Analysis of Alfieri’s speech

- prologue
- narrator figure – also character
- outsider in community because he is a lawyer
- reliable witness
- As chorus figure he introduces themes of play and characters – guides our understanding
- What are his views of Eddie Carbone?
- Analyse the language that he uses – note that he links a tragedy in Roman Times to Brooklyn in the 1950s. What does he imply?

What we learn from his speech?

- to meet lawyer – unlucky – associated with ‘disasters’, community keeps its distance
- ideas of justice – embedded in culture – 3,000 years
- reference to Mafia law – concept of Omerta – not ‘friendly’ – implies unfairness. Idea that there is an unwritten law that is older than the current law of the land. Hints at conflict re justice
- Mafia law outside law of the land.
- Symbolic setting in Red Hook – just across from Statue of Liberty – symbol of freedom, liberty and justice, therefore it is ironic that this clash occurs
- Sicilian code of Omerta: based on belief that justice, honour and vengeance are for a man to take care of, not the government. The Sicilian mafia valued this code of honour and silence – only open to those with Sicilian blood.
- American mafia: group of glorified thieves, pickpockets and murderers evolved into organisation that made money by any illegal means.
- Key quote: ‘Now we are quite civilised, quite American. Now we settle for half and I like it better’. Implies under mafia law – vengeance and murder were commonplace, now people are not so touchy and absolute – settle for half and the crime and revenge rates have lowered.