

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

Aim: To examine the way that O'Neill draws on Irish stereotypes to create a minor character in LDJ.

Do Now:

Lesson:

Minor characters are often more significant than they first appear. They are frequently "flat" or "type" characters who are presented without details that individualize them. Playwrights rely on their audience's associations or stereotypes about "type" characters.

Two minor characters in LDJ are the family Irish servants. We do not meet Bridget the cook. We know she has a temper and that Mary Tyrone sends whiskey into the kitchen to make peace with her. We do meet Cathleen in Act 2, Scene 1.

1. Read the description of Cathleen. ("She is a buxom Irish peasant, in her early twenties, with a red-cheeked comely face, black hair and blue eyes - amiable, ignorant, clumsy, and possessed by a dense, well-meaning stupidity.")

2. In pairs or groups, examine Puck cartoons of Irish domestic servants. How are Irish servant girls portrayed in the cartoons? How are Irish cooks characterized? Identify the stereotypes of Irish servant girls that O'Neill use for his characterization of Cathleen. Group share.

3. While O'Neill tells us that Cathleen is stupid, she is responsible for giving the audience some very important information about what is going on in the Tyrone family in Act 3. What do we learn from Cathleen? O'Neill says she is stupid. What do you think?

HW: O'Neill presents us with a "typical" Irish servant girl in the character of Cathleen; however, her relationship with Mary Tyrone is more complicated. While Cathleen really likes her employer, there are things about Mary Tyrone that make her that make her very uncomfortable. Discuss their relationship in Act 3 using quotations from the text to illustrate your points.