

A vehicle to convey a didactic and spiritual message

- Inspector Goole appears to be presented as 'all knowing, all seeing', this omnipotent nature to his character leads Sheila to assert "there's something about him", arguably this is his 'god-like' presence that allows him to 'judge' each family members' morality or sins.
- He appears to try to teach each of the characters the error of their ways and his final **didactic teaching** holds **biblical allusions** of the Old Testament where he warns the family that if they do not change, they will face "hell and fire and blood and anguish." This religious teaching appears to be not only for the characters, but also a didactic warning to the 1945 audience that they too must change or face "blood and anguish" in post-war society.
- He teaches both the audience and the characters that they must understand **community, responsibility** and **society** if they are to live morally right, reminding us and them that "we do not live alone. We are one body."
- Although biblical in his allusions, these messages clearly link Inspector Goole to **Socialist values** and perhaps suggest that to be Capitalist, is to be a 'sinner' and morally corrupt hence he tells the Birlings and Gerald that "he wouldn't know where to draw the line" between respectable (Capitalist) individuals and criminals.

A mouthpiece for Priestly

- The Inspector can arguably be seen as a **mouthpiece for Priestly** in which he attempts to show the 1945 audience that change is necessary for post-war society to prosper.
- Priestley seemingly portrays this through the Inspector's treatment of the older generation as they receive harsher treatment. The Inspector admits "the younger one are more impressionable" therefore, characters who fail to show remorse, or fail to accept **responsibility**, or fail to learn something from the visit are treated more harshly. Inspector alludes to this idea in "if you're easy with me, I'm easy with you." Moreover, he repeatedly berates Mr Birling to remind him of his responsibility as someone upper class: "Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges". Arguably, Priestley attempts to berate the audience to remind them that "public men" in current society also have this responsibility to the lower classes.
- Priestley also voices his opinions on the **class system** through the Inspector, educating both the modern day audience and the 1945 audience about the plight of the **working classes and their oppression**, evoking sympathy for them via Eva Smith's desperation: "no money, no relatives, no friends, starved, lonely and penniless." Priestley also critiques the Capitalist attitudes that often occupy the upper-class mindset, reminding both Birling and the audience that "it's better to ask for the earth than to take it" - a damning critique of Mr Birling's earlier delight at having "lower costs and higher prices" effectively celebrating "tak[ing]" the "earth" from the lower classes.
- Perhaps, by using the Inspector as a mouthpiece, Priestley attempts to encourage people to seize the opportunity for change at the end of WW2 to create a better, more Socialist society in which "we are responsible for each other."

What do you think of Inspector Goole and how he is presented in *An Inspector Calls*? [20 + 4]

A dramatic device through which the play is controlled

- Priestley often uses the Inspector's dialogue to **create a sense of urgency and purpose**: "we haven't got much time" – we can argue that he does this to make the audience feel tension as well as it reflecting his urgency to get the moral/ didactic message across to both the family and the audience.
- Equally, we could perhaps argue that he is merely a **supernatural device**, with his name "Goole" being a clear pun for the word 'ghoul' perhaps presenting him as the ghost of Eva Smith or the embodiment of all those who were oppressed in 1912 society and suffered as a result.
- Moreover, his arrival would mark him as a device as he **arrives at a critical time** – to interrupt Mr Birling and his selfish views: "a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own – and – We hear the sharp ring of a front doorbell." Perhaps the Inspector's role is to highlight that this is not the case and to reveal that those who hold the same belief as Birling hold false values that must change.
- Furthermore, he is described in the stage directions as giving "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness" and takes charge immediately and remains in control throughout. He remains solid as each of the other characters breaks down and nothing distracts him from his purpose: "(very sternly) Her position now is that she lies with a burnt-out inside on a slab. (As Birling tries to protest, turns on him.) Don't stammer and yammer at me again, man." Despite Birling being of a higher social standing, the Inspector "turns on him" to remind him of the dire fate Eva experienced at the other character's' hands. Moreover, he uses **aggressive, shocking language** to make the characters feel guilty for the part they played in Eva Smith's death: "she died in misery and agony" and "a nice little promising life there, I thought, and a nasty mess somebody's made of it." Therefore, the Inspector's role may be to create shocking imagery that forces the reader to feel pathos for Eva and all that she represents.
- Finally, he uses a 'divide and conquer' **method of questioning** - "It's just the way I like to go to work. One line of inquiry at a time" - that creates tension for the reader as it is this that allows the events to unfold in front of us while each character further incriminates themselves or others and it also allows us to question whether it was the same photograph shown to each responsible party, further creating mystery and intrigue.