



Denver Center
Theatre Company

Inside

Out

A STUDY GUIDE

PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 1999

In a shabby, isolated cottage in western Ireland, specifically the village of Leenane in Galway County, Connemara, a mother and daughter are engaged in an epic battle of ordinary life. Mother Mag is an aging, ailing lump of a woman who whines and bullies to get her own way. Maureen, Mag's plain, unmarried daughter passing 40 without a boyfriend in sight, resentfully carries out her mother's orders. Onto this familial battleground step the Dooley brothers—Pato, a possible knight in shining armor to rescue Maureen, and Ray, his younger brother and message bearer. In this black comedy, the playwright turns his focus on a simple village full of ordinary lives that complexities, contradictions and cruelties conceal.

"The back of the hand [has been] given to the customs and manners of the old.—It can't be helped, I suppose, because life is changing as the years are passing along."

—Peig Sayers,
An Old Woman's Reflections.

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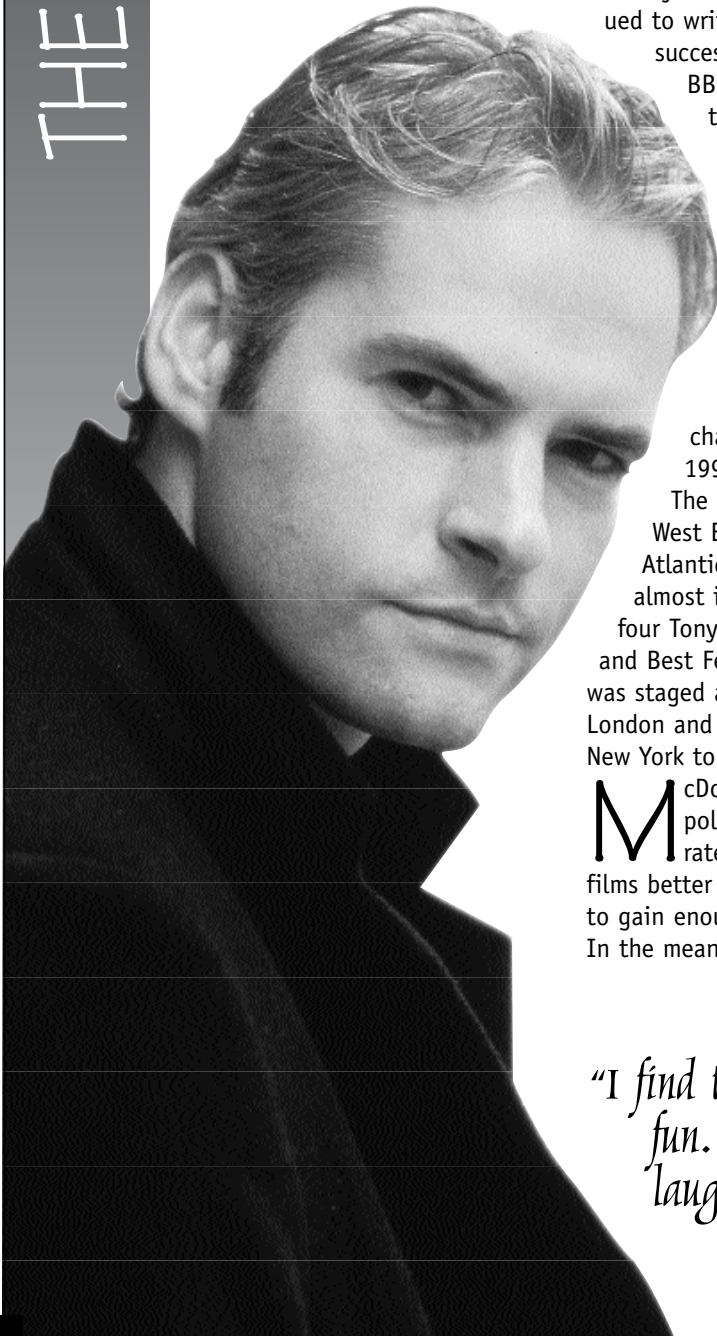
"Romantic Ireland's dead and gone...."

W.B. Yeats, *Responsibilities*. September 1913. Stanza 3.

The Beauty Queen of Leenane

"His plays are set in rural Ireland where you can't kick a cow without someone bearing a grudge for 20 years."

—Martin McDonagh¹



Martin McDonagh was born in England in 1970. His father, a construction worker, and his mother, a part-time domestic, had left Connemara, Ireland in the mid-1960s and settled in South London where they raised Martin and his older brother, John. In 1991, both parents moved back to Ireland where they now live in semi-retirement in a village on the west coast near Galway. When they left England, they gave the brothers the family's row house in Camberwell, a working-class neighborhood in South London where the two still live.

The younger McDonagh despised school. After quitting high school, Martin spent most of the next five years unemployed, supported by government aid. Eventually, he became so bored that he read a few books owned by his brother, who was well-read and interested in screenwriting. Martin became interested in writing, too, partly because he didn't have to wake up at a set time and leave the house in the morning. Also, he could watch television whenever he wanted to take a break.

After McDonagh turned 21 and lost his unemployment benefits, he took a job as a clerk at the Department of Trade and Industry. He continued to write and wrote some TV scripts and short stories but had no success in marketing them. He also sent 22 radio scripts to the BBC but they were all rejected. He next moved on to plays for the legitimate stage. He admired the works of Harold Pinter and David Mamet, and his first attempts were bad Mamet rip-offs. He discovered his own playwriting voice in his memories of childhood summer vacations spent in Ireland and conversations he had with his relatives. McDonagh's first play (not counting the ones he scrapped) was *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. It was quickly followed by *A Skull in Connemara* and *The Lonesome West* and the three plays became known as the *Leenane* trilogy.

Garry Hynes of the Druid Theater Company of Galway took a chance on *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and produced it in 1995. It was a huge success and subsequently toured Ireland. The production then moved to London where it played in the West End. In 1998, *Beauty Queen* opened in New York at the Atlantic Theater, an off-Broadway theater. Its six-week run sold out almost immediately and it moved to Broadway. The play garnered four Tony Awards for Best Director, Best Actress, Best Featured Actress and Best Featured Actor. In the meantime, the entire *Leenane* trilogy was staged at the Druid; *The Cripple of Inishmaan* was produced in London and then in New York. This spring, *The Lonesome West* opened in New York to favorable reviews.

McDonagh doesn't see many plays and feels that art that concerns politics and social issues is dull. "My kind of theater incorporates as many cinematic elements as possible, because I like films better than theater."² Indeed, he has often said he is using theater to gain enough recognition and capital to begin making his own films. In the meantime he has four plays that are waiting to be produced.

"I find that I enjoy telling interesting stories. It's fun. I love to surprise myself and make myself laugh. And you know, you have to attempt to leave something decent behind you."³

Connemara, Ireland

A BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The wild, stony mountainous region of Connemara is in the county of Galway where the village of Leenane can be found. The name Connemara comes from the tribe of Conmac, or Conmaiene, a warrior tribe which was sent into the area by the ancient Gaelic kings of Connaught to secure the territory. Modern Connemara extends south from Killary Harbor almost to Galway City, and westward from the west shore of Lough Carrig to the Atlantic ocean.

From the sixth through the tenth centuries, the area was home to Christian mystics, hermits and raiding Viking tribes. In the 13th century, the Normans tried to conquer it, but they lost it to the O'Flaherty clan who held it until the mid-17th century when they were dispossessed by the Cromwellians of England. After the sack of Galway City in 1652, "the rampaging armies of Oliver Cromwell told natives to go "to hell—or to Connaught." The western province, including Connemara, was so bleak and infertile that the [English] planters willingly ceded most of its badlands to the Irish. Ever after it became a byword for all that was primitive and undeveloped."⁴

Connemara was hit particularly hard by the Great Famine of the 1840s when the potato crop failed. Mass emigration was the only alternative to mass starvation; between 1841-1851, the population of County Galway fell by 27 percent. But the next three decades brought a gradual recovery from the trauma of the famine. The tenants mobilized and demanded the British government make major reforms in the land tenure system; they improved harbors, subsidized fishing fleets and

introduced new industries like lace-making and herring-curing. There was also a renewed interest in the Gaelic way of life and the Irish language, which had almost disappeared in the 18th and 19th centu-

"To see Ireland happy you must carefully select your point of view, look for some narrow, isolated spot and shut your eyes to all the objects that surround it, but wretched Ireland, on the contrary, bursts upon your view everywhere."

A French visitor to Ireland in the 1880s in R.B. McDowell's Social Life in Ireland 1805-1845.

ries. Dr. Douglas Hyde founded the Gaelic League in 1893 to encourage interest in the Irish language and folklore.

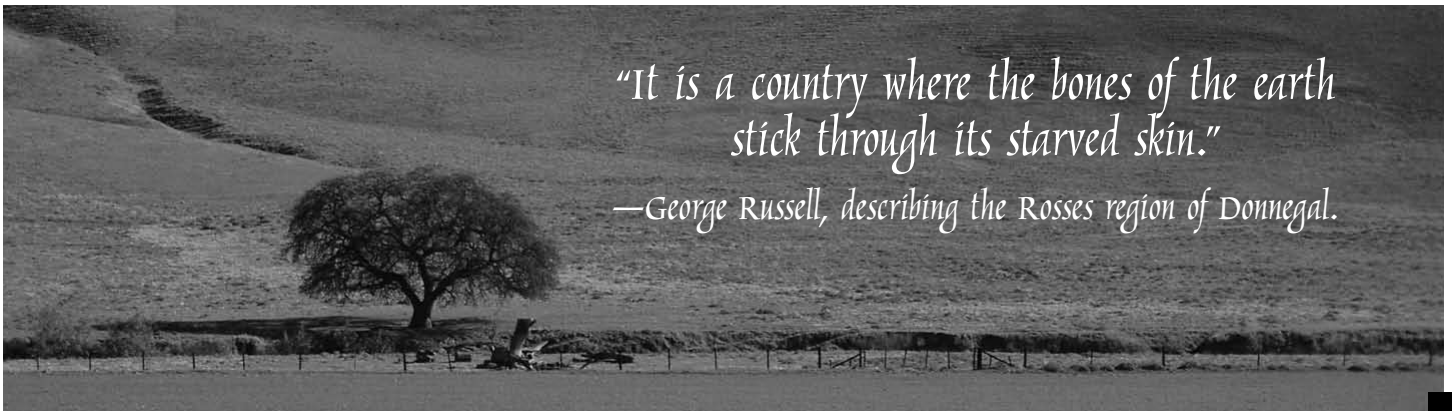
The quality of the land still remains poor today. Top soil is thin, infertile and rocky. There are huge tracts of soft bog, only the edges of which could be drained and fertilized enough for a crop. The land has been stripped of its trees, leaving the ground with little pro-

tection against wind and water erosion. The shoreline is rugged and dangerous, offering little shelter for harboring, and leaving fishermen exposed to the sudden violence of Atlantic storms. As a region, the west of Ireland is ill-suited for either farming or fishing.

The climate, too, is unfriendly most of the year. In December and January, a low pressure system over the Atlantic brings strong winds and frontal rain. From February to June, the weather is dry, but cold. From late June or early July, a westerly, water-laden airflow produces cloud cover, humidity, and rainfall which can last until August or September. In October and November, rain may continue but daytime weather can be decent. May tends to be the sunniest month with an average of six to seven hours of sunshine per day.

Despite the inhospitable climate and the unfavorable soil, there are still communities of people living in Galway. One of these villages is Leenane or Leenaun. "The village consists of terraces of color-washed houses, a bar, a shop, a hotel, and a few modern bungalows."⁵ It stands by the head of the tidal Killary Harbor and is the meeting point of several ranges of mountains, including the Mweelrea, Ben Gorm, Maamturks and Partry mountains.

Because the land in Connemara is so poor, most farmers require another source of income to survive. Many have turned their homes into guest houses, while some work in factories, hotels or restaurants. All are concerned with securing the peat (turf), which is the main source of fuel for Connemara homes. The peat is cut during May or June and laid out to dry. Later it is turned over, stacked to continue drying and finally brought home at the end of summer. The cutting and drying of turf is traditionally a man's job. Though modern technology has reached Western Ireland, the area is still viewed as primitive and provincial by many other Irish.



"It is a country where the bones of the earth stick through its starved skin."

—George Russell, describing the Rosses region of Donegal.

COMMENTARY

The Leenane Trilogy and Irish Rural Life

by Sally Gass

The plays of Martin McDonagh's *Leenane* trilogy are loosely inter-linked in that they take place in the same village with a level of violence that is demonstrated or underlies the action. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, the first play of the trio, is the story of a stifling relationship between a spiteful old

communities engaged in dancing, singing and storytelling; in winter, a community came together for winter festivities. The last three decades have seen a decline in such activities, and community life has become weak and intermittent. For example, when young people married they traditionally returned to the bride's home

depressants than headache tablets."⁹ Typically, the mental breakdown alternates between sobbing withdrawal and the destruction of household property. The latter act is demonstrated in *The Lonesome West*, when one brother destroys the other's religious artifacts.

In a traditional Irish home, the father was dominant. Hugh Brody, mentioned above, reports on the erosion of this dominance when he describes a group of young men going out to gather turf. The sod packets were loaded onto a cart and the boys sat on top. As they traveled back along a tiny winding lane, the boys began to hurl turf at the houses and other carts. As the cart progressed down a very narrow line of houses, the eldest brother pulled out a pocket knife and began to slash at the bindings that held thatch to the roof rafters. His gestures were not playful and seemed to confirm a tremendous inner tension. When the author and boys reached their home, it was time for tea. Instead of sitting with their parents, the boys sat by themselves telling Brody how stupid their parents were, how old-fashioned, how little they knew. Throughout these exchanges the father said nothing. "It became obvious that in the relationship between parents and children of the family, the behavior and attitudes I was witnessing, were accepted. It was certainly a far cry from the traditional farm family."¹⁰

*"All of McDonagh's plays reveal dark undertones barely below the surface of rural Irish life."*⁶

woman and the unmarried daughter who looks after her. In *A Skull in Connemara*, a gravedigger initiates his young assistant in the art of "moving" the dead to make room for new arrivals. This task comes around every seven years, and this time the remains include those of the gravedigger's wife, who is rumored to have been killed in an automobile accident. In *The Lonesome West*, two brothers live together in a state of constant warfare. One of them has killed their father; the other, using some sharp blackmail, has inherited the family property. After the local priest drowns himself, they try to honor his last wishes by making up. Predictably, their good intentions soon result in worse mayhem than before.

McDonagh's plays convey the sense of desolation and isolation that pervade this particular village. "The inhabitants say and do cruel things merely to keep themselves occupied and to distract them from the feeling the world has passed them by."⁷ Hugh Brody writes of these factors and more in his book *Inishkillane: Change and Decline in the West of Ireland*. He notes that the increasing awareness of the urban industrial society (seen on television) brings to rural people a new level of self-criticism. This consciousness of a life style different from one of subordinating all things to the family farm causes restlessness, uncertainty and stress. For some, the preference is emigration and leaving the traditional system. For those remaining, there is a sense of demoralization; "they have lost belief in the social advantages or moral worth of their own small society."⁸

Brody notes that in summer, rural Irish

for a wedding celebration; today, the couples hold the reception in the smartest hotel the bride's family can afford.

In addition, mutual aid is disappearing from the land. Today there is more of an emphasis on the privacy and self-reliance of each household. The separate farm families have withdrawn into themselves; thus, Maureen is left alone to deal with Mag in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*.

Both decline and imbalance in population continue to dominate rural Ireland. In Inishkillane, the largest population group consists of those between 56-60 and the smallest between 26-30. A breakdown by households in the parish shows 56 bachelors living alone, 61 spinsters living alone, 68 widowers living alone, 66 widows living alone. Forty-two bachelors

Tradition: "The longer I live the more keenly I feel that whatever was good enough for our fathers is not good enough for us." —Oscar Wilde.

live with their mothers, 42 bachelors live with their fathers. Couples who live alone with children number 73 and 65 couples without children live alone, etc. The middle-aged and elderly inhabitants have possession of the parish and in none is there the possibility of a younger generation emerging. Additionally, 12 of the 231 households in Inishkillane contain people suffering from mental illness associated with isolation and depression. "The nurse who comes each week to the small surgery at the back of the village bar claims she dispenses more anti-

Parish priests, too, are regarded with little respect. Though most of the villagers attend Sunday services, they find the priests' sermons irritating when they appeal to the young to stay at home and the old to farm with greater enterprise and fuller cooperation. After services, many of the householders go to bars, while many women go off with their daughters and sons to shop. Sunday may begin with mass for all, but after church, the divisions reassert themselves. As *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* shows, the characters in the village are really not

continued on page 5

sure of the parish priest's name.

In Declan Kiberd's book, *Inventing Ireland*, his essay on "Fathers and Sons" speaks of the sons' disenchantment with the Irish male as seen in the works of James Joyce, John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey. They write of an older generation that cannot break through to a newer system; of an erosion of the "self-confidence of the elderly, to a point where their influence ceases to exist. The result is a fatherless society—and so it is no surprise when the vacuum thus created is filled by the self-created codes of the young."¹¹

McDonagh's plays seem to fit this thesis. In the *Leenane* trilogy, there are no parents, except for Mag, who is no example of a caring mother. In their lonely, isolated, leaderless lives, all the children can do is smash the icons and traditions their parents have lived with—as the gravediggers smash the bones in *The A Skull in Connemara*—and try to live with the skeletons—or invent new selves.



DENVER CENTER THEATRE COMPANY DESIGN CONFERENCE

Director Anthony Powell's Presentation

The *Beauty Queen of Leenane* is the first part of Anglo-Irish writer Martin McDonagh's *Leenane* trilogy, a harrowing and hilarious cycle of plays all set in the same rough, backwater town on the western coast of Ireland. (The other two plays are *A Skull in Connemara* and *The Lonesome West*.) As depicted by McDonagh, *Leenane* is a completely awful place, stricken by poverty and seething with petty resentments that lead, often as not, to mayhem. *Leenane* is not a place to live, it is a place to leave. As the suicidal priest of the parish, Father Welsh, points out in one of the plays, *Leenane* is a town in which God himself seems to have no jurisdiction.

Beauty Queen's plotline is almost absurdly simple, but the psychological story underpinning it is rich and complex. This is very much an actor's play, with four wonderful roles and substantial subtext. Maureen Folan is a 40-year-old woman who still lives with her grasping and manipulative old mother, Mag. The two spend their days in a grinding, acrimonious struggle over nothing, responding to slights both real and imagined. Their relationship is based on a mutual loathing so extreme that it borders on love. Both women bring hideous new meaning to the expression "passive-aggressive."

When a man suddenly enters Maureen's life, the daily wrangling between mother and daughter slowly escalates into an all-out war of attrition. No quarter is given, no prisoners taken.

McDonagh's plays are exciting to read and laugh-out-loud funny. McDonagh's

version of spoken language is quite a wonderful thing, seemingly realistic but really a highly stylized creation all his own. (The language spoken in McDonagh's *Leenane* is to Irish speech what Faulkner's language was to the American South.) McDonagh



borrows from, and also parodies, (sometimes so hard that it hurts) classic Irish drama. In *Beauty Queen*, as in the rest of the trilogy, characters must suffer through the same dramatic travails we associate with the folks in Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and the plays of O'Casey but with an awful, absurdist edge. There is a bracing meanness to his plays. The rap on McDonagh is that his plays are brilliant but lack heart. The director doesn't necessarily agree. Yes, the plays are cruel, but McDonagh seems to be saying that this is life on planet Earth and we're all in the same monstrous tangle. He's never above the action, commenting. He seems to be in the trenches, right alongside.

BLACK COMEDY

“The genre screams Think About It! as it scrambles one’s complacency by juxtaposing humor and horror.”



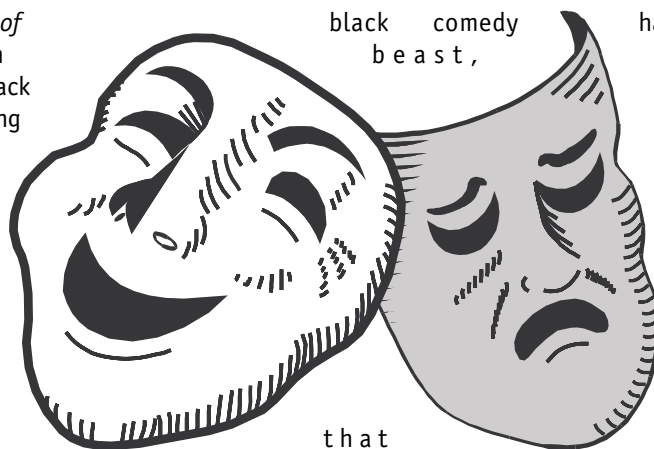
The *Beauty Queen of Leenane* has been described as a black comedy. According to Losman’s

Lair of Horror located on the Internet, black comedy is a movie (or drama) which draws its humor from dark subjects like murder, war and suffering. It employs these events or circumstances which normally would not be funny and uses them in a macabre and twisted way.

Dave Barry, the Pulitzer-prize winning humorist, said in a *Time* magazine interview on July 3, 1989 that all humor “is based in the fear that the world is not very sane or reliable or organized and that it’s not controlled by very responsible people. Anything can happen to you, and you have no say in it, and it could be bad.”¹²

This opinion is very close to that of Hennig Cohen who, writing a century earlier about Herman Melville’s *The Confidence Man*, said the novel’s problem is “how to live in a world in which nothing is what it appears to be, in which the only thing knowable is that nothing can be known, and the only thing believable is that nothing can be believed.”¹³

Wes Gehring, in his book *American Dark Comedy*, says dark or



has three central themes—man as the absurdity of the world and the omnipresence of death.

“These terrible realities belie the veneer of rationality that ‘civilized’ man too often accepts as a norm. The genre screams Think About It! as it scrambles one’s complacency by juxtaposing humor and horror.”¹⁴

Finally, J. L. Styan in his book *The Dark Comedy*, writes “dark comedy is drama which the spectator forward by stimu-

lus to mind or heart, then distracts him, muddles him, so that time and time again he must review his own activity in watching the play.”¹⁵ Thus, the playwright of dark or black comedy must show us the duller aspects of human personality in order to extend the content of the drama and point out the same foibles in ourselves. We are witness to stupidity, boredom, carelessness, doubt, disappointment, reluctance, vacillation, bungling, mediocrity—all the things that seem paltry in human beings. All these elements are present in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* as we both laugh and despair.

Notes

1. Green, p. 12
2. Green, p. 13
3. Current Biography, p. 422
4. Kiberd, p. 5
5. Jennett, p. 129
6. Current Biography, p. 421
7. Current Biography, p. 421
8. Brody, p. 16
9. Brody, p. 100
10. Brody, p. 119
11. Kiberd, p. 388
12. Gehring, p. 3
13. Gehring, p. 3
14. Gehring, p. 49
15. Styan, p. 262

Sources

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ACTIVITIES

1. Geography:

- Where is Ireland? Find its location on the globe, maps and other geographic tools. How large is the land mass in square miles or kilometers?
- Identify Ireland's latitudes and longitudes. How far is it from the North and South poles? How far is it from the equator? What zone is it in?
- Create your own map of Ireland. List important cities, mountains, rivers, lakes, the ocean, sea, etc.
- What is Ireland's farthest point from the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea? The sea is a dominant influence. How does Ireland's geographical location effect the people who live there?
- Are there any other places that are geographically similar?
- Are there any other places where people confront the same issues?
- What alternatives do people have to improve their situation?

This activity contributes to Colorado Model Content Standard #1 for Geography. (Students know how to use and construct maps, globes, and other geographic tools to locate and derive information about people, places and environments.)

2. What is the political difference between Northern Ireland and Ireland?

3. What do the Irish call their country?

4. Research the geology of Ireland (you may want to include all of Great Britain):

- What natural processes shaped this land?
- Describe with special emphasis on the eastern coast, this land's composition, its resources and plant life. Are there any other places on the globe that are geologically similar? Do they have similar resources?

5. Climate:

- Describe the climate of Ireland? Describe Ireland's weather and analyze weather patterns of the Irish coast; collect, plot and interpret the data. Explain the factors that influence its weather and climate.
- Describe the seasons. What is the temperature range of each season? What is the average rainfall? Yearly? Seasonally?
- How many hours of daylight are there in Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall? How long is the growing season?

- How does the ocean influence the weather?
- What other countries or places on the earth surface have a similar climate?

Activities 4 and 5 contribute to Colorado Model Content Standards Standard #4 Earth and Space Science. (Students know and understand the processes and interactions of Earth systems and the structure and dynamics of Earth and other objects in space.) 4.1 (Students know and understand the composition of Earth, its history, and the natural process that shape it.) 4.2 (Students know and understand the general characteristics of the atmosphere and fundamental processes of weather.)

6. The Irish People:

- Research the history of the Irish people. Where did they come from?
- Explain the population distribution. What is the current demographic structure of Ireland's population?
- Over the centuries, where did the people come from and how did the people live, i.e., farming, fishing, warring, trading etc.?

- Describe the evolution of Ireland's political structure?
- Research the patterns of migration, invasions and conquests. What were the physical and cultural impacts of human migration in this area.

This exercise contributes to Colorado Model Content Standard #4 for Geography (Students understand how economic, political, cultural and social processes interact to shape patterns of human populations, interdependence, cooperation and conflict.) 4.1 (Students know the characteristics, location, distribution and migration of human populations.)

7. Land:

- How do the Irish live with their land? What concessions do they have to make to their environment, i.e., land formations, climate, nearness to water, resources, etc.?
- Does the physical environment provide opportunities or place constraints on human activity?
- Find a land that is very different from the coast or Ireland. How have it people adapted to their land? Contrast the two peoples and the two lands.

This activity contributes to Colorado

Model Content Standard # 5.2 for Geography. (Students know how physical systems affect human systems.)

8. Traditions:

- Have an Irish day. Have food that is traditionally Irish. Play traditional music.
 - a. What ingredients do the Irish use in their food? Is it significantly different from ours?
 - b. What is the usual method of preparing the food?
 - c. What instruments are used in their music?
 - d. Describe traditional Irish clothes.
- Watch traditional Irish step dancing such as the video Riverdance.

9. Legends:

- Investigate historical characters, folklore, legends and legendary heroes of Ireland. Look up leprechauns, banshees, Fion (Fin) MacCumhail, The Hound of Culann (or CuChulainn), Tir-Na-N-or (country of the young), pookas, Tuatha de Danaan (the people of ancient Ireland (see the video Willow.), Lugh, sun god of Irish and European Celts and his festival of Lughnasa, the shamrock, Grainne or Granuaile (Grace O'Malley) the pirate queen, Mahon MacMahon, a giant, and Saint Patrick.

This exercise contributes to State of Colorado Model Content Standard #6.3 (Students know how various forms of expression reflect religious beliefs and philosophical ideas.)

10. What does it mean to "kiss the blarney stone?"

11. Art:

- Research the art of Ireland, including Celtic art forms and the illumination of books (see the Book of Kells).
- Why did this form of art exist? Who were the people who created the art? How were they trained?

This exercise contributes to State of Colorado Model Content Standard #4 for Visual Arts. (Students relate the visual arts to various historical and cultural traditions.)

12. Druids:

- Research Druids (priests of the pre-Christian religion). What do we know about them and their religion?
- When did Christianity come to Ireland? What happened to the Druidic religion?
- Also research the ancient seasonal festivals including: the Spring festival Bealtaine (May 1), the midsummer festival of Lughnasa (Lunasa), the Fall festival of Samhain, and the festival called Imbolg,

held on February 1. How were they celebrated? What was their significance?

This exercise contributes to State of Colorado Model Content Standard #6 (Students know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history.)

13. Ancient Sites

- Look up the stone circles, megaliths, dolmens and burial mounds that are a part of Ireland's landscape.
- What other ancient structures populate the landscape of Ireland? What are the theories behind why these ancient site were created?

This exercise contributes to State of Colorado Model Content Standard #6.3 (Students know how various forms of expression reflect religious beliefs and philosophical ideas.)

14. The Yew, the Hawthorne, the Oak the Rowan trees were held in special regard by the Celts. Mistletoe was special also. Why?

Exercises:

1. *Family Portraits:* Divide the class into groups of four or five. Form a circle with the class. The first group goes to the center of the circle and creates a "family portrait" based on a type of family you announce. After three seconds, shout "freeze." The actors must freeze in their portrait positions. When you call change, the first group moves back to the circle and the second group enters and creates its family portrait. Then the third and the fourth. Have fun; make the changes fast to enliven the students. Examples: lion family, school of fish, Eskimo family, family of rock and roll stars, family of musicians, sports family.

2. *Family Reunion:* Ask students to create characters who are attending a family reunion. Two students begin the scene, which takes place in the kitchen of the home where the reunion is being held. When a third student enters, one of the initial characters must find a reason to leave. The two remaining students contin-

ue the scene until another student enters, at which time one of the former two students must find a reason to leave. Students may enter the kitchen as many times as they want as long as they remain in the same character throughout the exercise.

Variation: Allow the students to change characters when they reenter the scene. (Exercise 1 & 2 are from Atkins, Greg. Improv: A Handbook for the Actor. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1993.)

3. Absurdist exercise.

- a. Divide the class into pairs.
- b. Use 3x5 cards and on each card write an action. For example, hop on one foot and recite Mary Had a Little Lamb; take off your partner's shoe; walk in a circle while singing the "National Anthem"; propose to your teacher; go around the class and tell everyone you love them; take all your books out of your backpack; shake the hand of the other students while asking them to vote for you; pretend you are a chicken; sing the alphabet song; pretend you need to go to the bathroom really bad; do cartwheels. You get the idea, but make the last card for each and every player be to enact an overly dramatic and noisy death scene. It is probably a good idea to come up with 20 to 30 actions and then shuffle the deck after each pair and take the first 14 off the top to give to the next pair.
- c. Ask the first pair to go to the front of the class and place a stack of seven cards on two chairs. When you say "flip" the students flip the first card and perform the action. After ten seconds say "flip" and the students flip another card and perform that action. The actions should be performed quickly and the actors should go through their stack in about one minute.
- d. After the exercise, think about what you saw. In the actions of each pair, a story (absurd though it may be) unfolds. Ask the class what they thought might be going on. Why was each character doing what they were doing? Can you make a story out of actions alone?

4. Women's Liberation.

- a. The objectives are:
 1. To understand some of the issues of the women's liberation movement.
 2. To develop empathy for women's issues.
- b. This is for a large group. Play takes about 30 minutes.
- c. Copy of handout for each player (see text below).
- d. Read handout aloud.
- e. Look at each statement. Write down examples that prove or disprove each one. What are the "other reasons" mentioned in the concluding statement? Discuss your thoughts with the group.

Extensions:

1. Investigate some of the pioneers of the women's liberation movement. Choose one pioneer and write a short biography of her.
2. Scan the newspapers for local women's liberation leaders. Write a list of qualities that they share.

Handout: Women's Liberation

Because women's work is never done, we are unpaid or underpaid; because our jobs are temporary or part-time, we're the first to be fired or downsized; because we want community care for our children, we are unfit mothers, but if we stay at home we're lazy; and if we stand up for our rights, we're aggressive and unfeminine, but if we don't we're typical weak females; we're the lousy women drivers and the interfering mothers-in-law, the sad spinsters and the bad witches; if we want to get married we're out to trap a man, and if we don't we're lesbians; if we enjoy sex we're sluts, and if we don't we're frigid; because of these labels and many more we are part of the women's liberation movement.

This activity is from Maureen Cech's *Global Sense: A Leader's Guide to Games for Change California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1996.*

Inside Out is intended for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages.



**Denver Center
Theatre Company**

Donovan Marley, Artistic Director

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