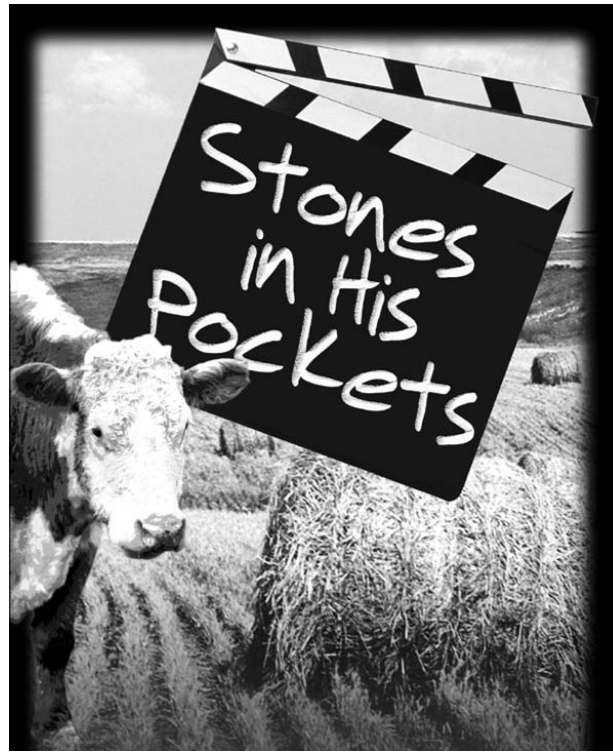


# STUDY GUIDE

2004–2005 SEASON

THE REPERTORY THEATRE OF ST. LOUIS



BY MARIE JONES  
DIRECTED BY PAUL BARNES

## C O N T E N T S

- 2. Who's Who?
- 3. Words to the Wise
- 4. What's the Story?
- 5. Read More About It
- 6. Q & A

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# Who's Who?

One of the most interesting theatrical devices of *Stones in His Pockets* is that two actors play every character in the play—males as well as females.



The two actors in The Rep's production are Joe Hickey and Timothy McCracken, and the following are the characters they portray.

*Timothy McCracken as Jake and Joe Hickey as Charlie.  
Photo by Jerry Naunheim Jr.*

## Timothy McCracken\*

**Jake Quinn** recently returned to Ireland after an unsuccessful attempt at making a life for himself in New York. He is in his mid thirties and is currently an extra in *The Quiet Valley*, a movie being filmed in Ireland.

**Aisling** is a flirtatious third assistant director, and everything she does is for the advancement of her career.

**Mickey** is a local in his seventies. He is a drunk whose claim to fame is that he is the only surviving extra from *The Quiet Man*.

**Sean Harkin** is Jake's seventeen-year-old second cousin. Sean is a dreamer, but he has great trouble dealing with the reality that his dreams may not be obtainable. He also has difficulty coping with change, and he has turned to drugs as a result.

**John** is Miss Giovanni's dialect coach, and he works with her incessantly on improving her terrible accent.

**Dave** is a crew member on the film. He is Cockney.

**Interviewer** is a member of the County Kerry news media.

## Joe Hickey\*

**Charlie Conlon** is in his mid thirties and, like Jake, is an extra in *The Quiet Valley*. He recently lost his video business. Charlie is in the film because he believes it may provide an opportunity for him to push his recently written screenplay.

**Simon** is an ambitious Irishman working as first assistant director. His authority is constantly undermined by his fellow countrymen.

**Clem** is the director of the film. He is a quiet Englishman, and he often has difficulty relating to the feelings and concerns of the local community.

**Fin** is a young local and Sean Harkin's best friend.

**Caroline Giovanni** is a glamorous, American movie star who often has a penchant for the 'natives' of the film on which she is working. Although Caroline is both difficult and pretentious, she can show moments of heart.

**Brother Gerard** is a very empathic and intelligent local teacher.

**Jock Campbell** is Miss Giovanni's Scottish bodyguard. He is quite intimidating, and a bit arrogant.

**Mr. Harkin** is Sean's father. Due to financial difficulties (and the generally poor economy of Ireland), he was forced to sell off much of his cattle herd and land years ago.

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States



# Words to the Wise

**Ballycastle**—a small town in County Antrim in Northern Ireland. Its population is around 4,000.

**bloody**—a strengthening adjective, often considered an offensive expletive; chiefly British slang

**R.U.C.**—Royal Ulster Constabulary (the police)

**“run like the hammers”**—a slang expression deriving from “run like the hammers of hell.” It means to run hard and fast.

**hures**—idiomatic pronunciation of “whore.” It is a term of abuse, applied to either gender.

**gob**—mouth

**The Quiet Man**—a John Wayne film from 1952 that was filmed in Ireland

**quid**—slang for one pound sterling, which is the basic unit of currency in the United Kingdom. The Irish pound is also referred to by this name.

**yoke**—a thing; an unspecified object

**boot**—the trunk of a car

**arse**—backside

**Blasket Islands**—a group of islands off the southwest coast of Ireland, forming part of County Kerry. They were inhabited until 1954.

**scraek**—used like “break” as in “the scraek of dawn”

**the Jacks**—the bathroom

**jumped up**—to dress up or make fancy in a tawdry, garish way

**slag**—a prostitute or promiscuous woman (also occasionally heard with reference to such men)

**piss off**—a vulgar invitation to depart rapidly; chiefly British

**buck**—lad, playboy

**waster/tosser/wanker**—derogatory terms for an uninteresting, irrelevant person (usually male); a person you don't like

**“on the dole”**—receiving money provided by the state; receiving a share of money as charity

**“go on the pints”**—to switch to drinking ale/beer

**haring off**—to move hurriedly, as if hunting a swift quarry

**riggers**—one who rigs ships; or to be in a drunken state

**whacki backi**—a euphemism for marijuana

**minders**—slang for the aides to someone in public life, especially a politician or political candidate, who keep control of press and public relations. Slang for someone acting

as a bodyguard, guard, or assistant, especially in the criminal underworld.

**Seamus Heaney**—a famous contemporary Irish poet who won the Nobel Prize in 1995

**Gee up**—British slang for a practical joke, or to encourage

**skiff**—a very light covering

**the heavy**—the showoff; braggart

**feckless**—careless and irresponsible

**Shagin’/eff/fek/feck**—strong, vulgar expletives

**boyo**—a young person; lad

**Da**—an affectionate and respectful term for Dad

**coddin’**—deception; to joke and make fun of or tease

**bollicks**—foolish; somebody one does not like or feels is stupid

**cunas, cunas**—quiet, quiet

**“muy hu agus sigi sios”**—a phonetic representation of the Gaelic (Irish) phrase meaning “well done and sit down”

**gargles**—alcoholic drinks

**Jasis**—an expression of surprise (idiom for “Jesus”)

**wobbler**—erratic or neurotic behavior; a fit of temper

**gobshite**—a person regarded as contemptible or stupid; chiefly used as British slang

**“knock it on the head”**—“cut it out,” as in to stop doing something

**“stall the ball”**—stop for a moment (usually spoken as a request)

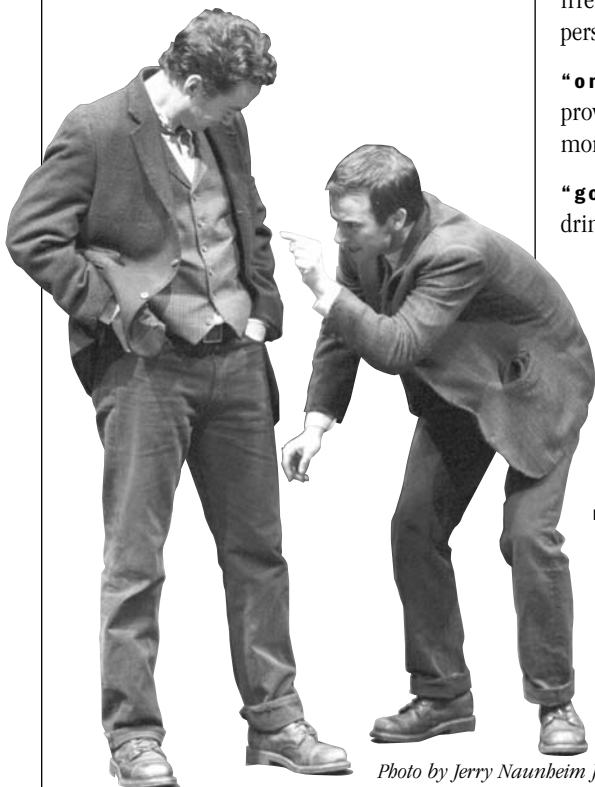


Photo by Jerry Naunheim Jr.



# What's the Story?

## Act I

*Setting: A scenic spot near a small village in County Kerry, Ireland.*

A Hollywood movie crew has essentially taken over the village to film a romantic movie, *The Quiet Valley*. Charlie Conlon, who is from the town of Ballycastle, is an extra in the movie, and he is currently trying to swindle an extra piece of pie from

the catering wagon. He doesn't get his pie, but he does meet Jake Quinn, a local who is also an extra. While they are waiting for the next scene to begin shooting, Charlie banters about his history, which, to his dismay, Jake is already quite familiar with. It seems Charlie had had a few too many drinks in the pub the night before, and subsequently revealed his entire history to most of Jake's family.

Simon and Aisling, the first and second assistant directors, respectively, call the extras into position and begin shooting an important scene in which the locals look "dispossessed." Simon is having a problem with the many cows in the scene, because the director feels they don't look quite Irish enough. Mickey, the "only surviving extra" from the John Wayne movie *The Quiet Man*, advises Jake and Charlie to lay low and do as they are bid, because that is the way to survive as an extra. Jake and Charlie are star-struck as the beautiful, American movie star Caroline Giovanni enters. She is currently practicing her Irish accent with her voice coach, but failing miserably in the effort. After the scene ends, Charlie reveals to Jake that he has written a script for a movie. Charlie tries to give the script to Aisling, but she is uninterested.

At the pub Charlie and Jake run into Sean Harkin, a local boy who is Jake's second cousin. He is out of his head on drugs. Jake avoids him because he doesn't want the hassle, but Charlie finds that Sean is upset because he cannot get a part in the movie. Jake sees Fin, Sean's best friend, and asks him to help Sean get clean. Both Jake and Fin are quite worried about Sean, but Fin says he simply can't get Sean to quit. Caroline enters the bar in search of a local to help her develop her Irish accent. . . . and possibly help her with a few other desires as well. She spots Jake and begins flirting with him. Charlie is amazed at



Jake's good fortune, and he passes Jake his movie script just before Jake leaves with Caroline, asking Jake to try to persuade her to take a look at it.

The following morning, as Charlie and Jake are changing for the next scene, Jake reveals that Caroline had tried to seduce him the night before, but nothing had happened. She had been surrounded by

"minders," and that made him too nervous. Jake was also a bit embarrassed, as he had tried to pass himself off as a poet, quoting a poem by a famous, Irish writer. Unfortunately, Caroline was quite familiar with the poem.

Jake is called to Caroline's Winnebago. He is escorted over by Jock, Caroline's large—and slightly insane—bodyguard. Jake has to go through an interrogation process, which begins to hurt his pride. As a result, he has no patience for Caroline's overt sexual advances or her requests for help with her accent. He leaves. Just after they shoot the next scene, Fin approaches Jake, and reveals that young Sean Harkin committed suicide that morning. From a distance, someone had seen Sean walking into the ocean. Sean came back out for a moment, but then walked back into the water and did not return. After the villagers had recovered the body, they discovered that Sean had come out of the water only to fill his pockets with stones.

## Act II

The next day the film crew is shooting the Big Happy Ending, during which all the extras must look jubilant and cheer the Irish hero of the film. But as most of the extras are locals, they all knew Sean or were related to him. They are in no mood for cheerfulness. The crew eventually gives up on the scene because cloud cover is moving in. The first director, Simon, plans to resume shooting the next day. The locals protest, saying that they will not work on the same day as Sean's funeral. Simon threatens to fire them all. Mickey, however, informs the other extras that they are all "in the can," or on camera—the director can't fire them all, because the crew would then be forced to shoot every scene again with new people.

Jake, depressed over Sean's suicide, goes to talk with Brother Gerard, a teacher who, at diverse times, had instructed both he and Sean. He learns from the Brother that Sean had been a dreamer all his life—as most kids are. Unfortunately, Sean's dreams had died. He had wanted to be a farmer like his father, but his father had been forced to sell off most of his land and cattle herd in order to pay the bills. The economy of Ireland had changed, and farming was no longer a reliable way to make a living.

At Sean's wake, Jake talks with Fin, who reveals what happened the night before the suicide. Apparently, Sean had seen Caroline talking with Jake at the bar, and when Jake had gone for a moment, Sean had approached her. He had been high, and as a result Caroline had called her guards, who threw Sean out of the pub. Sean had then seen Jake leave with Caroline. Fin's story leaves Jake feeling guilty, and he has a brief argument with Charlie. Jake tells Charlie that his script is a terrible "load o' bollocks," and utterly worthless.

After the funeral, the extras are again called to the movie set. However, being an Irish funeral, there had been quite a bit of drinking, and old Mickey had had more than his share. He is

fired and thrown off the set. Jake apologizes to Charlie about his comments on his script, and they begin talking of Sean's tragedy. They strike upon an idea: they will write a script about Sean's story. It will be a movie about their story also, one in which a Hollywood crew takes over a small Irish town. It will be a movie in which the extras become the stars and the stars become the extras. And there will be lots and lots of cows. That

night, the two men outline the entire script, and decide to pitch it to Clem, the director, the next morning.

As Clem eats his breakfast, Jake and Charlie pitch their idea. He listens, but after they have finished he makes a few suggestions, typical Hollywood-type plot devices: Sean should be running from drug pushers, Fin should be a girl and Sean's love interest, and—of course—the movie had to have a happy ending. He tells them the script just "isn't sexy enough."



Photo by Jerry Naunheim Jr.

It is the first knock against Jake and Charlie's movie, but they decide that Clem is simply wrong. They have a great movie idea, and they continue planning. The movie will begin and end with cows: "big slobbery dribblin' cows...atin'...moooin'...lukin' at ye." Wide shots, mid shots and close ups. Lots and lots of cows.

## Read More About It

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books, websites and videos.

*Stones in His Pockets* by Marie Jones. Applause Theatre & Cinema Book Publishers; 2001. This is the script for the play in published form. If you would like a complete listing of Jones's works, her CV is available on her agency's website at [www.pfd.co.uk/scripts/get.py/filmandtv/?playwrights%20LAVERYB](http://www.pfd.co.uk/scripts/get.py/filmandtv/?playwrights%20LAVERYB)

If you want to know more about modern Irish playwrights, including Marie Jones, visit the Irish Playography website at [www.irishplayography.com](http://www.irishplayography.com). The site lists the plays of most Irish playwrights published since 1975, and includes summaries of each play. A concise bio-bibliographical dictionary of Irish writers is also available online at [www.irishwriters-online.com](http://www.irishwriters-online.com).

*CELT: The Corpus of Electronic Texts*, at [www.ucc.ie/celt](http://www.ucc.ie/celt), is a website that brings the wealth of Irish literary and historical culture to the Internet. It features a searchable online database consisting of contemporary and historical Irish texts, including literature and other arts.

To learn more about the growing film industry in Ireland, visit the website of the Irish Film Board at [www.filmboard.ie](http://www.filmboard.ie).

The official website of the International Phonetic Alphabet at [www.arts.gla.ac.uk/IPA/](http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/IPA/) contains a wealth of information on phonetics and the practical applications of the science.

*The Islandman* by Tomás O'Crohan. Translated by Robin Flower. Oxford University Press; 2000. O'Crohan was one of the last inhabitants of the now deserted Blasket Islands off Ireland's southwest coast. The book is a fascinating look at the way of life on the islands—a way of life that slowly disappeared.

*Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966–1996* by Seamus Heaney. Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 1999. Seamus Heaney won the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature, and this hefty 440-page volume is a collection of many of his best poems.



These questions and activities are designed to help students anticipate the performance and then to build on their impressions and interpretations after attending the theatre. The activities and questions are divided into “**Before the Performance**” and “**After the Performance**” categories. While most of the exercises provide specific instructions, please feel free to adapt these activities to accommodate your own teaching strategies and curricular needs. To assist you in incorporating these materials into your existing curriculum, we have provided the numbers of some of the corresponding Missouri Knowledge Standards and Illinois Learning Standards. In addition, the majority of the content integrates or allows demonstration of the following Missouri Performance Goals: 1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 4.1.



## COMMUNICATION ARTS

### Before the Performance

**1** *Stones in His Pockets* features many dialects of the English language: British, Cockney, Scottish, and many, many dialects of Irish. This presented quite a challenge for the two actors who play all the characters, as well as for The Rep’s dialect coach, Bruce Longworth. According to Bruce, the goal is to make the actors’ speech “accurate and consistent,” rather than “authentic.” By that he means that the actor should speak in a manner that is authentic to the dialect and always be consistent in the way a given sound is pronounced. The goal is not, however, to be “authentic,” because most of the audience would not understand what the actor is saying. There are several aspects that make a dialect unique: where the speech is produced in the mouth (front, middle or back), the tone of the sounds, the pitch, the rhythm, etc. Watch a movie in which someone speaks with an accent, and try to put into words how the person’s speech is different from your own. Write down your observations, and then try to speak a few sentences in the person’s accent. Compare your new dialect to those of your classmates by speaking the dialect aloud in class, and tell them the characteristics of the dialect. (MO: CA1, CA2, CA4, CA5, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, SS2, SS5 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27)

**2** The area a person is from plays the largest role in determining their mode of speech, of course, but other factors are important as well. What character traits might influence the way someone talks? For instance, might socioeconomic status play a role? Self perception? Goals and ambitions? The person’s view of his country? Explain your answers. (MO: CA1, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, SS2, SS5 IL: 4, 5, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27)

### After the Performance

**3** Marie Jones gives us a glimpse of a small Irish town that has been almost wholly taken over by the arrival of a Hollywood production team. Whether it is Sean Harkin’s suicide or Kevin, the bar owner, angling for publicity, all of the characters are affected by the intrusion in either a small or significant way. Choose a character from the play and compile a list of the ways in which his life has been changed by the movie production. What are the direct and indirect affects? How could his life be changed long-term? Has the experience been beneficial or detrimental? How has the change in their lives affected the town as a whole? (MO: CA1, CA2, CA4, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, SS2, SS5 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27)

**4** The phenomenon of change, and how people as individuals and groups react to change, is one of the central themes in *Stones in His Pockets*. In particular, Jake, Charlie and Sean cope with change differently. As a class, discuss the following questions, using evidence from the three characters listed above to support your answers: What is each character’s perception of the world around him? Is it positive or negative? What is his perception of himself (ie: does he feel that he matters)? What mechanisms does the character use to cope with his changing environment? Are they effective? All three characters have goals and ambitions. Is this a positive or negative thing? Be sure to support your answers. (MO: CA1, CA2, CA5, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, SS2, SS5 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27)

**5** Near the end of the play, Clem tells Jake and Charlie that “You can’t have a happy ending about a kid who drowns himself.” Given the ending of *Stones*, what type of humor is this? As a class, try to identify other examples of this type of humor in the play. (MO: CA1, CA2, CA5, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)



# FINE ARTS

## Before the Performance

**1** As mentioned previously, all 15 characters in the play—male and female—are portrayed by two actors, and they do this without any major costume changes. If you were cast as an actor in the play, what methods would you use to distinguish one character from another? Make a list of these techniques to consult after the performance. (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA4 IL: 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

**2** For a scenic designer, one factor that must be taken into account is the size of the show. *Stones in His Pockets* has only two actors, which is a very small number given the size of The Rep's Mainstage. What techniques could you use as a scenic designer to "shrink" the size of the stage and make it a more intimate setting? Be sure to list your ideas so that you may consult it after the performance. (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA4 IL: 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

## After the Performance

**3** Why do you think all the characters in the play are performed by only two actors? Does it have any connection to the overall theme of the play? If it does support the theme, how so? (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

**4** The pile of broken furniture and stones on the set is symbolic of a few things: the obvious reference is to the title of the play, but it could also represent an Irish home that has been destroyed by the film crew during the making of the movie. The shoes surrounding the stage and the clothes hanging above it are also metaphorical, representing something larger about change and the Irish people. What do these scenic elements represent? The backdrop for the show—of the Blasket Islands with the surrounding film-like border—holds symbolic references as well. Can you identify them? (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

**5** In answering the following question, be sure to revisit the lists you made for questions 1 and 2 from "Before the Performance." What devices and mannerisms did the two actors use in the play to differentiate between the characters they



Photos by Jerry Naunheim Jr.



were portraying? What were the similarities and differences between their character transitions and the list you made before the performance? Regarding the scenic design, how did the designer, Michael Ganio, shrink the stage to make it a more intimate setting? Did the lighting play a role? In what ways? How about the shoes? (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2, CA4 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

**6** At the end of the play, Jake and Charlie decide that the true-life events they have experienced would make a good movie. However, when they present their idea to the director, Clem, he tells them that their idea is too boring, and wouldn't appeal to an audience. In a group, make a list of the necessary elements of a successful movie. Now choose a current event that you believe would make a good film. Write a detailed description of how you would turn this event into a screenplay. What is the principle storyline? Who are the characters? What are the subplots?

Does your movie fulfill all of the elements on your list for a successful movie? Would your choice make it at the box office? Why or why not? (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA4, CA6, CA7 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

**7** Charlie and Jake, as well as the other Irish townsfolk in the play, view the movie production of *The Quiet Valley* as both a good and bad thing. Yet, Charlie and Jake's goal is to write a film of their own. What is ironic about that decision? Is their goal at odds with their views of the movie industry? Why or why not? (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)



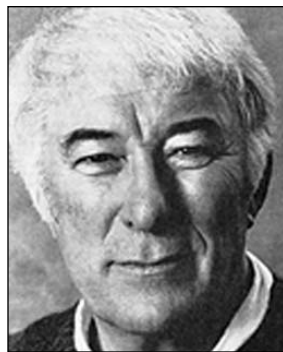
# SOCIAL SCIENCES

## Before the Performance

**1** Ireland has had a very tumultuous history, and it has been described as “the most colonized society of white peoples in the world.” Examine Ireland, and determine to what this statement refers. Who have they been colonized by and for what reasons? What major events occurred as a result of the colonization? How have these events affected them as a people? The Irish are often noted for their well-developed sense of humor. Do you believe that their history of colonization played a role in developing this humor? Why or why not? (MO: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA3, CA6, CA7 IL: 1, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

**2** The Republic of Ireland today has changed in many ways from the Ireland of the past. Keeping in mind the previous question, look into the modern Republic of Ireland and take note of the ways in which it has transformed. Pay particular attention to economic, political and artistic changes. Participate in a class discussion about change in Ireland through the years. (MO: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA3, CA5, CA6, CA7 IL: 1, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

**3** In Act I, Jake tries to woo Caroline by quoting Seamus Heaney, whom to Jake’s dismay, she is already familiar with. As Caroline knows, there have been many famous literary names associated with Ireland through the years. Many Irish writers are particularly noted for their humorous writing, especially in the areas of satire and irony. Choose an Irish writer and research his or her history and work. Write an essay on him or her that answers the following questions: What makes this writer’s work special and what characteristics are found in his/her writing? Does the writer use humorous devices such as satire? If so, list the comedic devices used along with a few examples. What was this writer’s contribution to Ireland? What impact did his/her writing have on the rest of the world? (MO: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, CA7 IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27)



**4** County Kerry, the county in Ireland where *Stones in His Pockets* is set, is largely a bilingual community. They speak English as well as Gaelic. Many of the road and business signs are also written in both languages. What would be the benefits and disadvantages of a bilingual community? What parts of the United States are bilingual? Do these areas

have any advantages or disadvantages over parts of the U.S. that only speak a single language? Give evidence to support your argument. (MO: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA6, CA7 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

**5** In the play we are told that Jake is from County Kerry and Charlie is from Ballycastle. This distinction plays a part in their history, character and future. Research the different parts of Ireland (Northern, Dublin, Blasket Islands, etc.) and write a short description about the people living in one specific area. How do these people differ from their countrymen in other areas? What make their customs, history and accents distinct? Is this area urban, rural, or no longer inhabitable at all? Now choose an area of the United States (South, Midwest, New England, etc.) and do the same. How and why are people in different areas of the same country so distinguishable? Do these regional differences affect the way they are perceived? If so, is this a good or a bad thing? Support your argument with facts. (MO: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA6, CA7 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

## After the Performance

**6** The movie that is being filmed in *Stones in His Pockets* is set in rural Ireland. Topics such as class differences and rural agriculture are important background events that can affect the principle storyline and present a picture of the country as a whole. Choose a movie set in Ireland (*The Quiet Man*, *Far and Away*, *Circle of Friends*) and compare it to Marie Jones’s portrait of Ireland. How does your choice present the people and country in a different light? What is similar? If your choice is set in a different time period, what has changed? What remains the same over time? (MO: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 27)