which point nothing more could be done. He then apparently jumped overboard rather than remaining on the railings until water engulfed him.

Meanwhile, the record clearly shows that Bruce Ismay, though quite involved in and excited about the performance of the *Titanic* on that voyage, exerted no undue influence on Captain Smith to drive the ship on at utmost speed against the commander's better judgment. Following the collision, Ismay helped to calm passengers and even actively participated in the loading of the lifeboats. Only at the very end did he take a seat in a lifeboat himself – a decision about which we let the reader make their own judgment. Ismay suffered irreparable damage to his reputation simply because he survived.

J Kent Layton, Bill Wormstedt and Tad Fitch are the authors of *On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic* (Amberley Books). To find out more, click here

AO1 Interpretation and Evaluation

1. **Why are condemning reports of Captain Smith unfounded, according to the extract?**

2. **What did Captain Smith strike a 'delicate balance' between?**

3. **What reason is given for the 'irreparable damage' to Ismay's reputation?**

4. **Why do you think historical reports may blame these two gentlemen for the tragic accident?**

5. **To what extent do you believe Bruce Ismay was responsible for the sinking of the ship?**

Suffragettes, violence and militancy

- Article by:Fern Riddell
- Published:6 Feb 2018

Some suffragettes believed that deeds, not words, would convince the government to give women the vote. Fern Riddell assesses the scale of violent direct action used by militant suffragettes, with a focus on events from 1912 to 1914.

This is the traditional image we have of the suffragette movement – empowered women, often young, holding placards, marching, determined to win the right to vote and have their views represented on equal terms with men. Prior to 1918, 100 years ago, only certain men had the vote. Through a very long campaign, begun in the early 19th century, women over 30 and who owned property were finally given the right to have their voices heard and stand for government. It wasn't until a decade later, however, that the 1928 Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act granted every citizen of this country the right to vote and have a say in how we are governed, who we are and what we stand for as a country.

Multiple suffrage societies formed across the country during the Victorian era, all fighting in different ways to convince the government that women deserved the right to vote. In 1903 a new society emerged that has dominated our history and understanding of the women's movement in the UK: the WSPU, or Women's Social and Political Movement, heading by the enigmatic Pankhurst family. Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, Christabel, Sylvia and Adela, are well-known names in our suffrage history. But their choice to turn to violent and extreme actions, what we would define today as 'terrorism', is something that is rarely acknowledged. The Pankhursts passionately believed that deeds, not words, would be the only thing to convince the government to give them the vote. After decades of peaceful protest, the WSPU recognised that something far more drastic was needed to get the government to listen to those who were campaigning for women's rights. While we are probably familiar with tactics such as window smashing, what was the real scale of suffragette violence and militancy?

'We are fighting for a revolution!': the escalation of violence and militancy up to 1912

'If men use explosives and bombs for their own purpose they call it war,' wrote Christabel Pankhurst in 1913, 'and the throwing of a bomb that destroys other people is then described as a glorious and heroic deed. Why should a woman not make use of the same weapons as men. It is not only war we have declared. We are fighting for a revolution!'

Christabel's new tactics oversaw a nationwide bombing and arson campaign that the newspapers quickly dubbed the 'Suffragette Outrages'. One of the earliest recordings of this term is found in the *Morpeth Herald* on 20 November 1909, when a suffragette attacked a young Winston Churchill with a horse whip on the platform of Bristol railway station.[1] In the same month, Selina Martin and Lesley Hall disguised themselves as orange sellers and, armed with a catapult and missiles, attacked Prime Minster Asquith's car in Liverpool.[2] The

following year in Battersea, a clerk suffered burns as he attempted to stop a suffragette from throwing a liquid over the papers of a Member of Parliament[3] – one of the first recorded instances of a suffragette causing physical harm to a member of the public.[4] Risk or injury to the public has been vehemently denied by many suffragette historians, as well as by the suffragettes themselves, but the newspapers (and even the accounts of the militant suffragettes) prove that there were numerous instances where injuries occurred, and that personal risk, or even death, was great.

One of the most dangerous suffragette attacks occurred in Dublin in 1912.[5] Mary Leigh, Gladys Evans, Lizzie Baker and Mabel Capper attempted to set fire to the Theatre Royal during a packed lunchtime matinee attended by Asquith.[6] They left a canister of gunpowder close to the stage and threw petrol and lit matches into the projection booth which contained highly combustible film reels. Earlier in the day, Mary Leigh had hurled a hatchet towards Asquith, which narrowly missed him and instead cut the Irish MP John Redmond on the ear.[8]

1912 proved to be an escalation point in the violence of the militant suffragettes. Glasgow Art Gallery has its glass cases smashed[9]; bank and post office windows were smashed from Kew to Gateshead; in September, 23 trunk telegraph wires were cut on the London road at Potters Bar; and on 28 November simultaneous attacks on post boxes occurred across the entire country.[10] By the end of year, 240 people had been sent to prison for militant suffragette activities.[11] Once in prison, these inmates were often subjected to the torture of force feeding at the hands of the prison authorities – actions which only further radicalised them and increased their commitment to the militant campaign on their release.

Suffragette violence in 1913 and 1914

The newspapers soon began to carry weekly round-ups of the attacks, and reports of suffragette violence are evident across the country, with papers like the Gloucester Journal and Liverpool Echo running dedicated columns on the latest outrages.[12] During 1913, a suffragette attacked the glass cabinets in the Jewel House at the Tower of London, while in Dundee, in Scotland, four postmen were severely injured by phosphorus chemicals left in post boxes.[13] In Dumbarton 20 telegraph wires were cut; Kew Gardens orchid house was attacked and its teahouse burned down.[14] In Ilford, three streets had their fire alarm wires destroyed and in Saunderton the railway station was destroyed, with placards entitled ‘Votes for Women’ and ‘Burning For the Vote’ left among the debris.[15] Croxley Station near Watford also suffered a similar fate, although the attack was initially not attributed to the militants until a suffragette newspaper was delivered to the Station Master with a scribbled inscription, ‘Afraid copy left got burnt.’[16]

In 1914 the destruction of homes, pavilions and churches continued, with the year containing some of the most well-known attacks on works of art, as Mary Richardson slashed the Rokeby Venus in the National Gallery in London.[17] The capital city saw a wave of cultural violence: the British Museum had mummy cases smashed, and bombs were discovered in St Paul’s and the Metropolitan Tabernacle, where a postcard was left bearing the words, ‘Put your religion into practice and give the women freedom.’[18] After the outbreak of World War One, however, the WSPU suspended their militant campaign.

Concluding thoughts

The WSPU acted like a regulated army with professional soldiers, seeing the Edwardian period as a civil war between the sexes. It played heavily on the advertised language of the 'Woman's Army' and suffragette rhetoric of 'rebellion'. Directed and in some cases orchestrated by the Pankhurst leadership, these attacks were specifically designed to terrorise the government and the general public to change their opinions on women's suffrage – not by choice, but by threats and acts of violence. Some members of the WSPU were alienated by the escalation of violence, leading to splits and the formation of groups including the Women's Freedom League in 1907 and the East London Federation of Suffragettes in 1914. The impact of the WSPU's extremism, much like the impact of political violence today, lost them many supporters.

This aspect of the fight for women's rights might make you uncomfortable. We don't want to believe that the people we idolise are capable of actions that have such little regard for others, or for themselves. But sanitising history is never a good idea. History is all around us, and it is far better to know it in its entirety, or at least as close as we can get to that, than it is to advocate myths and half-truths. And the fight for equality has never been easy.

Footnotes

[1] For Churchill's whipping see 'Suffragette Hits Churchill', *Dundee Courier*, 15 November 1909, and 'Suffragette Outrage', *Morpeth Herald*, 20 November 1909.

[2] For Selina Martin and Leslie Hall, see 'Suffragette Outrage', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 28 and 31 December 1909.

[3] 'Suffragette Outrage', *Grantham Journal*, 8 January 1910.

[4] 'Suffragette Outrage'.

[5] 'Gunpowder and Oil', *Hull Daily Mail*, 19 July 1912; 'Prime Minister in Dublin', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1912; 'Suffragette Outrages', *Western Times*, 20 July 1912; 'Sensational Evidence Is Given', *Dundee Courier*, 20 July 1912.

[6] Gunpowder and Oil', *Hull Daily Mail*, 19 July 1912; 'Prime Minister in Dublin', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1912; 'Suffragette Outrages', *Western Times*, 20 July 1912; 'Sensational Evidence Is Given', *Dundee Courier*, 20 July 1912.

[7] 'Gunpowder and Oil', *Hull Daily Mail*, 19 July 1912; 'Prime Minister in Dublin', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1912; 'Suffragette Outrages', *Western Times*, 20 July 1912; 'Sensational Evidence Is Given', *Dundee Courier*, 20 July 1912.

[8] 'Suffragette Outrages', *Western Times*, 20 July 1912; 'Sensational Evidence Is Given', *Dundee Courier*, 20 July 1912; 'Suffragist Outrages', *Evening Telegraph*, 20 July 1912.

[9] 'Foolish Art Gallery Outrage', *Hull Daily Mail*, 6 August 1912; 'Suffragette Outrage in Glasgow Art Gallery', *Western Times*, 10 August 1912. For the telegraph cutting see 'The Latest Suffragette Outrage', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 1912.

[10] 'Suffragette Outrage', *Hull Daily Mail*, 2 November 1912; 'Pillar Box on Fire', *Evening Telegraph*, 11 November 1912; 'Hundreds of Letters Are Damaged', *Dundee Courier*, 29 November 1912; 'Suffragette Outrages', *North Devon Journal*, 5 December 1912.

[11] 'To-day's Parliament', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 28 January 1913.

[12] During 1913 *The Gloucester Journal* ran a column called 'The Militant Suffragists', and the *Liverpool Echo* dedicated a space entitled 'The Wreckers' or 'Wreckers' to report all attacks and trials linked to the suffrage movement.

[13] 'Our London Letter', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 3 February 1913; 'Four Postmen Are Burned', *Dundee Courier*, 6 February 1913.

[14] Telephone Wires Are Cut', *Dundee Courier*, 8 February 1913; 'Women's War', *Western Times*, 10 February 1913, 'Latest News', *Western Gazette*, 21 February 1913.

[15] 'Women's War', *Evening Telegraph*, 10 March 1913; 'Suffragette Outrages', *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 April 1913.

[16] 'Suffragettes Accept Responsibility For Burning Of Railway Station', *Evening Telegraph*, 11 March 1912.

[17] 'The National Gallery Outrage', *Liverpool Echo*, 11 March 1914.

[18] 'Suffragist Damage In British Museum', *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 10 April 1914; 'Bomb In Westminster Abbey', *Grantham Journal*, 13 June 1914; 'Bomb In Tabernacle', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 11 May 1914.

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AO1 Interpretation and Evaluation

1. **How did the WSPU justify their use of violent measures to get their voice heard?**

2. **Who did the WSPU intend to intimidate and for what purpose?**

3. **What did this militant approach lead to some members doing?**

4. **What does this demonstrate to us about how women felt about the confines of their gender at the time?**

5. **Explore what is meant by the statement, 'sanitising history is never a good idea.'**

John Burnett, *The Annals of Labour*

[U]ntil the First World War <u>domestic service constituted the largest single employment for English women,</u> and the second-largest employment for all English people, male and female. Yet it is a largely unknown occupation. No Royal Commission investigated it or suggested legislative protection of the worker; no outburst of trade union activity called attention to the lot of servants, as it did to that of the building workers, the cotton-spinners and the dock labourers. Immured in their basements and attic bedrooms, shut away from private gaze and public conscience, <u>the domestic servants remained mute and forgotten</u> until, in the end, only their growing scarcity aroused interest in "the servant problem."

AO1 AO2 Interpretation and analysis

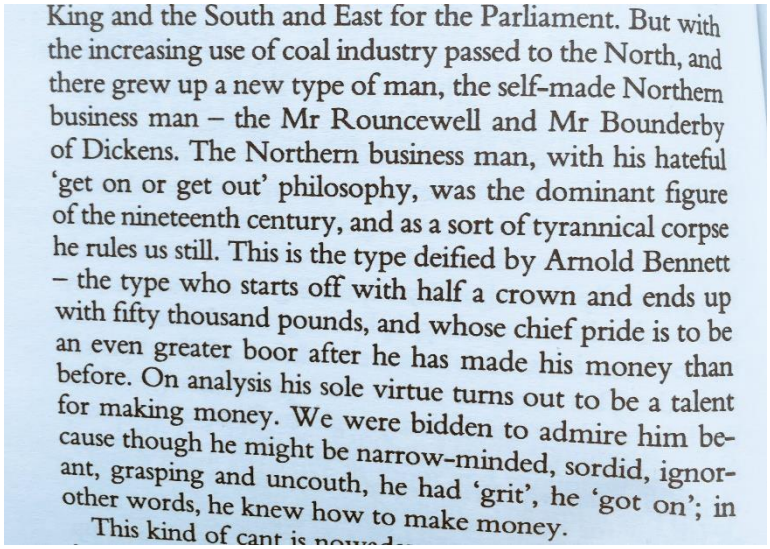
1. **What was the largest employment for English women until the First World War?**

2. **How do you think the war acted as a catalyst for change?**

3. **What is the impact of the line, 'away from private gaze and public conscience'?**

4. **How might the connotations of the statement 'the servant problem' differ according to social class?**

George Orwell, writing about Mr Birling, 8 years before Mr Birling was written and 25 years after Mr Birling had a rather awkward dinner party. (Source: Road to Wigan Pier, 1937)



King and the South and East for the Parliament. But with the increasing use of coal industry passed to the North, and there grew up a new type of man, the self-made Northern business man – the Mr Rouncewell and Mr Bounderby of Dickens. The Northern business man, with his hateful 'get on or get out' philosophy, was the dominant figure of the nineteenth century, and as a sort of tyrannical corpse he rules us still. This is the type deified by Arnold Bennett – the type who starts off with half a crown and ends up with fifty thousand pounds, and whose chief pride is to be an even greater boor after he has made his money than before. On analysis his sole virtue turns out to be a talent for making money. We were bidden to admire him because though he might be narrow-minded, sordid, ignorant, grasping and uncouth, he had 'grit', he 'got on'; in other words, he knew how to make money.

This kind of cant is nowa-

AO1 AO2 Interpretation and analysis

1. **What is meant by the phrase, 'get on or get out'?**

2. **Why does Orwell state that we are 'bidden to admire' such a man?**

3. **How is Orwell describing what could be Arthur Birling here?**

4. **What links can we make between this depiction and the modern celebrity?**

Oupensky's theory of Eternal Recurrance

Priestley was influenced by the Russian mystic philosopher Peter Ouspensky((1878-1947). Ouspensky believed in the theory of eternal recurrence. This is a theory that holds to the concept that the universe has been recurring, and will continue to recur in a self-similar form an infinite number of times (everything happens again and again and again). Ouspensky believed that our time on the planet was spent travelling along an ever-recurring spiral and that the aim of all individuals should be to change and improve this spiral and stop making the same old mistakes. In all our lives we are presented with opportunities to learn and change and therefore swing out in a new direction. The Inspector comes back from the future or from some place outside time to offer the Birlings an opportunity to change – an opportunity they appear not to take. In the end they have learned nothing and so will have to go through it all over again.

Francis Bass writes about Priestley's play, I have Been Here Before:

I Have Been Here Before is the third of J.B. Prietsley's time plays, written the same year as *Time and the Conways*. The play explores P.D. Ouspensky's theory of eternal recurrence, that everyone lives their life over and over again, and déjà vu and precognitive dreams are the result of remembering past lives. Unlike *Time and the Conways* or *Dangerous Corner*, Priestley doesn't develop this idea through any formalistic techniques. The acts occur in chronological order, and it all takes place in the same timeline. The fact that it's a work of theatre is in itself a formalistic technique, which I'll discuss in a moment, but otherwise Priestley's pretty straightforward, and presents the theory in a science fictional style.

As I said, while there's no time jumping or out-of-order chronology in the play, the fact that it is a play is in itself a formal choice. Theatre, as a medium, fundamentally lends itself to fatalistic themes. While most forms of story-telling have the quality that no matter how many times you read/hear/see the story, the characters will always make the same choices, and things will always turn out the same, theatre is the medium that emphasizes this most. As audience members, we are seeing actual live human beings on stage, experiencing the same present moment as us, who are (hopefully) highly skilled at creating the illusion that everything they do is natural and internally motivated, though in truth everything they do is being dictated by a script. This is part of the power of Greek tragedies, in ancient Greece and today—because they adapt myths that everyone is familiar with, the audience knows exactly what will happen before the show even starts.

Katherine Howard @saysmiss

AO1 Interpretation and evaluation

1. **According to Ouspensky, how is time spiralled and what impact does this have upon us as individuals?**

2. **How does the Inspector transcend time, if we are to take on this theory?**

3. **Francis Bass states that no matter how many times you see a story, the characters always make the same choices. To what extent do you believe this to be true of the Birling family's lives?**

4. **Some critics apply the features of a morality play to Priestley's An Inspector Calls. How does reading this theory enforce such an idea?**

J.W. Dunne and the popular promise of dreams (edited)

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'We must live before we can attain to either intelligence or control at all. We must sleep if we are not to find ourselves, at death, helplessly strange to the new conditions. And we must die before we can hope to advance to a broader understanding.'

J.W. Dunne, An Experiment with Time, 3rd edn. (London: Faber, 1958), 183.

In brief, Dunne proposed that time takes time to pass, so that the unfolding of 'Time 1' in our waking consciousness may be measured by an observer in 'Time 2', and so on in an infinite series. The series of times was inhabited by a series of observers, a concept illustrated in *The Serial Universe* by the image of a painter who paints himself painting into the foreground of a landscape, and then paints another picture in which the first picture is included in the scene, and so on[4].

Despite its awkward theorizing, heavy-handed expository style, baffling plane diagrams and talk of 'cerebral substratum' and 'diagonal reagent', *An Experiment with Time* was immensely popular, and has been frequently reprinted. In part, the book functioned as an antidote to the Einstein sensation: Dunne converted the inaccessible, abstruse fourth dimension of relativity theory into something that any reader might explore in their sleep[5]. Readers were encouraged to collect examples of their own precognitive dreams, to further corroborate the theory. Dunne's method of dream recording also restored the unconscious to readers, dismissing the symbolic content of dreams to focus on their literal enactment of past and future events[6].

Beyond these consolations, Dunne's proposals established the reader as a self-experimenting subject, and it is this feature, I argue, that accounts for the enduring popularity of his book. Dunne uses newspapers and novels to show how he came to observe the dream effect in action. Headlines from the *Daily Telegraph* are included in the text: a report of the successful Cape to Cairo expedition led by Lionel Decle in 1901, and the 1902 eruption of Mont Pelée on Martinique. Dunne's dreams are the stuff of adventure stories: in the first instance, he dreams that a group of ragged and sunburned soldiers inform him that they have just crossed the continent of Africa, and in the second he himself attempts to save thousands of people from an island volcano. On waking, he reads about his dreams in the *Telegraph*, and wonders how he can have woken up with memories of the news he is about to read.

Dunne's military lifestyle and social milieu were inherently adventurous: years later, a dream involving an escaped lion includes elements of a prior discussion with his brother about what

guns to take on a lion-shooting expedition, combined with future reading of *Hatchways*(1916) by Ethel Sidgwick, which features an escaped leopard. Precognition of an element from the novel prompts Dunne to investigate the possibility of accessing the future while awake, and he reports successful glimpses of detail from *The Book of the Sword* (1884) by R.F. Burton, *Julia* (1924) by Baroness van Hutten, Arnold Bennett's *Riceyman Steps* (1923), *The House of the Arrow* (1924) by A.E.W. Mason, and *The King of Elfland's Daughter* (1924) by Lord Dunsany. These examples give Dunne a connection to his readership as a fellow consumer of popular fiction, across divides of class and occupation. Although the exposition itself quickly becomes dense and abstract, popular entertainment is emphasized as an equally valid means of contact with the truth. Readers could relax in the knowledge that escapism was in fact a way of participating in a grand experiment to help develop humanity's higher powers.

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5. I have explored the struggle for access to relativity in Britain in *Loving Faster than Light: Romance and Readers in Einstein's Universe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012).
6. On the relationship between Dunne's theory and Freudian wish-fulfilment, see Victoria Stewart, 'J.W. Dunne and Literary Culture in the 1930s and 1940s', *Literature & History* 17 (2008): 62-81.

AO1 Interpretation and Evaluation

1. **How was Dunne's theory of time received? Why do you think this might be?**

2. **What might we learn from looking back at previous events in time?**

3. **What are the possible flaws of Dunne's theory study?**

4. **Dunne believed in precognitive dreams as a way of avoiding possible future events. How might this be applied to the play?**

Biblical Allusion in An Inspector Calls

Biblical Reference: Cast out of the Garden of Eden

Genesis 3:22-24 *- "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a* ***flaming sword*** *which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."*

In the bible an angel with a flaming sword casts Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden for eating the forbidden fruit stopping them from visiting the tree of life.

The Worst is Yet to Come (Revelation 8:1-13)

Recognize and respond before God's wrath is revealed (8:7-13). In 8:7, "The first sounded, and there came hail and **fire**, mixed with **blood**, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up."

In the Old Testament, hailstorms are a common element in God's judgment. Why were these judgments "mixed with blood"? "Blood" is a key word here. Blood is the symbol of vengeance. Blood and fire were often combined as symbols of judgment.

In the play, Inspector Goole says:

> *We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other. And I tell you that the time will soon come when, if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish. Good night*.

In the New Testament, Paul writes something similar in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 21-26:

> *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit.… The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

Katherine Howard @saysmiss

AO1 AO2 Interpretation and analysis

1. **What misconceptions does Priestley want us to deliberately make by naming the character Eva?**

2. **What links can we make between the statement, 'Recognise and respond before God's wrath is revealed' and the character's actions within the play?**

3. **What is meant by the statement below? Why do you think Priestley chose the Inspector to mimic the words of the New Testament?**

'just as the body is one and has many members, and all he members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ'?

JB Priestley's An Inspector Calls, October 1946

October 1, 1946: the first night of JB Priestley's play left critics bored and stifling groans

Samantha Ellis

Wed 7 May 2003 11.01 BST

"Bang! Bang! Mr Priestley lets drive with both barrels," was the Times's verdict on An Inspector Calls, when it was performed at London's New Theatre. JB Priestley had already established himself as an astonishingly prolific writer, churning out poems, essays, novels and, from the 1930s, plays. During the war his patriotic radio broadcasts were more popular than anyone's except Churchill's.

He had also found a favourite actor: Ralph Richardson, who had appeared in Priestley's Eden End in 1934. The following year Priestley wrote him a play, Cornelius, and was full of praise for Richardson's performance, writing: "He can be a bank clerk, an insurance agent, a dentist, but very soon mysterious lights and shadows, tones of anguish and ecstasy, are discovered in banking, insurance and dentistry." This made Richardson perfect casting for the sepulchral Inspector Goole.

The chosen director was the fearsome Basil Dean, famed for his slick, glittering productions but also for his temper; some called him "Bastard Basil". He certainly didn't see eye to eye with his star. Dean wrote in his memoirs: "I found Ralph Richardson unexpectedly reluctant to take direction, perhaps in unconscious rebellion after the years of wartime restraint." Richardson's five-year stint as a pilot in the second world war was less the problem, however, than his strong views as to how the play should be staged. He and Priestley wanted an impressionist production; Dean's idea of impressionism was a realistic box set lit in lurid green. After the dress rehearsal, Richardson fired Dean and redesigned the lighting.

Richardson also clashed with his cast, including Alec Guinness, who one night found his shoes immersed in a bucket of water. Richardson, it seems, had found it irritating that they squeaked throughout the show. The water didn't help, as Guinness later recalled: "I squelched noisily through the last act and then missed two performances through near pneumonia." Despite this, the actors stayed friends.

Reviews were mixed. The Observer's JC Trewin felt that the play, which found a family responsible for the death of a young girl, was somewhat heavy. "[It] could have been stripped to half its length: though their offence is rank we feel that the Birlings are hardly worth this prolonged clatter of skeletons." Lionel Hale, writing in the Daily Mail, declared: "Only severe self-control prevented hollow groans rising throughout the last act from seat No. E1 in the stalls: my seat. It was early on in this act that Mr Priestley disclosed that his moralising play had no theatrical ethics … the stage demands a theatrical solution." Instead of closure, he wrote, came "a fatal dead-end". As for the actors, "Mr Richardson, looking for something to act in a nebulous part, paraded like some dummy in the tailoring section of a 'Britain Used to Make It' Exhibition. A pitiful sight."

Katherine Howard @saysmiss

Not everyone was so vitriolic. The New Statesman's Stephen Potter praised Priestley's "beautiful craftsmanship" and called the ending "the best coup de thétre of the year". Echoing Priestley, he wrote that Richardson "suggests the unearthly by his very ordinariness". The Sunday Times's James Agate admired the acting: "Guinness makes of the tragic libertine something that is a long way from being wholly vile," he wrote, while Richardson "gives the Inspector a stern, unangry poise far more effective than all the thunder he obviously has up his sleeve". But he closed his review with the observation: "It is not until you leave the theatre that you ask yourself by what magic dullness has been kept away from this modern morality in which nobody does anything but talk."

The play wasn't the success it might have been, and the criticisms that it was sententious and stodgy stuck. But Stephen Daldry's 1992 revival changed all that. His staging of the play in an Edwardian doll's house set on top of post-Blitz rubble was so shiveringly powerful that one critic credited him with "reclaiming JB Priestley's play from the realms of banal period whimsy".

AO1

1. **What indication does the popularity of his radio broadcasts tell us about public reception of Priestley overall?**

2. **What was unorthodox about Richardson's behaviour? How was this quite fitting in that he played the role of Inspector Goole?**

3. **Why was Lionel Hale disappointed by the play?**

4. **To what extent do you agree that the Birlings, 'are hardly worth this prolonged clatter of skeletons'? Why might Priestley have taken the audience though such a level of discomfort?**

5. **In your opinion, what did Stephen Potter mean by the statement, 'this modern morality in which nobody does anything but talk'?**

An Inspector Calls is poisonous, revisionist propaganda - which is why the luvvies love it

Yet despite the oppressively didactic set-up, the BBC's new TV adaptation of J.B. Priestley's weird melodrama grips and compels

James Delingpole

19 September 2015
8:00 AM

What a load of manipulative, hysterical tosh is *An Inspector Calls*. It wasn't a work with which I was familiar till I saw the latest TV adaptation. Now, of course, I see exactly why the luvvies — see, for example, Stephen Daldry's highly acclaimed early 1990s National Theatre revival — adore it so. It confirms everything they think they know about the world: rich people bad, heartless, oppressive; poor people the long-suffering and saintly salt of the earth.

In case you've not had the pleasure, J.B. Priestley's play is like a socialist game of Cluedo: a lovely innocent young working-class woman has died and the toffs all dunnit. Self-made millionaire mill-owner Arthur Birling bludgeoned her with his ruthless capitalism; Mrs Birling with her hypocritical sanctimoniousness; young Sheila Birling with her hysterical upper-middle-class insecurity; Sheila's betrothed, Gerald Croft, with lasciviousness dressed up as human sympathy.

Then young Eric Birling, the drunken son and heir, finished her off by borderline-raping her and impregnating her with a child for which he neglected his responsibility. All right, so they didn't literally kill her — she drank bleach — but they might just as well have done. As the mysterious nocturnal visitor Inspector Goole makes abundantly clear, this is a case of murder.

You can see, too, why it has become a standard GCSE text. Not only are its politics perfectly aligned with those of the teaching profession but there are so many big themes to explore, so many dramatic coups-de-théâtre at which to marvel. That Inspector, for example. As his name subtly indicates, he's a supernatural figure: a red avenger from the netherworld come to strike a blow for social justice in a callous world ripe for righteous retribution.

Being a prescient sort of fellow, the Inspector knows — the play being set in 1912 — that that righteous retribution lies but two years hence. Prescient but not omniscient. What he doesn't seem to be aware of (odd, given that his creator served in the trenches, first with the ranks, later as an officer) is the disproportionate burden of sacrifice that will fall on those despised public-school classes. (Eric, we can infer, is definitely for the chop; as is Gerald, whose father is a lord.)

Or perhaps he does know and thinks it's a jolly good thing. If so, then I don't think that reflects very well on J.B. Priestley, who, it is often said, created the Inspector as his mouthpiece. By the time of the second world war, when he wrote the play, Priestley had become a national treasure. A pretty repellent view for a national treasure to hold and to celebrate in a potboiling drama, if you ask me: those bloody toffs, they had it all coming.

Mind you, I'm not sure even Priestley himself would have guessed that his weird melodrama would have become such a standard of dramatic literature. Not least given its tragically dreadful implausibility. Five members of the same family, all with a hand in this random girl's death? Pull the other one. As for the nonsense with the Inspector's ludicrous investigation, whose purpose has less to do with inquiry than with delivering portentous moral judgments: it's so unprofessional and impertinent that Arthur Birling would have seen him off the premises in five minutes, not waited an hour before belatedly realising, 'That inspector didn't half ask some funny questions.'

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But for all that, it's amazing how intensely it grips and compels. Once you forget the implausibilities — which you do quite often — you cannot help but be sucked into the emotional maelstrom. Yes, the set-up is almost embarrassingly schematic, oppressively didactic, risibly contrived, but the characters and their relationships (domineering father, feckless son, indulgent mother), though clichéd, are persuasively drawn. It's an actors' play — every part meaty, with hidden depths, requiring hugely satisfying shifts of mood. Another reason why the luvvies love it so.

Boy, do they inhabit those roles. They did in this TV production anyway: David Thewlis as the Inspector; Ken Stott as Mr Birling; Miranda Richardson as Mrs; etc. It's quite invidious to name names when the entire cast was so good. They believed in their characters — even when required to do crap things like get an innocent shopgirl sacked on a toffee-nosed whim — and so, thanks to their conviction, did you.

The play, though, does not deserve this reverence. It's poisonous, revisionist propaganda on a par with that of Barbara and John Lawrence Hammond, the northern bourgeois liberals who, in the wake of Engels and Toynbee, invented the popular modern notion of the industrial revolution as the bad thing it simply wasn't. Most serious historians now recognise that for people like Eva —the play's suicide victim — the owners of dark satanic mills like Birling's generally did far more good than harm. If the public still often doesn't, then it's those celebrity purveyors of cast-iron bollocks like J.B. bloody Priestley we have to thank.

AO1 AO2 Interpretation and analysis

1. What are the stereotypical views of social class that Dellingpole outlines exist within the television adaptation of the play? Why do you think this infuriates him somewhat?

2. Why does Dellingpole describe the Inspector as 'prescient' and not 'omnipresent?

3. Explore the meaning behind the writer's line, 'disproportionate burden of sacrifice' of the 'public-school class.'

4. Based upon reading this article, to what extent do you believe the involvement of all of the characters in Eva's death is plausible?

5. To what extent do you think the statement, 'dark, satanic mills like Birlings generally did far more good than harm'?

Postscript Sunday 23 June 1940

Posted on June 22, 2010 | Leave a comment

In the fourth of the BBC radio Postscripts, Priestley explored the two faces of Germany. He had always responded to what he called the "bright face" of Germany: music, art, civic life, and beautiful landscapes. He knew the country and its people well. Bradford, where he was born and grew up, was a cosmopolitan city with a large and influential German population. Priestley had taken a walking holiday by the Rhine before the Great War, had suffered alongside German soldiers and prisoners during that war, and had visited the country again afterwards.

But "after the Nazis came, I went no more. The bright face had gone, and in its place was the vast dark face with its broken promises and endless deceit, its swaggering Storm Troopers and dreaded Gestapo, its bloodstained basements …" Priestley saw Nazi-ism as the pathetic mentality of overgrown bullying schoolboys, giving power to the most vain, rotten and cruel people in society.

The ideas Priestley expressed in this broadcast had come to him as he walked home in the black-out from a night at the cinema. He had known from the early days of Nazi power that "it must come to this: that there must come a night when I would find myself walking through a blacked-out London in an England that was being turned into a fortress".

Black-out in Gretley (Heinemann, 1942) is a thriller about Humphrey Neyland, a counter-espionage agent whose best friends had been killed by the Nazis. He is sent to an industrial town in the North Midlands to expose Nazi agents. The novel paints a vivid picture of war-time life, and is full of the ideas Priestley would express in this and other Postscript broadcasts: what motivated Fifth Columnists, how to improve society post-war.

Neyland arrives in Gretley, and has his say about the black-out:

"Now I hate the black-out anywhere. It's been one of the mistakes of this war. There's something timid, bewildered, Munich-minded about it. If I'd my way, I'd take a chance right up to the moment the bombers were overhead rather than endure this daily misery of darkened streets and blind walls. There's something degrading about it. We should never have allowed those black-hearted outcasts to darken half the world".

Neyland struggles to find his hotel in the darkness and is overwhelmed with the idea that they are all on the very brink of Hell, of total evil. He realises his mission is to stop those who are trying to push them further in

AO2 analysis and contextual understanding

1. **Explore the persinfication of Germany that Priestley presents in the second paragraph.**
2. **What links can we make with Priestley's view of Nazism and the portrayal of the Birling family?**
3. **How would you describe Neyland's views when he states, 'If I'd my way, I'd take a chance right up to the moment the bombers were overhead rather than endure this daily misery of darkened streets and blind walls.' Whatfuels his frustrations?**

Katherine Howard @saysmiss

The BBC’s Steph McGovern is right: posh girls get paid more

The BBC’s Steph McGovern says that she is paid less than privately educated colleagues because of her working-class roots. Deborah Orr knows how she feels

Deborah Orr

February 27 2018, 12:01am, The Times

Steph McGovern: a regional accent means lower pay

Steph McGovern has spoken out, in a strong, working-class, regional accent. Unfortunately, due to her strong, working-class, regional accent, no one has a clue what the lass is saying, although we know she’s a lass because she’s from Middlesbrough. From that, if my experience of having a strong, working-class, regional accent is anything to go by, even the most casual listener will still have been able to work out quite a bit about who Steph McGovern may be.

Not so long ago, in a pub, a man could tell from nothing more than a brief introduction and my strong regional accent, that I should put my money away because London prices could be quite shocking and I was probably finding it pretty tough in the big city. He thought he was being absolutely charming. He was, obviously, being a patronising, xenophobic, sexist twonk. I can only assume, since I’m in my fifties, that he assumed that middle-aged women were of no account or means either. I asked for champagne. Of course.

McGovern is asking for champagne as well. Sort of. The television presenter says that her regional accent has inhibited her ability to earn at the BBC. Only now, at the age of 35, has she achieved a six-figure salary, one that not only men, but also posher women at the BBC could have expected with her level of experience at a much earlier stage. Her contention is that the BBC not only has a problem with a gender gap in pay, but with a class gap in pay as well. She appears to have been clobbered by both.

Part of me wishes that the controversy about the gender pay gap were not being carried out at such an exclusive level. I, like most people, don’t expect to have a six-figure salary for as long as I live. And I’m cool with that. Inequality and discrimination are always ugly. (The BBC has said that it is more diverse than ever, with 80 per cent of its workforce educated in state schools.) Yet there does come a point when the spectacle of one person complaining about how arduous their ascent to silly money has been, only to be countered by another person complaining about how they’ve earned every penny of the clown-shoes-silly money, just turns everyone off.

Even so, what McGovern is saying is important to women, working-class women in particular. The BBC’s language is indeed Received Pronunciation, reminding people constantly of how they should ideally be speaking, with the occasional and marvellously liberal foray into the provincial dialects serving only as the exception that proves the rule. If

you have a regional accent you are always aware that you are deviating from some supposedly neutral benchmark of perfection.

My experience of life with a working-class, regional accent has been a bit of a “journey”. I was born and bred in Motherwell, North Lanarkshire, with a Scottish father and an English mother. Until I was 17 I was berated daily for the unbearable pretence of my English accent. Immediately on arrival at university I began the pattern of much of my life, which was to stand around talking perfectly normally only to be told by people whose faces were a picture of incomprehension that they couldn’t understand a word I was saying, what with that incredibly strong accent, and could I please be more clear?

Part of the problem was that I’d just made a really bad, uninformed choice. I knew nothing at all about university except that my grades meant that I could get into what seemed to be the “best one”. I’d gone to St Andrews, unaware that it was considered a “hurrah” university, beloved of England’s hunting, shooting and fishing crowd. I’d never seen anything like them and they had never seen anything like me. It was very confusing and I don’t quite know how I got through it.

A few years later, in London, when I bumped up against the Oxbridge people, a degree from Scotland’s “best one” meant nothing. They really did only take other Oxbridge people seriously. My boss once patiently explained to me that he had to pay a new Oxbridge graduate a good chunk more than me, with my five years’ experience in magazine publishing, because some other company would snap him up if he didn’t. Clearly, no other company would be snapping at me. They eventually fired me for my bad attitude. My bad attitude to the fact that I was blatantly from a less refined section of society.

Has my accent hampered my career? Probably not that much, give or take the occasional interview in which no one understood any of my answers. I guess the thing is that it accelerates the careers of others around you. I have been passed over for people who were no better than me, but who just fitted better with ideas about how a young person working in journalism looks and behaves. And I’ve been made to feel self-conscious about those things many, many times. Even now, my strong, working-class, regional accent will be referred to pointedly by good people who mean no harm and I’ll feel obliged to respond with a rousing round of “Muuuurrrduuur”, in the manner of Detective Taggart. It’s either that or a Glasgow kiss.

Insiders at the BBC say that the men who hire and fire there are still in thrall to the pretty girls with the posh accents. The McGoverns of this world they find more intimidating. This atavistic stuff dies hard, especially when so many people are so keen to cling on to it. McGovern, I believe, is making the right connections, and deeper, more complex, more sinister ones than she may know at that.

McGovern’s six-figure salary proclaims that she has a voice. It is being heard. I think it’s important to remember how it was before the war, and how fitting it was that class constraints broke down so much in Britain in the decades immediately after. For a time in Britain it was ultra-cool to have a working-class background and a regional accent — you were a mod, in the same ballpark as the Beatles. It felt as if there had been a breakthrough.

All that feels under threat now. That slippery posh white boy Nigel Farage has led our whole nation away from Europe and plurality and back to little Britain, little England, little Essex

and little Middlesbrough. McGovern's observations are a warning that people like Farage will always find other people to think they are better than, at the least excuse, then mocking and vilifying them for the quaint but important mistake of being even a tiny bit different. I stand with McGovern. I always will.

AO1 Interpretation and Evaluation

1. **How have class and gender restricted Steph's career outcomes?**

2. **What stereotypical assumptions have been made of her as a result of her spoken voice?**

3. **What does the writer state is the unfair advantage of attending an Oxbrige university?**

4. **To what extent do you agree with the statement, 'McGovern's six-figure salary proclaims that she has a voice. It is being heard.'?**

5. **How might we draw csmilarities and differences between the male individuals mentioned within the article and the male chatacters of the play?**

Socialist Worker

Birth in toilets puts a spotlight on Sports Direct conditions

by Jeannie Robinson

The Sports Direct warehouse in Shirebrook, north Derbyshire

On New Year's Day a woman worker gave birth to a baby in the toilets of a Sports Direct warehouse in Shirebrook, north Derbyshire.
She had allegedly been refused permission to go home after reporting sick.
Police confirmed they questioned the woman for "neglect" but she has not been charged.
This incident has led to outrage in the local area—and exposed what workers call a "culture of fear" at the plant.
Both local Labour MPs, Dennis Skinner and Sir Alan Meale, spoke out in the local paper last week. Both have approached the company but been ignored.
Meale said, "I have spoken to people who work there and I know that staff are in fear for their jobs on a daily basis."
He added that Sports Direct boss Mike Ashley was allowing people to work in "appalling conditions".
Since the birth, other workers at the warehouse have made new allegations about their treatment.
One said working there was like living "in the olden days".
Every worker is searched on leaving the plant, and are sometimes asked to strip.

Queues
Often the queues for these checks last for hours and employees are not paid for the time they spend waiting.
Workers report bullying on the shop floor. They describe people being laid off or having their hours cut, and say there is a big turnover of staff at the site.
Another says there is a "strike system" and "if you get six you are out the door". This can be for things such as lateness.
Management has insisted that no one is allowed to speak about the conditions in the factory.
Sports Direct is a hugely successful company valued at £4.3 billion. Owner Ashley is a billionaire with a 64 percent stake in the firm.
He owns Newcastle United Football Club, which is sponsored by payday loan shark Wonga.
The huge warehouse in Shirebrook is the hub of his company.
It employs around 5,000 people—and some 90 percent are on zero hours contracts.
There are some Unite union members at the plant. And campaigners plan to work with local trades councils to demand an end to these practices.

Hovis workers in Wigan struck and got rid of zero hours contracts last year. They showed it can be done.

There are many Polish staff at the plant. Workers in Poland have a proud history of solidarity, just as workers in Derbyshire do. Whatever our nationality, all workers deserve decent pay and conditions.

Katherine Howard @saysmiss

AO1 Interpretation and Evaluation

1. **Why might Sports Direct employees continue to go to work, even when faced with a 'culture of fear'?**

2. **How would you describe the treatment of the staff at the warehouse in North Derbyshire, based upon your reading?**

3. **Why might we be led to believe that these types of working conditions would not be in existence in modern Britain? What measures are in place to stop such treatment?**

4. **To what extent does this bring a new level of relevance to Priestley's play?**

The Social Media Effect: Are You Really Who You Portray Online?

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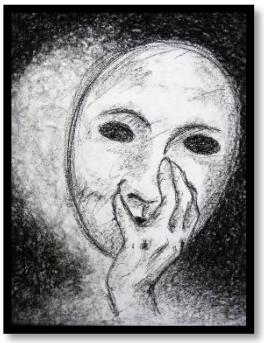
R. Kay Green

Over the past 15 years, the world as we know it has been taken by storm through the onset of social media. According to Comscore (2014) about 90 percent of UK Internet users visit a social media site each month. Because we live in such a largely global-society, creating and maintaining an online presence has become most relevant in promoting your brand and expanding your social network.



As we know, perception is everything; especially in the world of social media. In terms of perception, we all have an ideal self. We all wish to maximize our careers, our profession, and aspire to be like those who we find most successful. As the use of social media continues to evolve; the concept of presenting our ideal selves versus our real selves has become more and more prevalent on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, Pinterest, and even LinkedIn.

As research suggests, your "real self" is what you are - your attributes, your characteristics, and your personality. Your "ideal self" is what you feel you should be; much of it due to societal and environmental influences. From a societal standpoint, many of us are driven by competition, achievement, and status; hence, the creation and portrayal of our ideal selves.

Consider the fact that on social media sites, we consider our profiles to be presentations of who we are. Therefore, through interaction with the social medium, the real and ideal selves intersect; and the ideal self is at least partially actualized. In essence, our online selves represent our ideals and eliminate many of our other real components.

The question we have to ask ourselves is: Are we really presenting who we are or are we presenting a hyper-idealistic version of ourselves? It has been argued that the social media effect creates a false sense of self and self-esteem through the use of likes, fans, comments, posts, etc. For many social media users, it is an esteem booster, which explains why so many people spend so much time on social media. It provides many individuals with a false sense of self and an inflated sense of who they really are.

Katherine Howard @saysmiss

AO1 Interpretation and Evaluation

1. **How was the idea of an 'ideal self' in existence before social media?**

2. **What reasons may an individual have to present an 'ideal self' to others over their 'real self'? Give examples that may have either positive or negative outcomes.**

3. **To what extent do you agree that we are in danger of believing that our own 'ideal self' exists?**

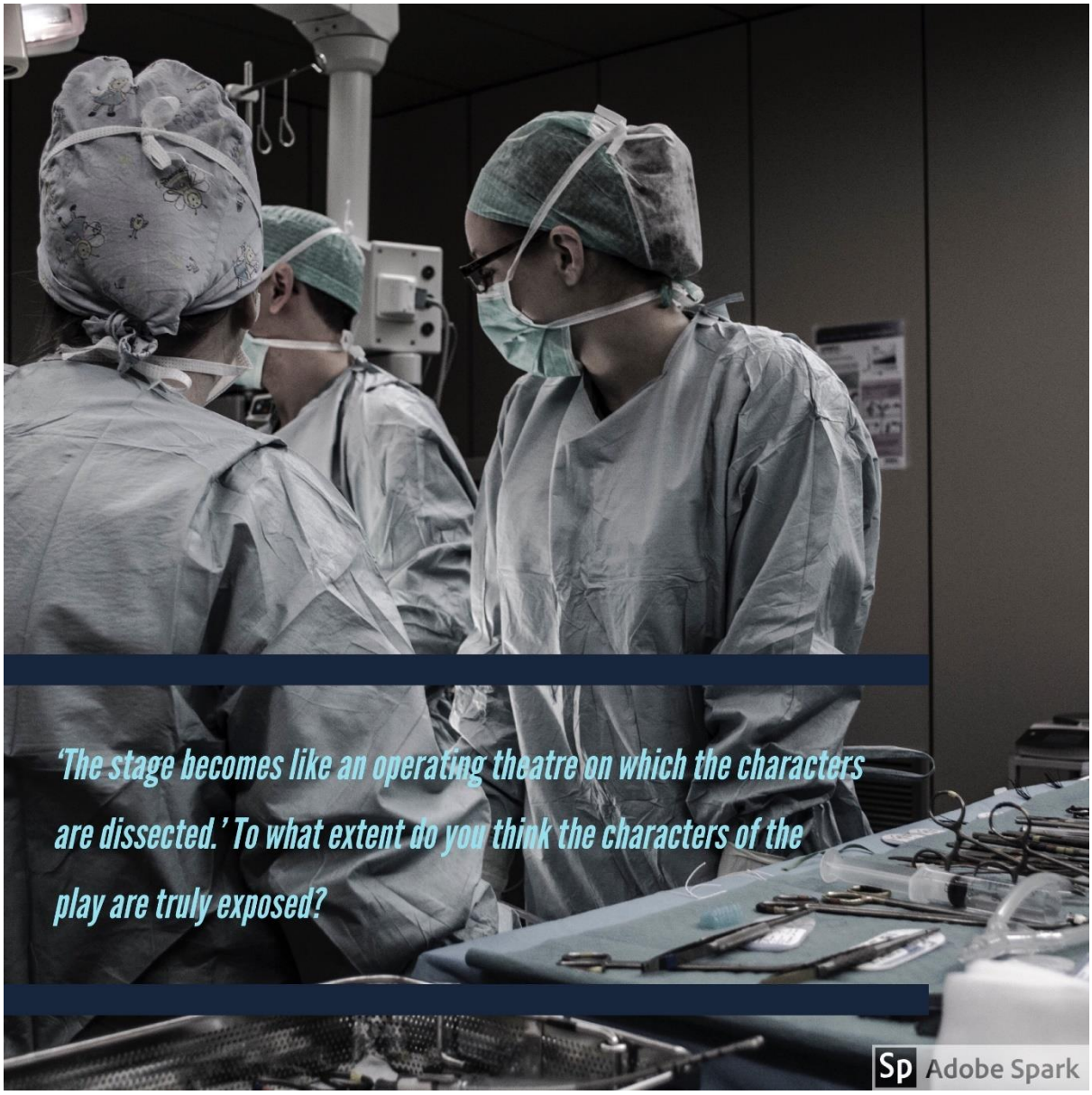
4. **To what degree do the Birling family present a 'hyper-idealistic version' of themselves? Select one or two characters to consider the question.**

5. **How does this desire to present as 'hyper-idealistic' ultimately become an obstacle for the Birlings? Select one character to consider the question.**

Questions of Discussion

1. The play is actually about male lust and the sexual exploitation of the weak by the powerful. Discuss.
2. Priestley once remarked that he had “always been delighted at the prospect of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning.” How might this quote illuminate your reading of An Inspector Calls?
3. The play is a symbolic confrontation between socialism and capitalism, where neither philosophy emerges triumphant. Discuss.

4. There is no hope at the end of An Inspector Calls because the hubristic nature of man is not fully destroyed. Discuss.
5. The action of 'An Inspector Calls' takes place on just one evening, and in just one room of the Birling's house. What do you think the play gains or loses as a result?
6. Do you think Priestley is optimistic about the future? Base you views on 'An Inspector Calls' and its dramatic presentation.
7. What type of play is in 'An Inspector Calls'? Social comedy, detective story, realistic presentation of life in 1912, supernatural fantasy? Consider each and give text-based reasons for your views.
8. Make the case for Edna being the play's most significant character.
9. J.L. Styan has written that the play's final twist gives a "spurious emphasis irrelevant to the substance of the play." Might he be wrong?
10. The Inspector is nothing more than a perfectly human hoaxer, and Priestley makes it clear. Do you agree?
11. "If we openly declare what is wrong with us, what is our deepest need, then perhaps the death and despair will by degrees disappear," J B Priestley. To what extent is this concept examined within the play?
12. The action of 'An Inspector Calls' takes place on just one evening, and in just one room of the Birling's house. What do you think the play gains or loses as a result?
13. 'The society that Prestley dissects simply doesn't exist anymore; the ideas and social constructs are far removed from the complexities of the modern world.' To what extent is this statement true?



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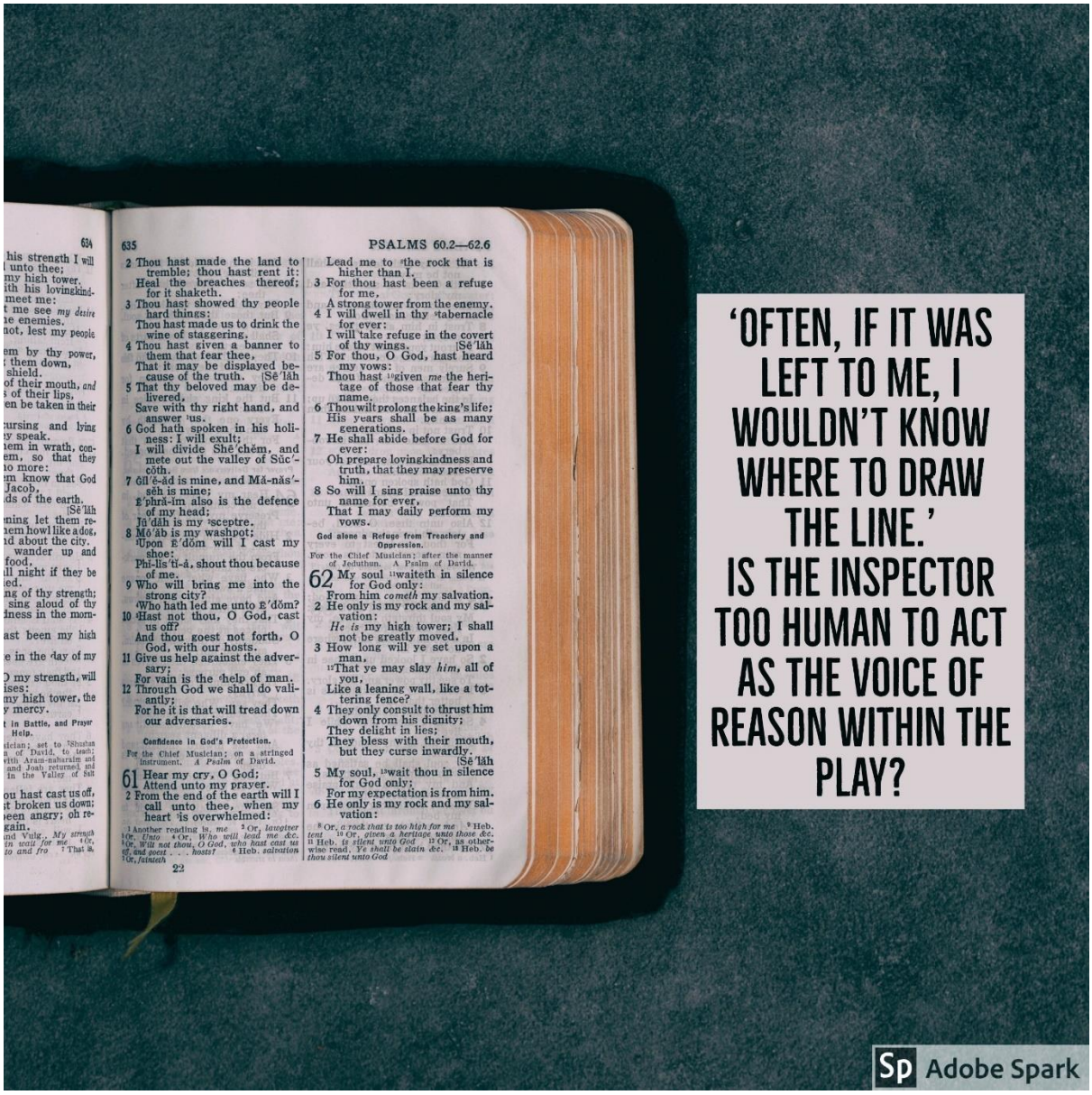

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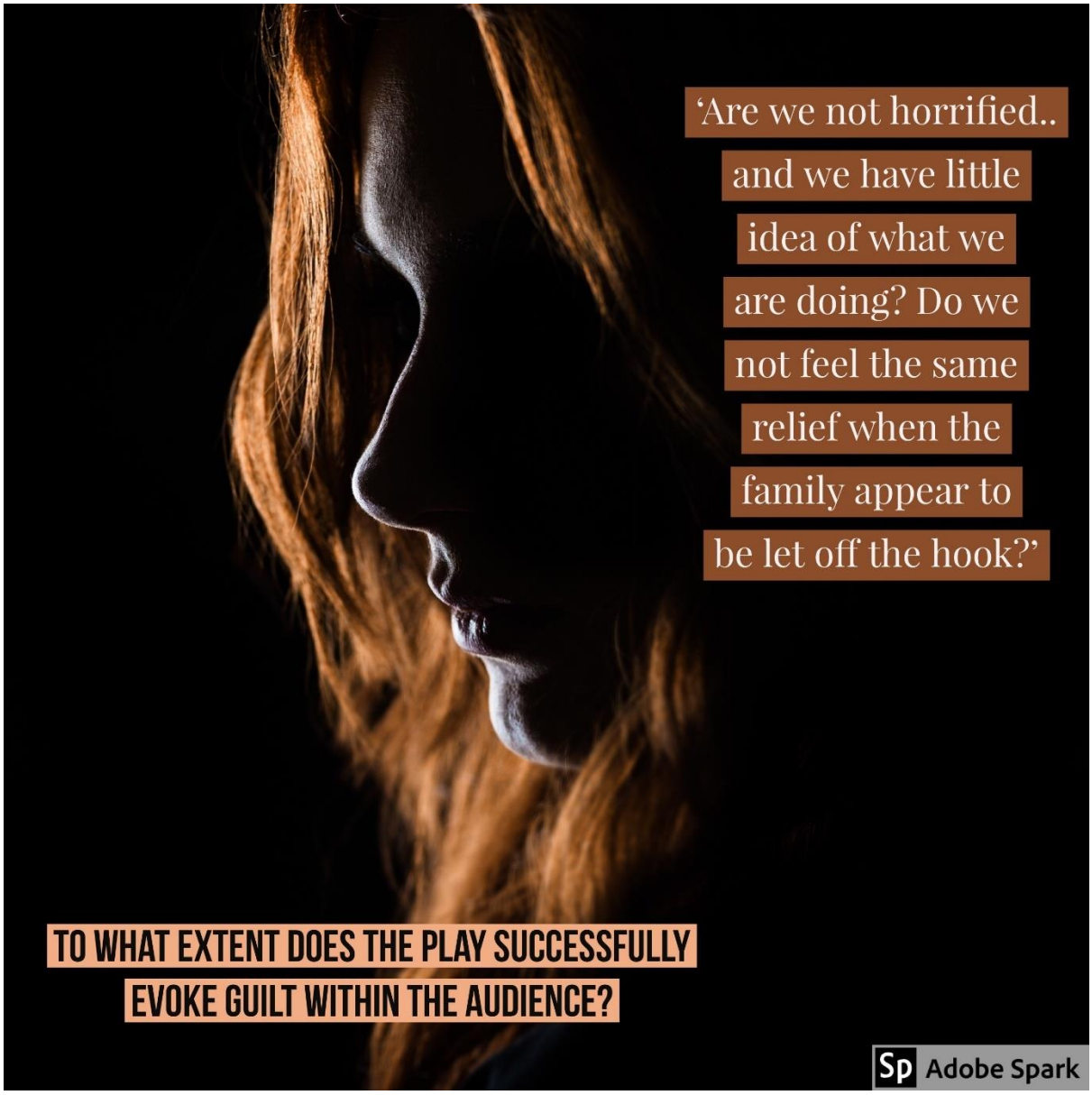

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