

**POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**  
**ON**  
***RIDERS TO THE SEA***

**PREPARED FOR THE STUDENTS OF**  
**PART III**

# ***RIDERS TO THE SEA***

AUTHOR	JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE
GENRE	ONE-ACT TRAGEDY
SETTING	ARAN ISLANDS
SCENE	AN ISLAND OFF THE WEST OF IRELAND
FIRST PERFORMED	FEBRUARY 25, 1904, MOLESWORTH HALL, DUBLIN

# LIST OF CHARACTERS

**MAURYA:** Grief-stricken widow and mother of eight children  
Cathleen, Nora, Bartley, Shawn, Sheamus, Stephen, Patch, and  
Michael

**CATHLEEN:** Maurya's elder daughter, tries to keep her mother  
from dying from grief by identifying her deceased brother Michael's  
clothing

**NORA:** maurya's younger daughter, helps her sister with their  
mother

**BARTLEY:** Maurya's youngest and only living son dies by the end  
of the play

Maurya's sons Shawn, Sheamus, Stephen, Patch, and Michael as well  
as Maurya's husband are all deceased when the play begins

There is also a priest who is never seen but is mentioned by Cathleen  
and Nora in the beginning of the play

# **THEMES**

**Catholicism vs. Celtic Paganism**

**Christianity : A New Religion**

**The Sea : The omnipotent and the  
omnipresent**

**Tradition vs. Modernity**

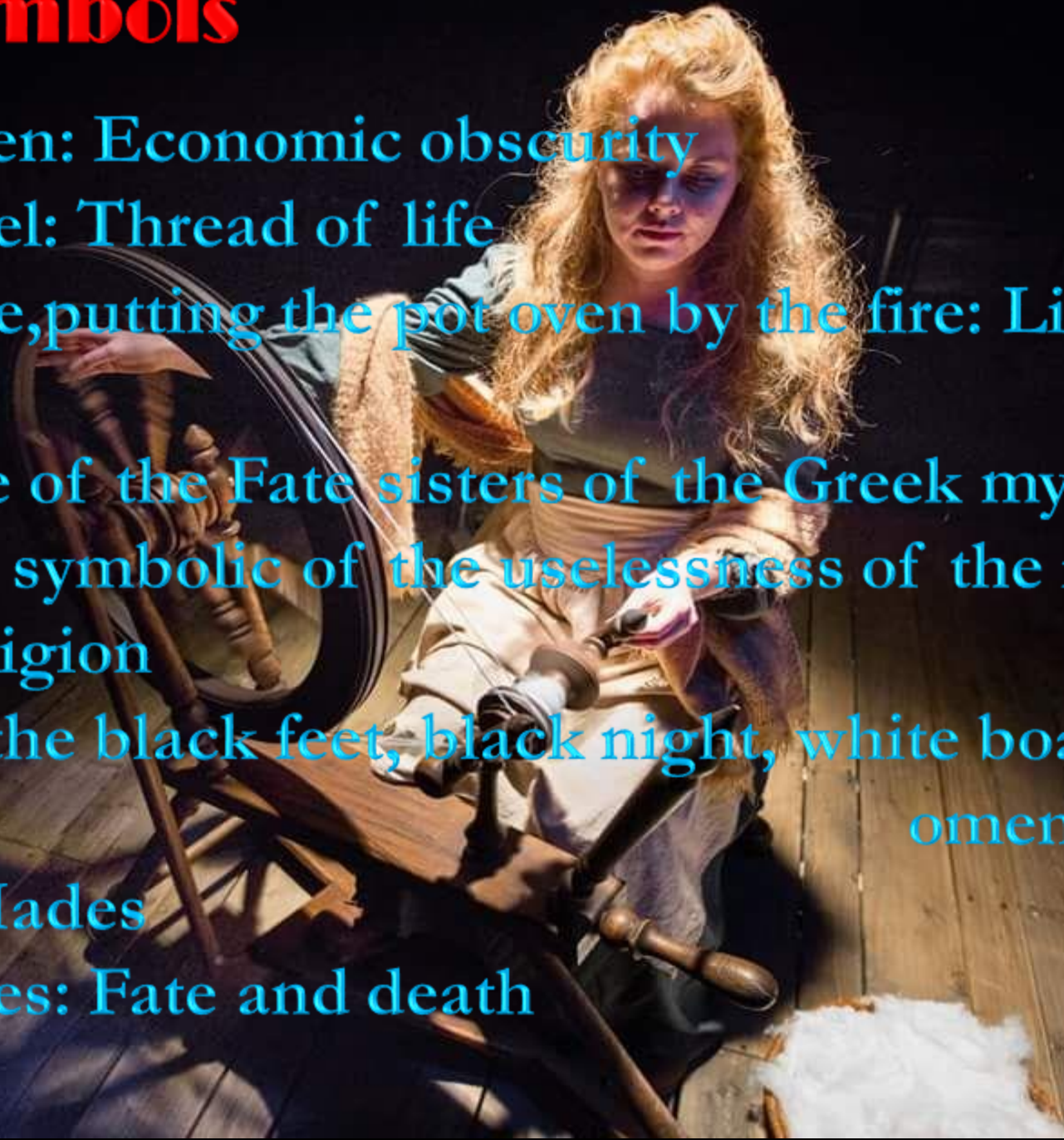
**Gender Roles**





# Symbols

- Cottage kitchen: Economic obscurity
- Spinning wheel: Thread of life
- Kneading cake, putting the pot over by the fire: Life activities
- Cathleen: One of the Fate sisters of the Greek myth
- Young priest : symbolic of the uselessness of the practice of religion
- The pig with the black feet, black night, white board omen
- Black cliffs: Hades
- Bartley's horses: Fate and death



# PLOT

- The dramatic narrative focuses on an island cottage off the coast of Ireland where three women are found waiting for some news.
- Maurya the grieving mother is resting in an inner room. Her daughters, Cathleen and Nora , work on household tasks.
- Michael their brother, has been missing for days.
- We learn from Nora , Michael is only the latest of Maurya's sons to be lost to the sea that has also taken away her husband.

# PLOT

- Cathleen and Nora identify a drowned man's cloth as Michael's but hesitates to disclose the truth to their mother.
- Their only surviving brother, Bartley enters the cottage, to announce that night he will be sailing that night.
- Bartley is determined to go to the horse fair in Connemara despite the bad weather
- Maurya is anxious asking him ' What is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?'
- Bartley, however, continues to prepare for his journey. When he leaves , Maurya will not give him her blessing



# PLOT

- Cathleen and Nora are both distressed in the wake of Bartley's departure. Maurya's sending him off in anger is thought to be unlucky; further they have forgotten to give him the cake.
- They manage to convince their mother to go to meet Bartley to give him the cake and her blessing
- On her return Maurya remains greatly distressed. She met Bartley but could not give him her blessings as he passed with the family's two horses, and further she saw the ghost of his brother, Michael chasing him.





# PLOT

- Maurya, Cathleen and Nora are all convinced that this is a portent, which is an unlucky sign .
- Cathleen cries out, 'It's destroyed we are from this day'.
- Shortly after Maurya herself returns, a noise of weeping by the seashore is heard.
- The women half-expect it to be Michael's body washed up at last.
- The body, brought in, however, is Bartley's.
- Maurya greets this with bleak resignation, saying, 'They're all together this time, and the end is come'.



**“ Being on the islands is the nearest thing to being perpetually afloat. The sea is everywhere...”**



“...What way will I  
live and the girls with  
me, and I an old  
woman looking for  
the grave” - Maurya





“ I’ll ride down on the red mare, and the grey  
pony’ll run behind me...” - Bartley



“ They’re all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have nercy on Bartley’s soul, and on Michael’s soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn...No man at all can be living forever , and we must be satisfied ”

– Thus the grieving mother Maurya sums up the tragedy of human existence.



A dramatic seascape featuring a large, curling wave with a white, frothy crest. The water is a deep, dark green, and the sky above is filled with heavy, grey clouds. The overall mood is powerful and somewhat somber.

**THANK YOU**