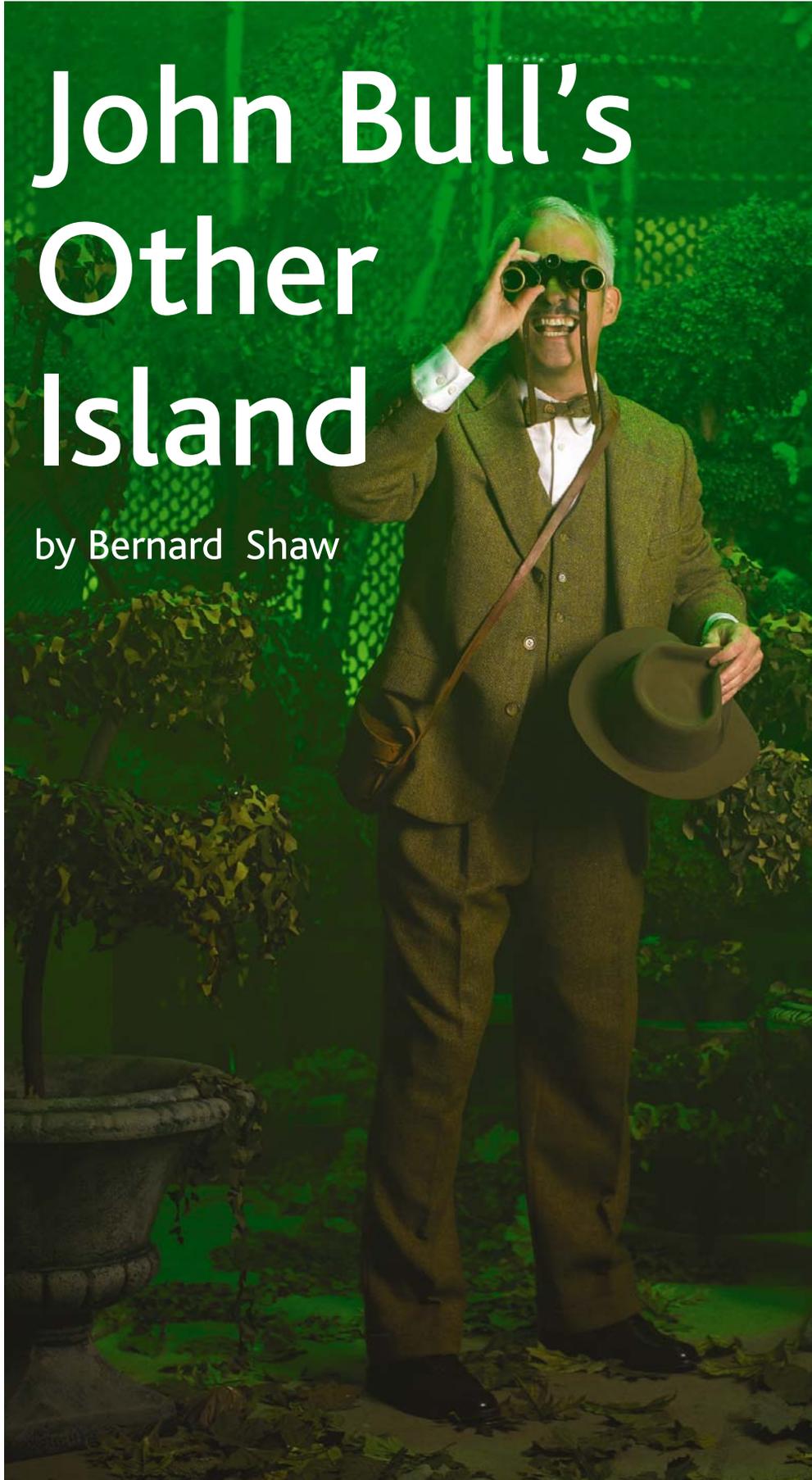


John Bull's Other Island

by Bernard Shaw



SHAW
FESTIVAL
THEATRE
2010 SEASON

CONNECTIONS
Shaw Festival
Study Guide

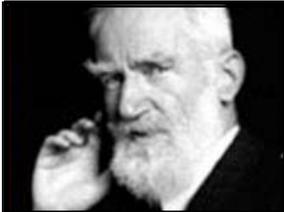
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WHAT MAKES SHAW SPECIAL



Festival Theatre



Court House Theatre



Royal George Theatre

THE SHAW STORY

MANDATE

The Shaw Festival produces and presents the work of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and playwrights writing anywhere in the world during, or about, the era of Shaw's lifetime.

VALUES

- The Shaw Festival chooses works for presentation that are challenging, provocative and intelligent.
- Productions engage audiences with clever, insightful, and delightful portraits of the human condition.
- The works chosen often resonate with the wit, social commentary, and topical relevance for which G.B. Shaw himself was well known.
- The Shaw Festival is dedicated to excellence, consistency, and integrity in all its creative and administrative practices.
- The Shaw Festival operates within a fiscally responsible and accountable framework.

THE SHAW FESTIVAL ATTRIBUTES ITS SUCCESS TO:

The Ensemble - their talent, continuity, generosity, and collegiality fuel all of the Festival's efforts

The Company - their singular sense of purpose fosters mutual trust, respect, and dedication to the Festival

The Repertory - the alternating schedule of performance serves the audience and inspires the company

The Mandate - 1856-1950 offers a wealth of material to fascinate and delight, liberating the ensemble to explore complex questions from the safety of the not too distant past while encouraging audiences to re-discover themselves through the lens of historical perspective

The Shaw Festival is a crucible of progressive and provocative ideas inspired by the brilliance, bravery, humanity, and humour of George Bernard Shaw.

OUR THEATRES

The Shaw Festival presents plays in four distinctive theatres. The Festival Theatre with 869 seats is The Shaw's flagship theatre; the historic Court House where The Shaw first began performing seats 327; and the Royal George Theatre, modeled after an Edwardian opera house, holds 328. Our new Studio Theatre has flexible seating and can accommodate approximately 200 seats.

THE SHAW'S COAT OF ARMS

In 1987, on the occasion of our 25th Anniversary, the Shaw Festival became the second theatre company in the world to be granted a Coat of Arms by the College of Heralds. A large painted sculpture of our Coat of Arms adorns the lobby of the Festival Theatre.



A practical, hands-on resource for the classroom which contains background information for the play, as well as suggested themes for classroom discussions.

John Bull's Other Island is recommended for students in grade 9 and higher.

This guide was written and compiled by Amanda Tripp. Additional materials were provided by Joanna Falck, Christopher Newton, William Schmuck, and Ann Saddlemyer

Cover:
Patrick Galligan
Photo by Shin Sugino

Previews June 18
Opens July 10
Closes October 9

THE PLAYERS

Cornelius Doyle	GUY BANNERMAN
Tom Broadbent	BENEDICT CAMPBELL
Aunt Judy	MARY HANEY
Father Dempsey	THOM MARRIOTT
Barney Doran	PATRICK McMANUS
Peter Keegan	JIM MEZON
Local Lad	CRAIG PIKE
Timothy & Matthew Haffigan	RIC REID
Hodson	DAVID SCHURMANN
Larry Doyle	GRAEME SOMERVILLE
Nora Reilly	SEVERN THOMPSON
Patsy Farrell	JONATHAN WIDDIFIELD
Local Lad	TIMOTHY ZIEGLER

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Director	CHRISTOPHER NEWTON
Designer	WILLIAM SCHMUCK
Lighting Designer	LOUISE GUINAND

SYNOPSIS

Friends and business partners Broadbent and Doyle travel to a small town in Ireland with a business deal in mind. The Englishman, Broadbent, falls in love with everything about the place, including Nora Reilly, Doyle's old flame. Doyle, the hometown boy, only sees a country trapped in its past. Shaw's unromantic look at the romance of Ireland, and a play so funny that at a royal command performance, King Edward VII laughed so hard he broke his chair!

“ Like most people who have asked me to write plays, Mr Yeats got rather more than he bargained for.”

-Bernard Shaw

The Story

JOHN BULL'S OTHER ISLAND

"When an Englishman is sentimental he behaves very much as an Irishman does when he is drunk."

This is the only play Shaw wrote about his country of birth and the conflicts and comedy in the play are reflections of Shaw's own thoughts about his homeland. The John Bull of the title refers to a character that came to be the personification of England (like Uncle Sam for the United States). The play was written to be performed in Ireland – it was intended for the Irish Literary Theatre, which became the Abbey Theatre, and was commissioned by poet W.B. Yeats. But the play was not only too long and too controversial, it was too large for the theatre's resources and it was finally produced in 1904 at the Royal Court in London and was not seen in Ireland for another three years at the Abbey, where it became a running staple of the theatre for the next ten years.

The great fun of the play stems from Shaw's uncompromising, unsentimental look at both the Irish and the English in the play – two worlds he knew very well. The play opens on the offices of the firm of Doyle and Broadbent, Civil Engineers. A piece of land in Ireland has fallen into their hands, and it happens to be in Rosscullen, the place where Larry Doyle was born and lived until he came to England eighteen years ago. Tom Broadbent wants to travel there but Doyle has no interest in returning to his homeland or to Nora Reilly, the girl he left behind. But when he realizes that Broadbent, with all of his romanticism, might be romantic enough to fall in love with her and take her off his hands, he agrees to make the journey.

When they arrive in Rosscullen, Broadbent does almost immediately fall in love with Nora Reilly. After a bit of whisky and a moonlit night, his emotions get the best of him and he can't help but profess his love and claims that her accent drove him out of his senses but that his love is out of an English earnestness. The next day when Doyle arrives, he is invited to become their Parliamentary candidate, which he refuses and Broadbent immediately accepts. Doyle also rejects Nora and Broadbent proposed marriage. Broadbent, it seems, becomes the perfect Irishman that Doyle has refused to become. And despite a foolish incident with a farmer's pig, Broadbent declares, "I feel now as I never did before that I am right in devoting my life to the cause of Ireland."

Directed by Artistic Director emeritus Christopher Newton, the production features Benedict Campbell as Tom Broadbent, Graeme Somerville as Larry Doyle and Jim Mezon as defrocked priest Peter (Father) Keegan, with Guy Bannerman, Mary Haney, Thom Marriott, Patrick McManus and Severn Thompson.

WHO'S WHO

John Bull's Other Island

BACHELORS, BUSINESS PARTNERS, BOSOM BUDDIES

HODSON

Valet to Tom Broadbent

An elderly, respectable man with an 'air of putting up patiently with a great deal of trouble and indifferent health'. He goes to Ireland with Broadbent and discovers that much as he likes Irishmen in London, he hates them in their own country.

THOMAS BROADBENT

Civil engineer in partnership with Larry Doyle. A robust, full-blooded, energetic Englishman, buoyant and irresistible, mostly likeable, and enormously absurd in his most earnest moments. A simple and romantic man who is enraptured with everything Irish (including Nora Reilly).



LARRY DOYLE

Civil engineer in partnership with Tom Broadbent. Son of Corney Doyle. Clever and good-looking, but restless and dissatisfied. He is loath to return to Ireland after an absence of 18 years—partly because he knows his childhood sweetheart, Nora Reilly, is waiting for him and partly because he will have to see his father with whom he disagrees on every possible point.



THE RESIDENTS OF ROSSCULLEN

CORNELIUS DOYLE

Larry Doyle's father. A worried-looking small-town businessman and former Land Agent.

JUDY DOYLE

Larry's aunt and house-keeper to Corney Doyle. A placid woman, 'kindly but without concern for others; the placid product of a narrow life'.

NORA REILLY

Since her father's death she has lived in the household of Cornelius Doyle, and has considered herself engaged to Larry, in spite of his absence in England for eighteen years. A slight, weak woman, commonplace to Irish eyes, but to Englishmen like Tom Broadbent an attractive, ethereal creature.



PATSY FARRELL

A young, superstitious, illiterate Irish farm labourer employed by Cornelius Doyle.

FATHER DEMPSEY

Rosscullen's parish priest. A priest neither by vocation nor ambition, but 'because the life suits him'. On the whole, an easy-going, amiable, even modest man as long as his dues are paid and his authority admitted.

PETER KEEGAN

A 'madman', visionary ex-priest who lost his faith 'when the mystery of this world was revealed to him' at the bedside of a dying Hindu, and realized 'this earth is hell, and that we are sent here to expiate crimes committed by us in a former existence'. He has been deprived of his priestly office. He wanders the fields and hills of Rosscullen.

BARNEY DORAN

A miller with an enormous capacity for derisive, obscene, blasphemous, or merely cruel and senseless fun. He is a typical example of 'energy and capacity wasted and demoralized by want of sufficient training and social pressure to force it into beneficent activity'.

TIM HAFFIGAN

A seedy, stunted, short-necked, small-headed man. He hoodwinks Broadbent into believing him to be a true Irishman who will help him with his land development scheme in Ireland. He takes a pay advance and never returns.

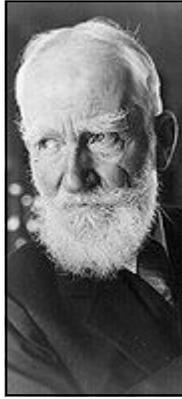
MATT HAFFIGAN

An elderly Irish peasant farmer.

“A bachelor, an Irishman, a vegetarian, a fluent liar, a social-democrat, a lecturer and debater, a lover of music, a fierce opponent of the present status of women, and an insister on the seriousness of art.”

- Bernard Shaw
talking about Bernard Shaw

The Playwright



BERNARD SHAW

An acclaimed **dramatist, critic,** and **social reformer**, Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin where he grew up in an atmosphere of genteel poverty. He attended four schools and was tutored by a clerical uncle, but left his formal education behind him at the age of fifteen. He developed a wide knowledge of music, art, and literature under the influence of his mother, a singer and vocal music teacher, and as a result of his visits to the National Gallery of Ireland. In 1876 he moved to London, where he spent his afternoons in the British Museum and his evenings pursuing his informal education in the form of lectures and debates. Shaw declared himself a **socialist** in 1882 and joined the **Fabian** Society in 1884. He soon distinguished himself as a fluent and effective **public speaker**, as well as an incisive and irreverent **critic of music, art, and drama**.

Shaw's first play, *Widowers' Houses*, was produced privately in 1892 for the members of the Independent Theatre Society. Shaw achieved his first **commercial success** with the American premiere of *The Devil's Disciple*, the income from which enabled him to quit his job as a drama critic and to make his living solely as a **playwright**.

In 1898 he married Charlotte Payne-Townshend, an Irish heiress whom he had met through his Fabian friends Beatrice and Sidney Webb.

Harley Granville-Barker, a young actor-manager, helped to advance Shaw's popularity in London with his famous repertory experiment at the Royal Court Theatre from 1904 to 1907. Of the "thousand performances" of this venture, over 700 were of plays by Shaw, including the premieres of *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), *Man and Superman* (1905), *Major Barbara* (1905), and *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906). Shaw's best-known play, *Pygmalion*, was first performed in 1913. Two generations later, it attained even greater fame as the musical *My Fair Lady*.

During World War I, Shaw's **anti-war** speeches and a **controversial** pamphlet entitled *Common Sense About the War* made him very unpopular as a **public figure**. In *Heartbreak House* (performed 1920) Shaw exposed, in a country-house setting on the eve of the War, the spiritual bankruptcy of the generation responsible for the carnage. Next came *Back to Methuselah* (1922) and *Saint Joan* (1923), acclaim for which led to the awarding of the **Nobel Prize for Literature** in 1925.

Shaw continued to write plays and essays until his death in 1950 at the age of 94.

“ I saw *John Bull's Other Island* as a journey perhaps rather like *The Wizard of Oz*. ”

- Christopher Newton

Director's Notes



CHRISTOPHER NEWTON talks about directing *John Bull's Other Island*

As a director you start with an idea. You ask yourself “What is this play about?” And often—unless the play is unusually thin and insipid—you come up with an answer. I saw *John Bull's Other Island* as a journey perhaps rather like *The Wizard of Oz*. Broadbent and Doyle set off from London and arrive in Ireland, one with a set of ideas about the country drawn from the Music Hall and sensational fiction, the other with a set of prejudices born of his childhood spent in their destination—the remote country town of Rosscullen.

In rehearsal the director encourages the actors to find their characters in themselves. (You don't have to murder anyone to play Macbeth because the seeds of every emotion can, to a greater or lesser extent, be found in every one of us.) So we rehearse and I sit watching the actors, asking myself: “Does what this actor is doing ring true given the circumstances of the plot?” and later “Will the audience understand what we think is happening?”

If the director is lucky, the original idea proves to be valuable and stimulating. During rehearsals for *John Bull's Other Island* we discovered the journey and we found obvious mythical elements rather like a fairy story. (I have found over the years that this is not unusual in Shaw. Look at *Too True to be Good* or *Man and Superman* or *Misalliance*.) Broadbent and Doyle meet a wise man (Keegan), they are offered gifts (perhaps as an attempt on the part of Roscullen to curry favour) and there's even a princess—a Penelope-like beauty—and a magical tower.

Laced through this fairy story is a critique of late nineteenth-century English and Irish politics. The partners, Broadbent and Doyle, are unscrupulous but well-meaning developers. They preach a doctrine of efficiency which is almost exactly the same as our own popular notion of productivity. And like productivity their efficiency takes no account of the sense of shared humanity or of the spirit and particularity often found in the places they want to change. Their destination turns out to be not quite what they expected. For one it provides gifts without understanding and for the other doubts without solutions.

As a coda I might mention that I was once invited to speak on Shaw to a distinguished audience at Trinity College, Dublin. I said then, and I still hold to the idea, that Shaw is, after Shakespeare, the greatest playwright in the English language. For the most part, my audience disagreed with me. It was so Irish of them.

MUSICAL NOTES

The music in *John Bull* includes a cockney Music Hall song which was a barrel-organ favourite (the barrel-organ was a portable street instrument). The music becomes lushly romantic when we get to Ireland and most of it dates from around the period. It includes Vaughan Williams' “Serenade to Music”, Hamilton Harty's setting of Keat's “Ode to a Nightingale”, and the second movement of his *Irish Symphony*. (Sir Hamilton Harty was the leading Irish musician of his day.) We also use Sir Malcolm Arnold's *Four Irish Dances*.

“...when I came back to Ireland I found all the wonders there waiting for me. You see they had been there all the time; but my eyes had never been opened to them. I did not know what my own house was like, because I had never been outside it.”

- Bernard Shaw talking about Ireland

Designer's Notes



WILLIAM SCHMUCK talks about designing *John Bull's Other Island*

The vision for the design for *John Bull's Other Island* began with a parallel that director Christopher Newton saw between the journey that takes place in *John Bull's Other Island* and that of Dorothy and her friends in *The Wizard of Oz*.

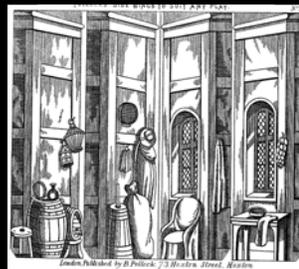
William Schmuck took this idea into the design for *John Bull* and portrayed England in sepia tones, monochromatic brown paper with black lines (like Kansas in the *Wizard of Oz*) in contrast to the verdant green of Ireland (as in the world of Oz and the Emerald City).

The design was also influenced by Music Hall theatres and Pollock's toy theatres, which were hugely popular in the 19th century. Pollock's would create reproductions of successful productions from London's West End theatres into collectible paper miniatures.

You can download a kit to assemble and decorate your own Pollock's Toy Theatre at:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/theatre_performance/todoonline/make_toy_theatre/index.html

Spot the design influences (clockwise from top left): Pollock's toy theatre; round tower (designed by William Schmuck); a still of the entrance to the Emerald City from the *Wizard of Oz*. Scene from current production of *John Bull's other Island*; a still of the entrance to the Emerald City from the *Wizard of Oz*; Doré picture



JOHN BULL'S OTHER ISLAND

Written at the invitation of W.B. Yeats for Dublin's Abbey Theatre, but rejected as "uncongenial" to Irish ideals (Shaw's explanation), *John Bull's Other Island* premiered at London's Royal Court Theatre on November 1, 1904, directed by Shaw and Harley Granville Barker. Barker also played Peter Keegan. The Abbey made amends by a series of productions beginning in 1916, and there have been several other British and Irish revivals, most recently at the Tricycle Theatre in London in 2003, directed by Dominic Dromgoole, with Niall Buggy as Keegan, and at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, in 2004, directed by Jonathan Munby, with Lalor Roddy as Keegan.

The American premiere was at the Garrick Theatre, New York, on October 10, 1905, directed by Arnold Daly, who also played Larry Doyle. A 1948 New York revival by Dublin's Gate Theatre was directed by Hilton Edwards and co-produced by Shaw Festival founder Brian Doherty.

The Canadian premiere was at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto, in a touring production by the Maurice Colbourne Players, where it ran in repertory for the week beginning February 4, 1929, with four other Shaw plays: *You Never Can Tell*, *Candida*, *Fanny's First Play*, and *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*.

The 2010 production is the Shaw Festival's fourth. Jim Mezon directed it in 1998, Denise Coffey in 1985, and the first production was in the Festival's third season, 1964, directed by Andrew Allan, the Festival's first Artistic Director.

Pictured below: stills from Shaw Festival productions of *John Bull's Other Island*
 Clockwise from left: Peter Hutt as *Peter Keegan*, Sandy Webster as *Corney Doyle*, Barry MacGregor as *Broadbent*, and Wes Tritter as *Barney Doran*. Englishman; *Tom Broadbent* (David Schurmann, right) tries to convince his business partner *Larry Doyle* (Blair Williams) to come to Ireland with him; Thom Marriott as *Father Dempsey*, Guy Bannerman as *Corney Doyle* and Patrick McManus as *Barney Doran*, Benedict Campbell as *Tom Broadbent*.



“ If wars were fought with words, Ireland would rule the world ”

- Irish Proverb

The World of the Play

THE STORY OF IRELAND

Ireland has a long, dramatic history that includes wave after wave of foreign invaders, revolutions, wars, political and religious oppression, centuries of famine and disease, emigrations and executions, with more twists and turns than a mystery plot! In the good news department, Ireland has also given the world some of its most brilliant characters in arts and literature (including Bernard Shaw and William Butler Yeats who commissioned Shaw to write *John Bull's Other Island*), great musicians and dancers as well as committed politicians and religious leaders. In order to understand the Ireland that Broadbent and Doyle find in *John Bull's Other Island*, we will take a brief peek into Ireland's past to see how the 'troubles' began. Let's begin with the Arrival of the Celts sometime around the year 700 BC.

*Please note that dates are approximate

ARRIVAL OF THE CELTS

700 - 150 BC

Different tribes of Celts arrived in waves over a long period of time and took control of different parts of the country, establishing their own regions, today known as provinces. The Celts introduced the idea of kingdoms and kingship to Ireland, dividing their lands up with each ruled by different kings.

CHRISTIANITY INTRODUCED

430 - 800

St. Patrick is famous for his involvement in converting the Irish to Catholicism. As Christianity flourished, a monastic movement was created. Many monasteries were built, creating places of worship and learning. The monks were extremely intelligent, spoke and wrote Latin and were skilled artists. The monks recorded important events during this time as well as stories and folklore that had been handed down through families over generations. This was extremely important in terms of documenting history, without the monks' written records very little would be known. There are no recorded facts from previous periods in Ireland's history.

VIKING INVASIONS

800—900

From Norway and Scandinavia, the Vikings heard of the riches held within Irish monasteries and they began invading Ireland in waves, plundering monasteries and towns. They also settled many of Ireland's main towns and cities, such as Dublin and Limerick.



Side note: Irish monasteries were rather defenceless against Viking attacks. A new form of building was constructed known as a '*round tower*' (see picture at left), built from stone and strong in defence. It had only one entrance that was at least 10 ft from the ground so a ladder was needed to gain entry. Round towers can still be seen today dotted around the Irish countryside, their unique features still standing strong.

HIGH KINGS

Ireland was divided politically into a system of petty kingdoms and over-kingdoms. Power was concentrated in the hands of a few regional dynasties who were all vying for control of the island. A high king ruled the boundaries of his own Kingdom and was responsible for ensuring good government, taxes, building public works, external relations, defence, law enforcement, etc.. In 1014, Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland, died in battle with the Vikings. A race for power began amongst Ireland's other kings. In a bid for power over his territory of Leinster and over all of Ireland, the King of Leinster appealed to England and France for help.

ARRIVAL OF THE NORMANS**1167-1185**

King Henry II of England granted permission for the King of Leinster to use his Norman subjects in his bid for power. The Normans arrived at the end of the 12th century, and made a critical intervention in Irish history that led to English occupation of Irish soil for more than 800 years! Within a short time Leinster was regained as was Waterford and Dublin ... but then the Normans stayed. They adopted the culture and customs and even intermarried with the Irish—causing King Henry II of England a great deal of concern that a rival Norman state was being established in Ireland. So, he decided to pay Ireland a visit and establish his authority. In 1171 he became the first King of England to set foot on Irish soil.

HENRY'S INVASION

Henry landed in Ireland with a large fleet at Waterford in 1171. He proceeded to proclaim Waterford and Dublin Royal Cities (way to make an entrance!) and the Pope ratified the grant of Irish lands to Henry in 1172. Henry then awarded his Irish territories to his younger son John, "Lord of Ireland". Henry was actually happily acknowledged by many of the Irish Kings who thought he would curb the expansion of Leinster and the Normans.

IRISH REVIVAL**1370-1455**

England's direct involvement in Ireland diminished due to a number of factors: Henry III and his successor, Edward I grew more concerned with events in England, Wales and Scotland: the Black Death, famine, the Hundred Years' War, the War of the Roses.

IRELAND AND THE REFORMATION**1536 -1607**

This period saw the full conquest of Ireland and colonization with Protestant settlers, establishing two central themes in Ireland's future history. 1) subordination of the country to a London based government and 2) animosity between Catholics and Protestants. In 1641, Henry VIII declared himself the King of Ireland. In 1536, he had broken with Papal authority (the Reformation) and declared himself the leader of the Church of England. He went on to dissolve the Irish monasteries and remit their revenues to the state. He subdued the Irish Chieftains by taking their lands and then returning them, but with an English legal title.

9 YEARS WAR**1594-1603**

A serious threat to English rule in Ireland. Hugh O'Neill, a powerful chieftain from the north of Ireland rebelled against English government. This war developed into a nation-wide revolt and O'Neill obtained military aid from Spain. Eventually, O'Neill and his allies surrendered, then fled Ireland for good in 1607. This removed the last major obstacle to English government in Ireland. The end result of the 9 Years War was that Ireland fell under English rule.

THE PLANTATIONS**1558—1647**

The Crown government carried out a policy of colonization known as Plantations. Scottish and English Protestants were sent to settle in Ireland. Land was seized from native Irish landowners as punishment for rebellion and as punishment for remaining Catholic, rather than converting to the established Church. Lands were divided into plantations and given to loyal English and Scottish Protestants in an attempt to establish Protestant supremacy.

PENAL LAWS AND REPRESSION**1695-1782**

A series of laws were imposed by the British that removed power and land ownership from the native Roman Catholic majority of Ireland. They were not allowed to sit or participate in elections to parliament.

PERIOD OF IRISH PARLIAMENTARIANISM**1782-1800**

As the American colonies grew increasingly resistant to the objectives of the British government, the Irish Parliament came to see an ally in America. When open rebellion broke out in the American colonies in 1775, the British Parliament began to fear that they might also end up with an Irish rebellion on their hands. As a result, they became more acquiescent to Irish demands and the authority of the Irish parliament was greatly increased. In 1793, Catholics were given back the right to cast votes in parliamentary elections

“It would be impossible adequately to describe the privations which they (the Irish labourer and his family) habitually and silently endure ... in many districts their only food is the potato, their only beverage water ... their cabins are seldom protection against the weather ... a bed or blanket is a rare luxury ... and nearly in all their pig and a manure heap constitute their only property ...”

- Earl of Devon, Chairman of a Royal Commission investigating the laws with regard to the occupation of land in Ireland.

THE ACT OF UNION

1800 -1922

In 1801, the Kingdom of Ireland and its Parliament were abolished when the Act of Union created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, merging the British and Irish legislatures under a single governing body based in Westminster, England.

Throughout the 19th century, Irish opposition to the Union was strong, occasionally erupting in violence. The phrase 'The Irish Question' came into prominence as a result of the Act of Union and was used by members of the British ruling classes to describe Irish nationalism and the call for Irish independence.

THE GREAT FAMINE

1845-1851

A period of mass starvation, disease and emigration. The island's population fell by 20 - 25%. Approximately one million people died and a million more emigrated from Ireland. The famine was caused by a potato disease. Although this ravished potato crops all over Europe, the impact was greatest in Ireland where one-third of the population was entirely dependent on the potato for food. (Pictured at right: A Dublin famine memorial)



CAMPAIGN FOR HOME RULE

1880-1916

The Campaign for Home Rule in Ireland meant that Ireland would still be part of the British Empire, but it would have its own parliament. The majority of Irish Catholics supported Home Rule—believing that they would receive more fair treatment from an Irish Parliament than one based in London. Many wealthy Protestants also supported Home Rule, believing that they would run Ireland's new Home Rule Parliament. The Parliament in London voted twice on whether to give Ireland Home Rule. Both times the measure was rejected.



...and that brings us to 1904: the year Tom Broadbent and Larry Doyle pay their visit to Ireland in *John Bull's Other Island*.

ACTIVITY

CHOOSE one of the periods of Ireland's history outlined above.

RESEARCH that period in greater detail.

SHARE your findings about significant events during the period with your class.

RESEARCH relations between Ireland and England from 1915 to the present.

DISCUSS how the present situation relates to the past.

ACTIVITY

Many Irish people immigrated to Canada during the Great Potato Famine.

RESEARCH AND WRITE about the impact that the Great Potato Famine had on a particular region of Canada.

“ My way of joking is to tell the truth. It’s the funniest joke in the world.”

-Father Keegan,
John Bull’s Other Island

The World of the Play



WHO IS JOHN BULL?

John Bull is an imaginary figure that is used to personify England. In the same way that 'Uncle Sam' is the iconic representation of the United States, John Bull is the personification of the character of the English: honest, generous, straightforward, with a zest for life and ready to stand up and fight for what he believes in. He usually appears in political cartoons as a stout, middle-aged man wearing a Union Jack waistcoat. He also usually wears a low topper (sometimes called a John Bull topper) on his head and is accompanied by a bulldog. His size and apparent gluttony represented prosperity in an age where rosy cheeks and plump faces were a sign of good health.

John Bull’s Other Island was, therefore, Britain’s Other Island: Ireland. The title of the play reflects the political reality that ever since the Act of Union in 1800 Ireland had been governed by an English parliament, and had indeed become “the other island”. Its goods and workforce were often exploited for English purposes while being ‘improved’ by English methods of governance and control.

THAT’S SO SHAVIAN ...

Bernard Shaw evolved his own unique writing voice. Something written in his style is said to be ‘Shavian’. A Shavian play will characteristically deal with one or more of the following subjects:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Socialism | The faults of capitalism | Education |
| Parents and Children | Husbands and wives | The class system |
| The fallacy of romanticism | Creative evolution | Leadership |
| The status of women | The superman | Life force |
| The folly of nationalism | The politics of corruption | The folly of war |
| Love | The menace of science and medicine | |
| The principles and practices of religion | | |
| The state of the theatre, and drama criticism | | |

Shaw also made frequent use of the following stylistic elements:

SATIRE Shaw used humour to draw attention to malignant social conditions and ill-conceived attitudes. With wit as his weapon of choice, Shaw was in the business of ‘edutaining’ his audiences in the hopes of affecting change in the world.

DIDACTICISM Shaw was determined that his plays were primarily a means to instruct his audiences. As a result, his plays always have a message.

INVERSION Shaw enjoyed turning the usual view of things on its head and opening his audiences’ eyes to new perspectives. Accordingly, Shaw’s children lecture their parents with wisdom; his tyrants turn out to be tenderhearted and so on.

SURPRISE You can reliably expect the unexpected from Shaw. Sudden plot twists and visual surprises are hallmarks of his style.

ELABORATE STAGE DIRECTIONS Shaw published his plays in book form. To help his readers visualize the world of the play, he described characters and settings in minute detail.

DISCUSS

How many elements of the Shavian style can you identify in *John Bull’s Other Island*? Provide examples.

“ I saw at once that you were a thorough Irishman, with all the faults and all the qualities of your race: rash and improvident but brave and goodnatured; not likely to succeed in business on your own account perhaps, but eloquent, humorous, a lover of freedom and a true follower of that great Englishman, Gladstone ”

- Tom Broadbent
John Bull's Other Island

The World of the Play

EPONYMS: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

An eponym is a word that is derived from the name of a person (real or fictitious)

According to "A Dictionary of Eponyms" there are three main groups of eponyms:

- 1) Words derived from mythological or fictitious names: Atlas, Achilles
- 2) Words which are descriptive of a person or his works: Shavian or Dickensian
- 3) Words that are taken from the names of people who actually exist or once existed

There are thousands of eponyms in everyday use in the English language. Studying the origins of these words yields fascinating insights into the history and development of the English language.

ACTIVITY

RESEARCH the story behind the creation of an eponym.

CHOOSE from the following list or research an eponym of your choice

Achilles' Heel	AMBER Alert	Atlas	Benedict Arnold
Bloomers	Bobbies	Bowdlerize	Boycott
Braille	Chauvinist	Darwinism	Freudian Slip
Gladstone	Guillotine	Hooligan	Leotard
Maverick	Mesmerise	Sandwich	Sideburns

DEFINE the word

TELL the class the story behind its creation

ACTIVITY

DEFINE YOURSELF: FROM ANONYMOUS TO EPONYMOUS

Any proper name is a candidate for becoming an eponym, including yours!

NAME SOMETHING AFTER YOURSELF: a character trait, a discovery, an invention, a kind of pizza or sandwich

EXPLAIN why it should be named after you.

STEREOTYPES

A stereotype provides a generalized picture of a person, created without taking the whole person into account. When we stereotype a group of people, we depict all of the individuals within that group as having the same characteristics.

THE STAGE IRISHMAN

The Stage Irishman is a stereotypical figure of fun from the time of Shakespeare, frequently presented for entertainment. With his thick accent, self-serving instinct for flattering phrases, a keen sense of irony, malicious wit, a doubtful genealogy, a gargantuan thirst, and a hasty temper, he was rarely seen without his shillelagh, his top hat, and his pig. Shaw lays it on especially thick with Tim Haffigan, but Shaw uses stereotypes in order to discuss economics and politics and the way they interrelate. He explodes the stereotypes of Stage Irishman and Stage Englishman in order to critique English colonial policies abroad and the commodification of the "Other".

Stereotypes can also lead to unfair judgments about individuals and groups.

Let's take a look ...

“ Like an Irishman!! Don't you know that all this top-o-the-morning and broth-of-a-boy and more-power-to-your-elbow business is got up in England to fool you, like the Albert Hall concerts of Irish music? No Irishman ever talks like that in Ireland, or ever did, or ever will. ”

- Larry Doyle,
John Bull's Other Island

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ACTIVITY

UNDERSTANDING STEREOTYPES

The following exercises will help students to understand that:

1. Assumptions can lead to stereotypes and unfair judgments about individuals and groups.
2. Stereotypes and biases affect our lives.

Gather the following materials: writing paper, flip chart, magic markers, art supplies (construction paper, scissors, tape, glue, magazines for collage, etc.), take home activity sheet: *Identifying Stereotypes in the Media* (see page 17).

VERSION I

1. **DISCUSS:** how people use labels or categories to describe others and how these labels can be based on such characteristics as clothing, looks, the way a person talks, or the groups to which he or she belongs. Explain that categorizing things or people is a natural human inclination; however, people often make assumptions about groups of people they don't even know.
2. **BRAINSTORM:** categories used at school to group people, include labels such as 'jock', 'nerd', and write each category on the board. Have students narrow that list down to 5 major categories
3. **WRITE** these 5 major categories on 5 separate pieces of flip chart paper and post them around the room. Give the class 5—10 minutes to travel to each posted sheet and write down adjectives related to the category headings. Only add new descriptions to the list. No repeats!
4. **REVIEW** the complete lists as a class. Use the following questions to lead a discussion:
 - Do these assumptions apply to everyone in the group?
 - Do most people hold the same assumptions about a group? Why/why not?
 - Do assumptions tell us anything definite about the categorized individual?
 - How do assumptions affect your behavior toward others?
5. **DEFINE** 'stereotype'. Ask the students to help. Explain that when we make assumptions about an entire group of people, those assumptions are referred to as stereotypes. When stereotypes influence our attitudes, we may find that making a fair judgment about someone or something is difficult. This influence on judgment is called a 'bias'.
6. **DISCUSS:** the adjectives you recorded as a class. Do these adjectives describe stereotypes? How can they be unfair or hurtful?

VERSION II

Repeat the same exercise above using racial stereotypes instead of social groups at school.

Begin by discussing the definitions for 'race' & 'ethnicity'

Make sure that one of the ethnic groups you identify is "IRISH"

Emphasize that students use stereotypes that they have heard; not ones they necessarily believe to be true.

“ ... Mr Haffigan: it will be quite Delightful to drive with a pig in the car: I shall feel quite like an Irishman. ”

- Thomas Broadbent
John Bull's Other Island

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DISCUSS:

- How do the stereotypes recorded by the class make you feel?
- What do you notice about the stereotypes listed? Are there positive and negative adjectives listed? Are there many stereotypes for different groups or the same stereotypes for different groups?
- Where have you seen these stereotypes portrayed? Television, movies, magazines, books, etc.
- How do you think a stereotype could cause someone to act unfairly toward another person?

EXPERIENCING BIAS

1. **POST** the lists of adjectives the class generated about assumptions and stereotypes around the classroom
2. **WRITE** (for 15—20 minutes) about a personal experience with biased behavior. Emphasize to students that they should not put their names on their papers. They can share an experience in which they were a victim of biased behavior or in which they witnessed bias.
3. **PROMPT** their thoughts by asking them to think about a situation when someone made a biased judgment about you or acted unfairly toward you because of your age, skin colour, clothing, gender, the way you speak, where you live, how much money your family has, or some other reason.
4. **COLLECT** their papers. Shuffle them and pass them back to the class. Have each student read the personal experience of a classmate.
5. **CREATE** a collage. Combine the written personal experiences, pictures and artwork that present how assumptions and stereotypes make them feel. To create these images, provide magazines, construction paper, paint, markers, glue and scissors

HOMEWORK:

Over the course of several days, have students keep a log of stereotypes they notice in television shows, commercials, movies, magazine and other media. Students should record the name of the show, commercial, movie, or product advertised; the group stereotyped; the stereotype portrayed; any thoughts or feelings the student experiences about this. Many of us are so accustomed to seeing certain stereotypes that we don't even notice them. Encourage students to look for patterns in the images they watch. Use the *Identifying Stereotypes in the Media* chart at right.



“THE GENTLEMAN WHO PAYS THE RENT”

was an expression that referred to a family's pig - often their most valuable asset. Keeping livestock was key to survival for several reasons: 1) keeping a pig allowed a family to preserve enough ham, bacon, sausage and lard to see them through the year 2) any portion of the animal that was unused could be sold 3)

livestock could be sold 4) pigs provided manure to fertilize crops. A pig could thereby serve to provide enough cash to *pay the rent*.

It was not uncommon for pigs to live within a farmers' home, the rationale being that pigs thrive in the same temperatures that humans do and that a pig was of greater value to a family than a good set of tea things, for example, as they depended on the pig for their survival.

IDENTIFYING STEREOTYPES IN THE MEDIA

Use this chart to keep a log of stereotypes that you notice in the media (television shows, commercials, movies, magazines, and other media). Record the name of the show, commercial, movie, or product advertised; the group stereotyped; the stereotype portrayed; any thoughts or feelings you have about this.

Look for patterns in the images you see!

Form of Media	Name (of show, commercial, magazine, movie or product advertised)	Group stereotyped	Stereotype portrayed	Your thoughts and/or feelings

SUBTEXT

Subtext is the content that lies beneath the surface of spoken dialogue. Underneath the dialogue might be: conflict, anger, sadness, joy, competition, pride, showing off, or other implicit ideas and emotions. In other words, a character might not be saying what they mean. Subtext is the unspoken thought and motives of characters—what they really think and believe. Subtext just beneath the surface of dialogue can sure make things interesting—but can also create misunderstanding.

In *John Bull's Other Island*, the relationship between Nora Reilly and Larry Doyle has some interesting subtext. Let's explore what is going on beneath the surface.

ACTIVITY THOUGHTSPEAK

READ the scene between Larry Doyle and Nora Reilly (next page). Do you think this conversation has a subtext? Do the characters mean exactly what they say?

DIVIDE into groups of four.

DISCUSS what kinds of thoughts and feelings might be bubbling underneath the surface of this conversation.

RE-WRITE the dialogue to give voice to Larry and Nora's thoughts—all the things that they might like to say, but aren't saying to one another.

PERFORM your new piece.

2 actors on stage play **LARRY** and **NORA**

2 actors offstage give voice to **LARRY'S THOUGHTS** and **NORA'S THOUGHTS**

ACTIVITY DEAR DIARY ...

IMAGINE that you are Larry Doyle, aged 18, about to leave behind the limited opportunities of Ireland in pursuit of a successful career in England. Larry can't get out of Rosscullen quickly enough, describing it as a "*hell of littleness and monotony*."

WRITE

- 1) a brief journal entry in character as Larry the night before he leaves for England.
- 2) a second journal entry for Larry the night before he returns to Ireland.

OR

IMAGINE that you are Nora Reilly, left behind to live in the world of limited opportunities (especially for women) that Larry Doyle has fled.

WRITE

- 1) a brief journal entry in character as Nora, immediately following Larry's departure for England at age 18.
- 2) a second journal entry for Nora the night before Larry returns.

DRAMATIZE IT

Stage Larry and Nora reading/writing in their journals

DISCUSS

Larry and Nora are left together for the first time since his arrival. She looks at him with a smile that perishes as she sees him aimlessly rocking his chair, and reflecting, evidently not about her, with his lips pursed as if he were whistling. With a catch in her throat she takes up Aunt Judy's knitting, and makes a pretence of going on with it.

NORA. I suppose it didn't seem very long to you.

LARRY. [*starting*] Eh? What didn't?

NORA. The eighteen years you've been away.

LARRY. Oh, that! No: it seems hardly more than a week. I've been so busy—had so little time to think.

NORA. I've had nothing else to do but think.

LARRY. That was very bad for you. Why didn't you give it up? Why did you stay here?

NORA. Because nobody sent for me to go anywhere else, I suppose. That's why.

LARRY. Yes: one does stick frightfully in the same place, unless some external force comes and routs one out. [*He yawns slightly; but as she looks up quickly at him, he pulls himself together and rises with an air of waking up and setting to work cheerfully to make himself agreeable*]. And how have you been all this time?

NORA. Quite well, thank you.

LARRY. That's right. [*Suddenly finding that he has nothing else to say, and being ill at ease in consequence, he strolls about the room humming distractedly*].

NORA. [*struggling with her tears*] Is that all you have to say to me, Larry?

LARRY. Well, what is there to say? You see, we know each other so well.

NORA. [*a little consoled*] Yes: of course we do. [*He does not reply*]. I wonder why you came back at all

LARRY. I couldn't help it. [*She looks up affectionately*]. Tom made me. [*She looks down again quickly to conceal the effect of this blow. He whistles another stave; then resumes*] I had sort of a dread of returning to Ireland. I felt somehow that my luck would turn if I came back. And now here I am, none the worse.

NORA. Praps it's a little dull for you.

LARRY. No: I haven't exhausted the interest of strolling about the old places and remembering and romancing about them.

NORA. [*hopefully*] Oh! You do remember the places, then?

LARRY. Of course. They have associations.

NORA. [*not doubting that the associations are with her*] I suppose so.

LARRY. M'yes. I can remember particular spots where I had long fits of thinking about the countries I meant to get to when I escaped from Ireland. America and London, and sometimes Rome and the east.

NORA. [*deeply mortified*] Was that all you used to think about?

LARRY. Well, there was precious little else to think about here, my dear Nora, except sometimes at sunset, when one got maudlin and called Ireland Erin, and imagined one was remembering the days of old, and so forth. [*He whistles Let Erin Remember*].

NORA. Did jever get a letter I wrote you last February?

LARRY. Oh yes; and I really intended to answer it. But I haven't had a moment; and I knew you wouldn't mind. You see, I am so afraid of boring you by writing about affairs you don't understand and people you don't know! And yet what else have I to write about? I begin a letter; and then I tar it up again. The fact is, fond as we are of one another, Nora, we have so little in common—I mean of course the things one can put in a letter—that corespondence is apt to become the hardest of work.

NORA. Yes: it's hard for me to know anything about you if you never tell me anything.

LARRY. [*looking at her with some concern*] You seem rather out of spirits.

“ It is not particularly complimentary to either the Irish or the English; but it is fascinating ”

-Bernard Shaw

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ACTIVITY

WRITE A REVIEW

Make your review informative, critical and easy to understand. It also doesn't hurt to make it a fun and entertaining read. Include key plot elements, memorable moments, a summary of why the audience would or would not enjoy it and other observations. Here are some tips on how to write a theatre review:

*Keep the play program for reference and to confirm correct spelling of names

Basic Elements: Include basic information about the play: title, author, leading actors, theatre location and other relevant details. Answer the five "w" questions - who, what, where, when and why. You may also wish to summarize the play - without giving away the entire plot, especially the ending!

Be Objective: Try to be as objective as possible. Write your review without using the first person (I).

Explain: Back up your ideas and comments with examples. If you make a positive or negative statement about the production, explain yourself. How would you improve the play or this production?

The Big Picture: Comment on the different elements of the production - the acting, the sound, the lighting, the direction, the set, the themes of the play, the audience's reaction. Read the entire program, especially the director's notes for further ideas and clues about the production.

The Good with the Bad: In every performance there is something of value that you can take away. Don't miss it. If there was a memorable moment, comment on it.

Other: You may choose to read the play before or after seeing the show. This can give you more insight about the playwright's ideas.

GLOSSARY

Broth-of-a-boy An outstanding person; as if produced by boiling down a savory broth

More-power-to-your-elbow An expression of praise or admiration for someone's success or bravery. An expression of encouragement

Brogue a strong accent in Irish dialects of English

Connemara (78) 1) A district in West Ireland consisting of a broad peninsula between Killary Harbour and Kilkieran Bay in the west of County Galway or south west Connacht 2) A division of Galway, was a UK parliament constituency in Ireland, returning one Member of Parliament 1885-1992 3) Pony breed native to Ireland

Coercion Acts Acts of emergency law passed by the Parliament of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland between 1801 and 1922, in an attempt to establish law and order in Ireland. Over 100 such acts were passed. The 1881 Act was passed by parliament and introduced by Gladstone. It allowed for persons to be imprisoned without trial

Blarney Smooth, flattering talk. Deceptive nonsense

Gammon Nonsensical talk

Fin McCool A legendary warrior of Irish mythology. Popular legend has it that he sleeps in a cave below Dublin and will one day awaken and defend Ireland in the hour of her greatest need. The 19th century organization known as the Fenian Brotherhood took its name from these legends

Dark looker The common grey lizard, which is supposed to walk down the throats of incautious sleepers and cause them to perish in a slow decline

Fenian A term used since the 1850s for Irish nationalists opposed to British rule in Ireland

Turncoat A traitor: one who betrays or deserts his cause or religion or political party, etc.

Disestablishment The process of depriving a church of its status as an organ of the state

Tory A political conservative

Hyperbole A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for effect

Quoits A game in which flat rings of iron or rope are pitched at a stake, with points awarded for encircling it (similar to horseshoes)

Orange Bashi-Bazouk An Orange man refers to a Protestant-Irishman. A Bashi-Bazouk was an irregular soldier of the Ottoman army. Literally 'leaderless'. They were known for their lack of discipline

crubeen A pig's foot

BOOKS & ARTICLES

WHO'S WHO

Hartnoll, Phyllis. *Who's Who in Shaw*. Elm Tree Books Ltd, London, 1975.

WEBSITES

IRISH HISTORY

<http://www.yourirish.com/oliver-cromwell>

http://www.amazon.com/Irish-History-Dummies-Mike-Cronin/dp/0764570404#reader_0764570404

PIG

<http://www4.cord.edu/projects/murphy/Famine/RelatedTopics/FarmingPotatoes.htm>

UNDERSTANDING STEREOTYPES

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/stereotypes/>

WRITE A REVIEW

http://www.theatreontario.org/content/play_reviews.htm