

“Inspector Goole merely functions as a mouthpiece of Priestley’s idea”

I agree that the Inspector was a mouthpiece of Priestley’s idea but I also think he has other functions in the play. JB Priestley clearly presents the Inspector as a socialist who wants change in the society. JB Priestley wrote the play in 1945 but the scenes and the story was set in 1912. He experienced wars in front of his eyes and was a socialist who wanted change as he thought rich people had power and enjoyed all of the freedoms without helping the poor. He wanted to teach the audience watching a lesson so he used himself as Inspector Goole and the Birlings as the rich society who had to change.

Inspector Goole clearly portrays the role of a socialist. He was a person in the play who wanted to change the attitudes of the Birlings and the Crofts to make them realise that they need to help the poor people. He gives a lot of inspiring messages throughout the play to show his role of a socialist. **“We don’t live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other”**. There is a repetition of the pronoun “we” to show that everybody is responsible and shows that “we” must function like a body to ensure the health and well-being of the society. This has a biblical reference which suggests that we have a duty to take care of one another. The speech has short sentences so it can emphasise his words to show the upper class and the audience that the things he is saying is important. This speech is used as a metaphor to show the character of Mr Birling in Act 1 **“a man has to make his own way”**. This contrast shows the difference between Mr Birling who is selfish and a capitalist compared to Inspector Goole who thinks about everyone in the society. Also this quote was made significant by the **“sharp ring”** of the bell when the Inspector came. This shows the audience how he may have a contradictory role. Throughout the play, he shows the Birlings that we are **‘bees in a hive’**. He wants them to accept that we are responsible for each other. This shows that Inspector Goole clearly portrays the role of a socialist in the play proving that he is the mouthpiece of Priestley because Priestley had the same views and ideas about the society which was clearly shown in Inspector Goole’s speech.

Inspector Goole functions as a mouthpiece of Priestley’s idea but also the Inspector wants to do more as he wants to improve the society which is exactly what Priestley wanted therefore he is the mouthpiece of Priestley. Inspector Goole is used to highlight the hypocrisy of the upper class by showing each member of the family how they have committed a crime and also tells them that **“each of you helped killed her”** showing they are all responsible. His function is to act like a mouthpiece of Priestley’s idea but to also teach them a lesson to redeem themselves. He also makes them feel guilty by arguing that none of them can say **“I’m sorry, Eva Smith”**. This shows that the Inspector shows Priestley’s point of view and idea therefore he is the mouthpiece of Priestley. Although he is directing this to Eva, some people may argue that it relates to all working class women. Eva comes from the word Eve which symbolises female. The surname Smith is the classical surname so Eva Smith represents w/c women.

The way Priestley present Inspector Goole shows that he is the mouthpiece of Priestley. Priestley makes it seem like the Inspector is controlling the play. He presents his entrance using stage direction and it draws the audience’s attention to the arrival of the Inspector. Before he arrived, the surroundings was **‘pink and intimate’** but when the Inspector arrived, the lighting became **‘brighter and harder’** showing that he has a strong role in the play and his character has importance. Before his arrival, when Mr Birling was talking to the youngsters about war and titanic, JB Priestley wanted the audience to lose confidence in him as they are 1945 audience and they know that the titanic did sink and there was war. This was used as an irony just before the Inspector arrives so that the audience has someone else to trust which is the Inspector. This was shown clearly by a **‘sharp ring’** to divert the attention from Mr Birling to the arrival of Inspector Goole. The use of the dash shows that Mr Birling paused. This proves that Mr Birling is already losing control of the youngsters as soon as the Inspector arrives. Another point is the length of the speeches. Before the Inspector arrived Mr Birling was the centre of attention as he had a lot to say and it shows that he is the boss of the family. He has long speeches although he does not want to **‘lecture’** anyone. However, as soon as the Inspector arrived, Mr Birling did not have much to say showing that he is losing control and showing that the Inspector takes over the scenes now. The Inspector also controls them by dealing with **‘one person and one enquiry at a time’**. This shows that he is able to control the family. This creates a sense of **‘annoyance’** from the upper class as mentioned in the stage directions. He also controls their speeches by **‘cutting through massively’** to show that a socialist is able to cut a capitalist. This shows that the attention is always on the Inspector as Priestley wanted to highlight the intention of the Inspector and show his character more which is why he presented the Inspector as controlling.

Although throughout the play, the Inspector is presented as controlling and the main function is as a mouthpiece of Priestley’s idea, there are other alternatives that the Inspector could present. One example is he could be the conscience of the upper class. Birlings and Crofts are the upper class and the fact that they confess directly to him shows that he is the conscience. All of the upper class reveal the truth on how they all **‘wronged’** Eva Smith and a normal human being cannot make everyone confess therefore the Inspector must be their conscience. The upper class are smart and have power therefore they would not directly confess everything to an Inspector but in the play, they all did confess showing that the function of the Inspector could be their conscience.

Another alternative is that he could be the voice of God. Inspector Goole shows an omniscient character because he knows the truth of everyone’s story. He makes all of them reveal their truth. Also he seems to know the future and this can only be the action of God. In Act 1, he says **‘two hours ago a young woman died in the Infirmary’** but in Act 3 there is a repetition by Mr Birling when he is on the phone **‘a girl has just died on her way to the Infirmary’**. The reader can assume that the whole investigation took about 2 hours which shows that the Inspector has just told them the future story in Act 1. Due to the fact that only God can do this, we can assume that the Inspector is the voice of God. Another point is that he does not seem to be doing his duty as a policeman or inspector but it seems like he is teaching the moral truth rather than legal or illegal acts. Realistically speaking, none of the family members committed a crime except from Eric who stole but this was within the family business. Therefore he is much more than a policeman. Another example is **“fire and blood and anguish”** which is a biblical imagery to show how people are punished for their sins by God. This could show that he is God. Also, he uses emotive language to distress the family **“burnt-out inside on a slab”**. This harsh imagery makes the audience hate the Birlings and Crofts as they already know they are to blame. Positive adjective like **“pretty”** and **“lively”** forces the audience to sympathise with Eva making their actions harsher.

The Inspector uses direct and literal language so that there is no scope of confusion. He also asks leading questions where the character simply needs to admit. **“Was it or was it not your influence?”** He also asks personal questions to Gerald **“Were you in love with her”**. This shows how he drives the play.