

The Character of Inspector Goole - Transcript

Inspector Goole: 'Stop!'

Narrator: 'They are suddenly quiet, staring at him.'

Inspector Goole: 'be quiet for a moment and listen to me.'

'This girl killed herself – and died a horrible death.'

'But each of you helped to kill her. Remember that. Never forget it.'

Presenter: When Inspector Goole interrupts an argument between the Birlings in Act 3, his use of blunt, commanding language is shown in a speech that demonstrates his narrative role, forcing the other characters to confront the results of their actions and accept a sense of social responsibility.

From the very moment the imposing Goole appears in *An Inspector Calls*, his 'impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness' is described through the stage directions.

After announcing the death of Eva Smith, a young factory employee of the Birlings, he proceeds to question the family members about their relationships with her.

Whilst doing so, author J. B. Priestley has Goole deliver short, sharp sentences - often statements, and often political.

So when Goole says that... 'We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other' it aligns with Priestley's strong socialist beliefs.

The author uses the tension between Goole and the Birlings to represent the overall theme of socialism vs capitalism.

Goole's socialist vision of being 'responsible for each other' contrasts Arthur Birling's capitalist statement that: 'A man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own.'

Goole's final line in the play warns of the consequences if mankind doesn't learn social responsibility.

He says...

Inspector Goole: 'if men will not learn that lesson, then they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish.'

Presenter: This is a prophetic passage, using a metaphor to hint toward the World War that would follow in 1914 - two years after the play is set.

Towards the end of the play it is revealed that Inspector Goole wasn't actually who he appeared to be and the author leaves the audience with a question; Who was the supernatural figure of Goole - and what does he represent?

The conscience of the audience? Or the voice of the author himself?