



Denver Center  
Theatre Company

# Inside

# Out

A STUDY GUIDE

PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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## The CRIPPLE of INISHMAAN

"JOHNNY: Ireland mustn't be such a bad place so if the Yanks want to come to Ireland to do their filming." *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Act I

The action takes place in 1934 on Inishmaan, the middle island of the Aran Islands located at the mouth of Galway Bay off the western coast of Ireland. "Cripple Billy" is a disabled, orphaned teenager who lives on the island with his two adoptive "aunties," Kate and Eileen. When the self-appointed local gossip and newsman, Johnnypateenmike, reports that the filmmaker Robert Flaherty is casting his movie *Man of Aran* on the neighboring island of Inishmore, the pattern of life in the village is disrupted. While residents such as the bullying, belligerent adolescent, Slippy Helen, and her browbeaten brother, Bartley, persuade the local fisherman, Babbybobby, to take them to Inishmore so they can be in the film, it is Billy who is most eager to go in order to escape the

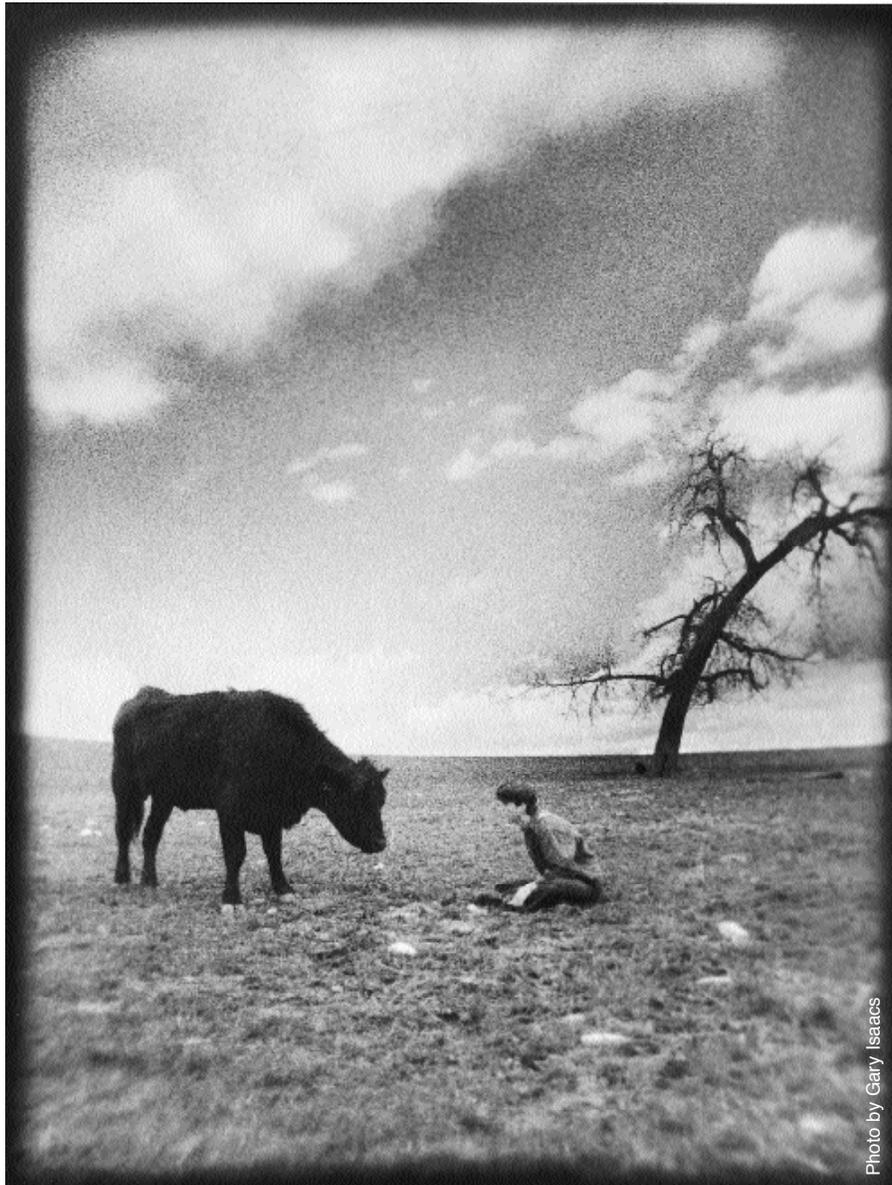


Photo by Gary Isaacs

life he feels is monotonous and restrictive.

The colorful personalities and peculiarities of the townspeople are fodder for hilarity in this piece. The audience discovers secrets, lies and cruelty in their lives, yet the play celebrates what remains alive and enduring in human nature.

"BILLY:  
Well, there are plenty around here as crippled as me, only it isn't on the outside it shows."  
*The Cripple of Inishmaan*, Act II.

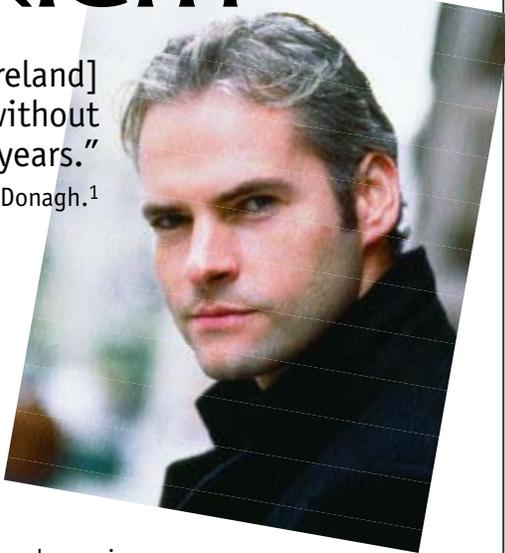
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**TWA**

# THE PLAYWRIGHT

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

Martin McDonagh.<sup>1</sup>



**M**artin McDonagh was born in England in 1970. His father, a construction worker, and his mother, a part-time domestic worker, 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 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 screen-writing. 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.

**A**fter 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 script plays to the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), but they were all rejected. Next, he moved on to writing 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 *Skull of Connemara* and *The Lonesome West*; these three plays became known as the *Leenane* trilogy.

Gerry 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—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. Last spring, *The Lonesome West* opened in New York to favorable reviews.

**M**cDonagh doesn't see many plays and feels that art concerning politics and social issues is dull. "My kind of theater incorporates as many cinematic elements as possible, because I like films better than theater."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, he has often said he is using theatre 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."<sup>3</sup>

## WORDS AND PHRASES USED IN *THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN*

Bang in the gob: smack in the mouth  
Banshees: ghosts  
Begora: by God.  
Biscuits: cookies  
Biteens of news: little bits of news  
Bollocks: balls  
Boxeen: little box ("een" at the end of a word means "little")  
Coddling you: lying to you  
Colleen fair: pretty girl  
Curragh: wooden fishing boat  
Doolally: crazy  
Eejit: idiot or fool  
eej: fool  
Fried winkles: periwinkles or baby clams  
Gob: mouth or face  
Goosey: silly  
Jam roly poly: sponge cake with jelly  
Jeebies: wow  
Jumper: sweater  
Ladeens: young boys  
Leenane: town in the west of Ireland  
Michael Collins: Irish freedom fighter who originated modern guerrilla warfare. He was assassinated in 1922.  
Porter: stout beer  
Poteen: illegal alcoholic beverage made from potatoes  
Rosmuck: town in the West of Ireland  
Shillelagh: Irish cudgel  
Gosawer: boy  
Prait: potato  
Kevin Barry: Irish patriot who was executed in 1920  
Skitter: excrement (more specifically, diarrhea)  
For the high jump: you'll be in trouble  
Antrim: one of the northernmost counties in Ireland  
Kerry: county, south, near County Cork  
Connemara: area in County Galway

# THE ARAN ISLANDS



“Those green fields bear witness to the indomitable spirit of the islanders.”<sup>4</sup>

The Aran Islands—Inis Mor (Inishmore), Inis Meain (Inishmaan) and Inis Oirr (Inisheer) lie at the mouth of Galway Bay off western Ireland. They are accessi-

Inishmaan is the middle island and the most remote. Because of its isolation, Inishmaan was regarded as a stronghold of the Irish language. It was to this island that John Millington Synge, the playwright, came to improve his Irish; his cottage may still be visited on the main road. The church of St. Gregory (Cill Cheannannach) and Dun Chonchuir, a stone fort dating from the second century are some of Inishmaan’s oldest edifices. The island is the most fertile of the three and least visited; it is home to more than 300 flowering plants and has high stone walls that define a complex maze of paths and roads. Its population numbers 300 people, all Irish speaking.

ble by ferry from the port of Rossaveel on the mainland and by air from the airport at Inveran.

Inishmore is the largest of the islands, eight miles long and two miles wide. There are several ancient stone churches and forts among its antiquities. Tour buses regularly take visitors to the “seven churches,” the oldest dating from the eighth century. Most impressive of the stone forts is Dun Aonghasa, a semicircular edifice resting on the edge of a perpendicular cliff that rises out of the ocean. It was built by the Fir Bolg, an ancient people. Another historic site is Dun Aenghus, a hill fort that sits on the top of a cliff providing protection from an ocean attack.



Inisheer (Inis Oire) is the smallest island, 2.5 miles long and 1.5 miles wide. A walk around the island leads you to Teampall Chaomhain, a tenth century church; Caislean Ui Bhriain, a castle dating from 1632; and Tobar Einne, the holy well of St. Enda.

A unique aspect of the archipelago is its stony, almost bare rocky fields. Next to a stony field there is often a stone wall enclosing a patch of rich green grass grown from sand and seaweed dragged up from the beaches.

“There is no language like the Irish for soothing and quieting.” John Millington Synge. *The Aran Islands*.

## A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE ISLANDS

**500 BC:** The first settlers on Aran

may have been people known as the Fir Bolg. After their defeat by the Celts, they retreated to Aran where they built the huge fortresses of stone.

**400s AD:** Christians made a perilous journey across land and sea to join St. Enda in his monastery in Inishmore. Here the founders of other great Irish monasteries studied with Enda before they left to form their own establishments.

**1300s:** The Normans reached the west coast of Ireland; they sacked Inishmore. The O’Briens, principal landowners of Clare, were granted lordship of the islands in return for their cooperation and goodwill.

**1500s:** An internal feud broke out among the O’Flaherty clan and one branch fled to Aran to find refuge with the O’Briens; the rest of the O’Flahertys, assisted by the English, pursued them, and both the O’Briens and the O’Flahertys of Aran were defeated. The islands were then handed over to the O’Flahertys who had sided with the English. The outraged O’Briens appealed to the Crown and the Crown, fearful of a French or Spanish attack, decided the Aran Islands were monastic lands and, since all church lands are Crown property, belonged to England. They sought someone to run the islands with the Crown’s interests at heart and chose a man named John Rawson. He was given Aran on the condition that he would maintain a garrison of soldiers on Inishmore. After Rawson, the islands passed through the hands of many

executors. Finally, the islands were

sold to Richard Butler, who received the title of Earl of Aran.

**1700s and 1800s:** The islands were owned by a series of absentee landlords. Their land agents extorted heavy rents from people struggling on poor land. Successive potato crop failures led to mass emigration from the islands; the people began to forsake their Irish language for English in order to prepare themselves for work in England and/or America.

**1831:** When the national school system started, English became the language of instruction. However, despite the historical pressure, the first language of the people of the Aran Islands is still Irish.

**1893:** The severe poverty of the land prompted the Congested Districts Board in 1893 to begin helping the islanders buy their own land, but it was not until the foundation of the Irish state in 1922 that the road to economic independence began.

**1906:** J.M. Synge wrote his book, *The Aran Islands*. In it he noted how difficult life was on the rocky islands. He particularly commended the women of the islands for their candor and self-reliance. In their flaming red dresses, they seemed untouched by Victorian gentility or by “the bondage of lady-like persons.”<sup>5</sup> Their life style contrasted sharply with that of the Irish mainland where the snobberies practiced by an emerging middle class were destroying the older communal way of life so necessary to living on the Arans.

# ROBERT FLAHERTY AND *MAN OF ARAN*

“There is something in Mr. Flaherty  
I can’t fathom.”

Pat Mullen, *Man of Aran*.

Robert Flaherty is considered the preeminent romantic poet of documentary cinema, but he was never a “rich and famous Yank” as Johnnypateenmike characterizes him. He made five major films and they all display an unusual poetic sensibility and respect for nature.

Flaherty was born in 1882 and began his professional life as an explorer and prospector. He began filmmaking in 1913 on several successive expeditions to Hudson Bay. His focus was the power of nature and the romantic appeal of the so-called “noble savage” who survived in a hostile yet beautiful environment.

Unfortunately, most of his original negatives burned when he dropped a cigarette into their packing crate. It took him until 1920 to raise the money from a French fur company that would allow him to return to Hudson Bay, re-shoot and finish filming. The result was the silent film, *Nanook of the North*, released in 1922. This was his first and most commercially successful movie. *Nanook* is also credited as being the first commercially financed and exhibited feature documentary. Its cast of natives not only acted but also contributed to the content of the film. *Nanook* is a narrative pitting man against the elements, a subject that was to become Flaherty’s signature theme. The film’s intent aimed to authentically document and preserve a vanishing culture but it restaged events and actions without comment and ignored the modern world in which the natives actually lived.

*Nanook* was relatively successful both in the United States and abroad. Its popularity inspired a popular song and Nanook’s face appeared on ice-cream wrappers. Paramount Studios hired Flaherty to go out and bring in another *Nanook*—this one from the South Seas. Flaherty shot *Moana*, a film about a young man’s coming of age in Samoa. Since life on Samoa is hardly a struggle, Flaherty restaged events including the painful tattooing rituals that had not been practiced for years. This film was not well received and ended Flaherty’s experience as a Hollywood director.

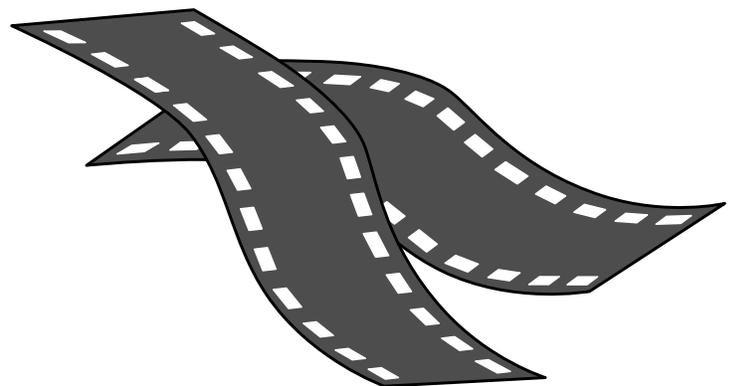
Eight years later, Flaherty journeyed to Ireland to film yet another major documentary, *Man of Aran*. Flaherty received backing (but not much money, counter to *Inishmaan*’s gossip) to record another epic of human beings in primal struggle with the elements. On Inishmore, he was introduced to Pat Mullen, a resident who helped the director scout locations and select actors. Mullen became the intermediary between the filmmaker and the islanders and his experiences are retold in his book, *Man of Aran*. Here again, we find that Flaherty documented the culture by restaging events and reviving old customs. The scene of shark hunting that so bores Slippery Helen in the play formed the dramatic core of the film—but, in fact, shark hunting for lamp oil had not been practiced in the islands for more than 50 years.

Although it won a prize, the Mussolini Cup, for the Best Foreign Film at the 1934 Venice International Film Festival, *Man of Aran* was attacked by critics for making poverty romantic during a time of mass unemployment and ignoring the real Irish political, religious and class struggles.

Robert Flaherty returned to the United States in 1939 and completed two other poetic documentaries: *The Land* (1941) and *Louisiana Story* (1948). At his death in 1951, he was known as the “founding father” of documentary cinema.

“There now remain of the *Man of Aran*  
film crowd Big Patcheen and myself.  
No, we didn’t save anything; there must  
always be fools in every family.”

Pat Mullen, *Man of Aran*.



# GOSSIP or NEWS

Gossip: an idle tattler;  
a newsmonger.  
Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

As offensive as Johnnypateenmike is, he is a valuable resource in Inishmaan. As the local gossip, he provides the social exchange in the village.

According to the book *Rumor and Gossip*, those persons who gossip help to maintain the fluidity of communication patterns. In a small community, they are the information specialists and news carriers to people who cannot or will not read and are not inclined to spy on other people's lives.

In his book, *Inishkillane*, Hugh Brody states that gossiping in western Ireland takes place in the village shop, just as it does in Eileen and Kate's store in Inishmaan. Gossip requires that someone (Johnny) be extremely aware of his neighbors. Gossip is directed against all deviation and to this end, it watches, anticipates and criticizes. A very important feature of gossip in a traditional small community is what counts as a deviation or transgression; for example, Billy's health condition and his habit of staring at cows is fodder for Johnny.

Johnny's gossip ranges from the ridiculous (the goose that bit the cat) to the useful (Flaherty's coming to Inishmaan to make a movie) to the cruel when he reveals Billy's secret. No matter what the situation, he expects "information" for he considers himself a newsman, and "a newsman must get his news by hook or

crook."<sup>6</sup> To this purpose, he bullies Babbybobby and badgers the Doctor for the news. He reminds us of contemporary reporters who poke microphones in people's faces at disaster scenes and ask such inane questions as, "How does this make you feel?"

Rosnow and Fine write gossip is "a transaction...made in which news is exchanged for some desired resource."<sup>7</sup> In Johnny's case, his payment is a can of peas, a loaf of bread, a leg of mutton, etc. The transactional nature of small talk is illustrated by the gossip columnist. In the United States, this tradition goes as far back as 1730, when Benjamin Franklin wrote a column for the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Other famous gossip columnists include Mark Twain for the *Virginia City Enterprise* and Eugene Field for the *Chicago News*. Walter Winchell advanced the art in his syndicated columns in the Hearst newspapers and on his radio programs in the

1940s and 50s.

Today consumers of gossip have an abundant market at their feet. Newspaper columns, tabloids, magazines and TV offer opportunities to read or see the specialists on the surreptitious state of events. Indeed, one has only to enter an on-line chat room and one can "dish the dirt" with the experts. Such is our unquenchable desire for the news.



"KATE: How else will we know what's going on in the outside world but for Johnny?"

*The Cripple of Inishmaan. Act I.*

"There are two kinds of people who blow through life like a breeze. And one kind is gossipers, and the other kind is gossipees."

Ogden Nash.  
*I'm a Stranger Here Myself.*



# TUBERCULOSIS

“The captain of all the men of death—  
was the Consumption.” John Bunyan

The most lethal of all infectious diseases, tuberculosis still claims 3 million lives worldwide each year, more than AIDS and cancer combined. It is recognized as the greatest killer in history; this single disease has caused one billion deaths during the 19th and 20th centuries. Once thought to have been eradicated, tuberculosis has re-emerged in the world as the result of unhealthy living conditions among the homeless, drug abuse, the AIDS epidemic, and new multiple drug resistant strains of the disease.

“The consumption,” as the disease was once known or the more modern term tuberculosis, is a disease that affects the lungs and is spread when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Moisture droplets carrying the infectious bacteria are spewed into the air where another person inhales them. The bacteria can remain alive and suspended in the air for hours and may infect many others.

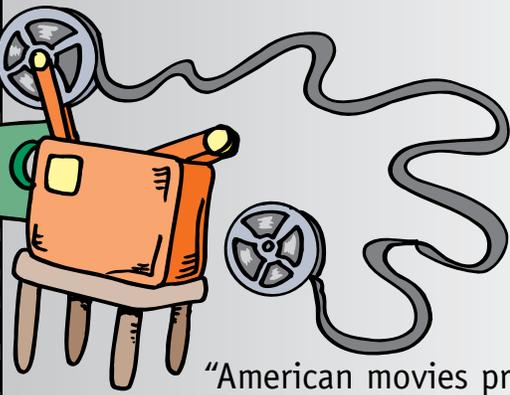
Several of the classical symptoms of tuberculosis, namely a persistent cough and the coughing up of bright red arterial blood, are related to the infection present in the lungs. Associated symptoms include: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite and weight, night sweats and chest pain.

Tuberculosis was once feared more than even the Bubonic (Black) Plague and thought to be incurable. Upon hearing the diagnosis of tuberculosis, the patient and family regarded this news as a virtual death sentence. Not only was there great fear attendant with this disease, but also the disease showed no partiality in those it struck. Rich and poor, famous and infamous, scholar and laborer, none were spared this wasting disease.

The modern name of the disease, tuberculosis, comes from the presence of small lumps, called tubercles that form in the lungs in response to the virulent bacteria. During the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, tuberculosis robbed humanity of many famous people often in the prime of life, thus denying society their great gifts and talents. John Keats (poet), Emily Bronte (writer, *Wuthering Heights*) and her sisters Anne (writer, *Agnes Grey*) and Charlotte (writer, *Jane Eyre*), Frederic Chopin (composer), Stephen Crane (author *Red Badge of Courage*), Henry David Thoreau (writer and naturalist), Ralph Waldo Emerson (poet and essayist), and Robert Louis Stevenson (author of *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*) are but a few who died from tuberculosis. The French doctor, Rene Laennec (1781-1826), who invented the stethoscope lost his life at age 45 to this dreaded killer. Many other physicians died while caring for their stricken patients, reinforcing the public image that tuberculosis was a highly contagious disease.

The German bacteriologist Robert Koch conclusively showed in 1882 that tuberculosis was caused by a “beautiful blue bacillus,” a rod-shaped bacterium with unusual cell wall properties that caused it to be undetectable under the microscope. Only after developing a special staining protocol was Koch able to see the causative agent of tuberculosis. The discovery of the tuberculosis microorganism was a first and giant step in formulating a therapy or cure. Although Koch was recognized for his discovery with the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1905, he was not to see a cure in his lifetime. A cure had to wait for the development of antibiotic therapy, first successfully used against tuberculosis in 1944.

## EARLY MOVIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ABROAD



“American movies presented American myths and American dreams, home-grown for native audiences, yet only man-made boundaries kept them from conquering the world.”<sup>8</sup>

So writes Robert Sklar in his book *Movie-Made America*. Thus, what Helen and Billy saw on the screen were descriptions of American values and style. They saw American humor, brashness, glamour, satire and violence. They also saw the open spaces of the American West with its resilient cowboys and the glittering cities of the East with their innovative entrepreneurs.

“Trade follows the film” became a favorite motto of economic expansionists of the 1920s.<sup>9</sup> Movies distributed abroad increased foreign demands for clothes, cars, furniture and appliances. For example, Middle Eastern movie goers demanded shoes and clothes modeled after those worn by American stars, while Japanese tailors went to American movies to learn how to cut the styles favored by their Western-minded customers. In Brazil, the sale of a particular car went up 35% and architects began designing California-style bungalows after they were featured in an American film. In addition to clothes, hairstyles, speech and gestures were adopted from popular American movies. In Japan, new words emerged to describe the young men and women who dressed and behaved like American screen characters: “mobos” was short for modern boys and “mogas” for girls. European observers began to notice the use of the slang word “gee” among the young.

The popularity of the American movie abroad was not solely based on the wish to look or talk or live like Americans. “In movies, girls could get their boys and boys their girls no matter what their income or social station; right could triumph over wrong no matter what forces of power or privilege stood in its way.”<sup>10</sup> Hollywood did not invent the happy ending; but in the first half of the 20th century, no other medium created the visions of love and social satisfaction as compellingly or confidently as the movies. In films such as *The Virginian* (1929), *Broadway Melody* (1929) *Platinum Blonde* (1931), *City Lights* (1931), *Blonde Venus* (1932), *Love Me Tonight* (1932), and *42nd Street* (1933), Billy, Helen and the rest of the world could suspend reality and see the barriers of class, poverty and disability fall, to be replaced by an idealized conception of themselves.

“In Hollywood, if you don’t have happiness, you send out for it.” Rex Reed

# ACTIVITIES

## 1. Geography

Where is Ireland? Find its location on the globe, maps and other geographic tools.

2. How large is the landmass? 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 geographic location affect 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 for survival?
- 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.)**

## 3. What do the Irish call their country?

4. Research the geology of the island.

- 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's surface have a similar climate?

**Activities #4 and #5 contribute to Colorado Model Content Standard #4 for 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? Where did the people come from and how did they live (i.e., farming, fishing, war, trading etc.)?
- Research the patterns of migration, invasions and conquests. What were the physical and cultural impacts of human migration in this area?
- Describe the evolution of Ireland's political structure?

**This exercise contributes to Colorado Model Content Standard #1 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. Legends

- Investigate historical characters, folklore, legends and legendary heroes of Ireland. Look up: leprechauns, banshees, Fin MacCumhaill, The Hound of Culann (or CuCulainn), Tir-Na-Nog (country of the young), pookas, tuatha de Danaan (the people of ancient Ireland—see the movie *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 the Giant and Saint Patrick.

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

## 8. Religious Beliefs

- Research Druids (pre-Christian religion); what do we know about them and their religion?
- When did Christianity come to Ireland? What happened to the Druid religion?
- Also, research the ancient seasonal festivals including: the spring festival Beltane (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 Colorado Model Content Standard #6 for History. (Students know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history.)**

## 9. 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 sites were created?

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

10. There are many references throughout *The Cripple of Inishmaan* to the historical period during which the play takes place, circa 1934. For example, Johnnypateen makes reference to Hitler's rise to power in Germany and the filming on Inishmore is a symbol of the growing movie industry in Hollywood. Using resource materials (newspapers, books, magazines, encyclopedias), research historical events that occurred in 1934. Be sure to include facts that might have made an influence upon the writing or characters of the play, such as social and political events in Ireland, the film industry in America, and political events in Germany. Create a time-line or fictional newspaper article from the year to share with your class.

11. The majority of the action of *The Cripple of Inishmaan* takes place in the Osbourne's general store; the rest of the town is left up to our imagination. First, look at an actual map of the island. Then, create a fictional map of the town of Inishmaan using context clues from the play. For example, what was spoken

of in the play but never seen: a police station, the homes of each of the characters, the farms where Billy would watch cows? What else would the town need to be self-sufficient: a bank, a fire station, a City Hall? Contribute to your map by researching the economic and geographic landscapes of Ireland circa 1934. What were its major exports and industries? What other businesses might Inishmaan have? After you have completed your map, be sure to make a symbol key and share your work with the class.

12. The characters in *The Cripple of Inishmaan* did not believe Billy could become an actor because of his disability. This form of prejudice exists toward many individuals with special needs: hearing impaired persons, persons with physical handicaps and visually impaired persons. In pairs, have one partner put on a blindfold. The other partner will then assist that person in accomplishing a simple task such as getting a drink from the water fountain, writing a word on the chalkboard or retrieving something from his/her locker. Once the task has been accomplished, switch roles so that the other partner has a chance to wear the blindfold. Follow the activity with a discussion about how the students felt while not being able to see. How did this affect the way you moved? How would a disability such as blindness change the way you live your life? Try to imagine and list what challenges you would face in your day if you had a disability? How would you overcome these challenges?

13. • One of the major themes of *The Cripple of Inishmaan* is pursuing your dreams. In theatre, much like in life, each character has a goal for which he/she is striving; this is called an objective. Make a list of each character in the play and his/her objective. Then, identify the primary obstacle that prevents him/her from achieving this objective. Compare your list with your peers. Often a character will have more than one goal; it is the job of the actor to decide which objective he will pursue.

• Next, make a list of your personal goals in life. What do you need to do to be able to accomplish these goals? For example, you may want to get a job that pays well. First, you would need to finish high school and probably graduate from college, too. List all of the obstacles that prevent you from achieving your goals and provide possible ways in which you will overcome them.

14. • In order for Billy to achieve his goal of going to Inishmore, he tricks Bobby into taking him. This is an example of using tactics. In theatre, tactics are defined as the ways by which a character tries to achieve his goal. In pairs, try to make your partner do something such as sit in a chair, give you a dollar or say a particular word. Be sure your partner does not know what you want him/her to do. What are the tactics you might use to accomplish your objective? Ask? Demand? Threaten? Beg?

• After each pair has performed for the class, relate the exercise to your life. How do you try to get something you want from your parents? Your best friend? Your boy or girlfriend? Your enemy? Do you use the same tactics? How and why are they different?



## Notes

1. Green, p. 12.
2. Green, p. 13.
3. *Current Biography*. p. 422.
4. Fitzpatrick and Whilde, p. 83
5. Kiberd, p. 20.
6. McDonagh, p. 32.
7. Rosnow and Fine, p. 87.
8. Sklar, p. 215.
9. Sklar, p. 216.
10. Sklar, p. 227.

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