

Inspector calls essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

' An Inspector's Calls' is a play that was written by J.

B. Priestley in 1945 but set in Edwardian England 1912. The play is set in a fictional industrial city in the North Midlands called Brumley. The fictional industrial city of Brumley would have been typical of many towns, as in the town there would be factory owners, who would provide much needed jobs, this meant that the factory owners were able to run their businesses any way they wanted to. These factory owners were more important in 1912 than they are now, as many industrialists got rich in the 1800s. For example, men like Arthur Birling may have come from a modest background but his new wealth helped him climb up the social ladder, gaining both a lot of power and respect.

This meant Arthur Birling was foolish and ignorant at times, as he thought he knew better. For example, ' The Titanic – she sails next week... and unsinkable absolutely unsinkable.

' This quotation also shows dramatic irony as the Titanic sank on her maiden voyage after hitting an iceberg on 14 April 1912. The play is about a family called the Birling family. The opening scene is when the Birling family is having dinner, celebrate Sheila's and Gerald Croft's engagement. However, the celebrations are short lived as a police Inspector's named Goole arrives. He makes enquires about the suicide of Eva Smith. As the play unfolds we find out that everyone in the family was involved in helping to kill Eva Smith.

The whole play takes place in the Birling's family dining room. Priestley during the 1930's became very anxious about the consequences of social inequality in Britain. So in 1942 Priestley, with the help of others, set up a

new political party, called the Common Wealth Party which argued for public ownership of land, greater democracy, and a new “morality” in politics.

Priestley believed that everyone should have equal rights and this right should not depend on how much wealth a person has. Priestley’s character is portrayed in ‘An Inspector’s Calls’ by Inspector’s Goole. Inspector’s Goole wanted each member of the family to share the responsibility of Eva Smith’s death.

The Inspector’s tells them “... each of you helped to kill her”.

As most of the characters have a narrow view of responsibility, however, Inspector’s Goole provides the reader with a broader view of what it means to be responsible. Inspector’s Goole final speech is aimed not only at the characters on stage, but at the audience. One Eva Smith has gone – but there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us, with their lives, their hopes and fears, their suffering and chance of happiness, all intertwined with our lives, and what we think and say and do. ” The Inspector’s shows that it is collective responsibility that killed Eva Smith, everyone in society is linked, in the same way that the characters are linked to Eva Smith.

Everyone is a part of “one body”; the Inspector’s sees society as more important than individual interests. The views the Inspector’s is propounding are like those of Priestley who was a socialist. Priestley message to the audience is that everyone is responsible for their own actions and the way in which they affect others. ‘An Inspector’s Calls’ is a ‘well made play’

because it is a well-structured as it contains many factors that captivate and sustain the attention of the audience.

As well as having the three unities: time past and present; place the Birling dining room and the actions which is focused on one storyline, there is only one setting and that the action on stage is identical to the actions in real time. Priestley uses conventions of a well made play to build up the sense of mystery and suspense. The first scene introduces the characters and gives a taste of their personality to the audience. Also the play has an element of Whodunnit since Eva's Smiths story is slowly exposed due to the Inspector's questioning. Sheila is the daughter of Mr Arthur Birling and Mrs Sybil Birling; she is described by Priestley as ' a pretty girl in her early twenties..

. pleased about life... excited. ' This makes the audience see Sheila as a sweet lively young girl who appreciates life in her own bubble.

The bubble makes her naive and immature. We see Sheila being naive when she talks about the previous summer when Gerald vanished. Gerald explains that he was ' awfully busy at work all the time', the audience see Sheila to be youthful because she believes Gerald was really working during the whole summer. Sheila in the beginning of the play says a little as she seems like a well mannered and not outspoken.

Priestley describes Sheila like an ordinary twenty year old girl, who is rather content with life, as Sheila is excited about her engagement like any girl would be. She is also portrayed as spoilt and a girl who gets her own way. ' You've got it... mummy- isn't beautiful.

' This impression of Sheila is portrayed again and again later on in the play. It also makes the audience feel jealous towards Sheila and not like her very much at the start, later on it shows how dramatically Sheila changes from being spoilt to being more realistic about life, when she opens her eyes to the true world the one she has been isolated from by her parents.. The word ' Inspector's' is used to describe a person who is employed to inspect something and also a person who looks at things closely and this is the exact role of the Inspector's in the play. The Inspector's is a figure of authority which the Inspector's establishes to do as he is ' massively taking charge' to show that he is the key to the plot.

The Inspector's name is ' Goole' which rhymes with Poole a seaport town, this suggests that maybe the Inspector's might seek for information and search for deeply hidden secrets and lies from the Birling family. The Inspector's name also sounds like ghoul and is related to somebody who likes or interested in death, evil spirits, as the Inspector's is very interested in the girl's death Eva Smith. Priestley describes the Inspector's as ' an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness. ' As the Inspector's question the characters one by one the Inspector's remains solid and unbroken as the characters break down, this shows nobody or nothing can distract the Inspector's from the purpose of his visit.

The Inspector's method is very simple and logical as he confronts a suspect with a piece of information that is more of a statement than a question and then makes them talk. Sheila describes his methods as "...

he's giving us the rope - so that we'll hang ourselves. " This shows that Sheila believes that the Inspector's already knows what has happened and that the Birling family is making it worst by not taking their individual responsibility.