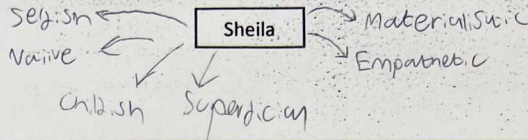


The philosopher **John Locke** theorised that nurture has a more significant influence on human behaviour than inherent nature. Therefore, it could be argued...

People learn
↳ bad qualities

Sheila Birling - Revision

Task 1: Write down adjectives that can be used to describe Sheila.



Intro
Discuss
Judge

Another theory... John Locke's theory on nature vs nurture.

Locke argued that people were not born inherently evil, instead the world around them has shaped their mindsets. He also believed that parents had a big influence on the way children acted, ultimately, he believed it was nurture over nature.

- Sheila and Eric's egotistical outlook can be directly attributed to their upbringing, and the role models their parents offered. *role model*
- However, when The Inspector provides them with an alternative, they are capable of change, and unlike their parents resolve to be better people. *Sheila + Eric learn from Inspector's behaviour*
- Therefore, they shed their old values, proving that their poor behaviour is not innate to them as people.

↳ context, social

Act 1	Act 2	Act 3
<p>'pretty girl'</p> <p>'pleased with life and rather excited'</p> <p>'has played huge series'</p> <p>MSB: men with important work... spend all their time and energy on business</p> <p>'serious temper'</p> <p>'laughing in a servable, plain looking creature'</p> <p>'they're not cheap labour, they're people'</p>	<p>'I'm supposed to be engaged to be married'</p> <p>'Bourgeois palace' → socialism</p> <p>'selfish, intricate creature'</p> <p>'Don't interfere daisy'</p> <p>'she tells him to ring'</p> <p>'we'd have to start all over again'</p> <p>'I begged you and begged you to stop'</p> <p>'mother, you must've known' (pregnant)</p>	<p>'guilty and dishonest'</p> <p>'I must die'</p> <p>'frightens me to see why you care'</p> <p>'I suppose we're all with people now'</p> <p>'I've got my own life and blood and organs'</p> <p>'you can't help to kill her'</p> <p>'we are humans, we are boys'</p>

In the exposition of the play, the Birlings are situated in the 'pink and intimate lighting' as Priestley created a depicts a grandiose and decadent household that the Birlings are living in within the 'suburban household'. Eric, a man who is described as 'half shy, half assertive' is initially introduced as a character that is quite deceptive or unsure of himself, his 'squiffy' nature is evident of his feelings of unease. The juxtaposition of 'shy' and 'assertive' may catch audience members unaware as they are confused as to why Eric feels like this amongst his family members. Locke theorised that nurture has more of a significant influence on human behaviour than nature, it could then be argued that Eric feels out of place within his family, the rules and regulations of the ideal Edwardian family are weighing heavy on him and he feels it's difficult to truly be his own self in this situation, despite being with his immediate family. It could also be argued that Eric feels disappointed in himself, his sister is celebrating a significant life changing moment in her life, whereas, he is called an 'ass' by his sister and is then ridiculed further on stage.

How does Priestley present Sheila tonight to play? [40]

In the majority of Priestley's works, he aims to entertain, while also providing important social messages. Priestley skillfully uses the character of Sheila to address a variety of subjects - class divide, government gap and responsibility.

Immediately, Sheila is presented as content in her societal place, and blissfully unaware of many of the realities of the world, regardless through the 'pale and intimate lighting' and her description as 'pleased with life'. The stage directions seem to give ~~the~~ the impression that she is naive and ignorant, almost living out some ideal fantasy, facilitated by her wealthy upbringing. ~~From~~ among the audience to already have a pre-conceived notion of her nature and character as a 'pretty girl' who loves awards before she's ever spoken a line.

Furthermore, this spoiled and ignorant side of Sheila is subverted in the latter half of Act 1, when she must take responsibility for her actions. First we see her take about her 'furious temper' at Milward's, and stating 'if she were a miserable, plain looking creature, I probably wouldn't have done it'. This is important, as it highlights Sheila's acceptance over her pride and ego, and understanding her role to play in Eva Smith's death. Additionally, it shows her coming to terms with her disdain and ignorance to be poor, which is unfair when she says 'their not cheap

labour, their people.' As an audience, we can see this development in her personality, and it lays the foundational elements for the rest of Sheila's emotional maturation that takes place later in the play.

In Act 2 of the play, Sheila is praised as having developed her individuality and morals, while also daring to speak out against what she sees as wrong. This is evident in her criticism of Gerald, calling 'I'm supposed to be engaged to the hero of it' and sarcastically juxtaposing 'Birling's Palace' to be 'haunt' where Gerald meets Eva Smith. This shows that through repenting and acceptance for her deadly sin of pride/ vanity, she has gained the strength necessary to critique and make the actions of others who are equally as scandalous. As an audience, we must admire the courage that is prominent in her self-realisation, as Edwardian women would not have been socially allowed to act in such an independent way.

Additionally, this independence and maturity is further realised when 'she hints Gerald to ring, expectably listing the engagement and the business prospects that would have come with it. She dares to say, saying 'we'd have to shut all over again highlighting her success in breaking apart from what's expected of her. She furthermore accentuates her remorse and guilt for her actions, describing herself as a 'selfish, vindictive creature'.

ironic as it's similar terms she used to describe
Eva Smith. To the audience, the reminder of
Act 2 doesn't involve anything new about
Sheila, but it does re-solidify our
impression of her as perhaps the most
reparable of the Birlings, especially when
against her parents.

Finally, Sheila's character arc concludes when
the Inspector lectures the household on their
responsibility in ~~the~~ ~~act~~ Eva Smith's suicide.
The Inspector details, ~~how~~ using vivid imagery,
how this will pay in "fire and blood
and anguish" and stating "you all helped
to kill her." This direct accusation and judgment of
the Inspector puns him as the optimum role
model for Sheila and Eric, contrast to the
high-society ignorance of Mr Birling - and
allows the audience to contemplate using
Lacoe's theory of the nurture from the Birlings
has led to the uncompassionate and criminal
acts of Sheila and Eric that we saw
earlier in the play.

Ultimately, Sheila is portrayed as both
ignorant, proud and naive, but also independent,
self-realised, and mature, more so than her
parents in many regards. Perhaps Primrose with
Sheila to highlight the malleable and hopeful
nature of the younger generation.