

## KEY WORDS

**Omniscient, composed, unperturbed (unfazed), virtuous, objective, austere (plain in appearance), enigmatic, mysterious, ambiguous, mystifying**

## OMNISCIENT AND SUPERNATURAL PRESENTATION

- He is presented as **omniscient** (all-knowing) as he investigates each Birling's **unscrupulous** actions without hesitation. Despite Mr Birling condescendingly questioning the Inspector, asking him "What did you say your name was, Inspector?", he remains composed as he obtains the knowledge and power- an idea Mr Birling is not used too as he associates power with money not knowledge.
- He carries an air of mystery as he is dressed in a simplistic way of a **[plain darkish suit]**, not suggestive of him belonging to a particular social class, thus making him **enigmatic** (mysterious) as the characters in the play are all defined by their class physically with.
- 'Goole' is a **homonym** (words that sounds the same but spelt different) for 'Ghoul', suggestive of a supernatural force of a ghost. By likening the inspector to a supernatural force, it makes his presence and intent seem more tremendous and powerful as he is presented **ambiguously**.

## COMPARISON

Mr Birling and the Inspector should be compared, even if it is briefly within your response. Priestley has intentionally created these characters to juxtapose one another to strengthen his socialist message.

# The Inspector - Act 1

## FOIL TO MR BIRLING

The inspector, the embodiment of socialism, is presented as the **antithesis** and **a foil** to Mr Birling, the embodiment of capitalism.

### Mr Birling towards the Inspector:

- He finds the Inspector's composure and unknown social status **insufferable**.
- Mr Birling measures an individual's worth by their social ranking, as this is unknown about the Inspector, paired with the Inspector being disinterested in his pompous boast that he was "an alderman for years", Mr Birling is both **dumfounded** and aggravated as he is unaware of how to interact with somebody **unphased by classism**.

### The inspector towards Mr Birling:

- Intolerant to Mr Birling's **pretentious** and **supercilious** (stuck up) ways.
- Breaks Mr Birling's **egotistical dramatic monologue** where he expresses his **self-proclaimed omniscience** that the "titanic is unsinkable". When the Inspector arrives, Mr Birling's monologues are shortened through the Inspector's interruption when he **[cutting through, massively]**.
- The Inspector's speech is short and concise such as "Quite so", yet his few words cause Mr Birling's speech to shorten. This suggests the Inspector has **shifted the power balance**, despite not being from an established social class, this elucidates that social status (symbolised through Mr Birling) is **weak in the face of morality** (symbolised by the Inspector).



## TOPIC SENTENCES

- Priestley's omniscient presentation of the Inspector makes him appear enigmatic and ambiguous. This compounds the immense power of his moral messages as he does not acquire respect through his known social status, instead he acquires power and respect through his composure and omniscience.
- The Inspector acts as a foil to Mr Birling, the embodiment of capitalism, as he is intolerant to Mr Birling's superciliousness and pompous nature. Most significantly, the Inspector is not preoccupied with social status and ranking, what Mr Birling defines a person by, thus remains focused on the unscrupulousness of the Birlings' opposed to being clouded by their social stature.

## NEED FOR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The Inspector introduces **pivotal** socialist ideals in Act 1, these are not explicit, but rather implicit regarding **shared and collective responsibility**. A **poignant** message he shares, critiquing Mr Birling directly, is **"It's better to ask for the earth than take it"**.

- The **syntax** on **"ask"** prior to **"take"** is used by the Inspector to highlight the order of importance that is required for society to be collectively responsible- we must "ask" and share, opposed to the capitalist ideas of "taking" to benefit oneself.
- The idea of to **"take"** connotes to **"steal"**, an idea that is **scorned** in the bible as it is a **mortal sin**. As the Edwardian era was highly religious, the religious teachings would be seen as **integral** to society. Thus, capitalists ideals completely dismiss these teachings- socialism could be seen to be bringing society back to its moral foundations.