

The rising of the moon



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The Rising of the Moon was a very interesting play. The setting takes place on a dock at night. There is very little lighting on the dock and the only object on the dock is a barrel. We start with three policemen, a Sargent and two regular officers. The two regular officers are posting fliers of an escaped prisoner. There is a reward mentioned on the fliers which is substantial and the officers talk about this and the possibility of a promotion for the one who brings in the fugitive.

The two regular police officers leave the Sargent alone on the dock to go about posting more fliers. The Sargent stays to thwart a possible escape route for the escapee. Enter the ragged man posing as a ballad singer. He tries to walk past the Sargent but is stopped and asked his business. He explains that he wants to sell songs to sailors as they return to their ships from leave. A conversation ensues between them.

As I was reading the play I first thought that the two main characters (the police Sargent and the ragged man) may have known one another. It was when the ragged man began to sing the ballad "Granuaile" (pronounced graw nya wail) and I found that it was a patriotic ballad that it struck me that the whole meaning was rebellion against English rule. The police Sargent Irish working to keep law and order for England. The ragged man Irish patriot or rebel. During their verbal exchanges the ragged man confesses that he is indeed the wanted criminal.

He removes his disguise handing it to the Sargent (the disguise performs the entire journey towards the discovery of the Sargent's "true" identity underneath his mask of law and duty; the use and exchange of the disguise are similar to the exchanges of identity between the Irish man representing

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British rule and the Irish man representing the rebellion. [Marina, June, 2005]

) At the very moment the two regular officers are heard returning the ragged man hides behind the barrel the only thing between escape or imprisonment.

The officers coming near with a lamp are stopped by the Sargent and he tells them he would rather be alone bidding them to leave as their noise may scare the wanted man. A kind of tug of war ensues about leaving the lamp, the officers want to leave it and the Sargent does not want it. It swings back and forth the Sargent afraid that the man behind the barrel might be exposed. The Sargent bellows " Be off the two of you, yourselves and your lantern! " They leave. The ragged man raises from behind the barrel thanks the Sargent, tells him he owes he one in return, waves his hand and disappears into the night.

The Sargent second guessing himself says, " A hundred pounds reward! a hundred pounds! I wonder, now, am I a great a fool as I think I am? " I think not, he gave in to his national pride and deep down he regrets it not! Bravo! There were four main points in this drama. The rising of the moon: Was it night that was being emphasized? Was it to make the escape easier? Was it a symbol for the darkness of the British occupation? Or the darkness in the lives of the Sargent and the ragged man. The barrel: A large barrel, was it only a place to hide behind? Or the symbol of the road to freedom or imprisonment.

The ballet " Granuaile": A patriotic song based on " one of the most remarkable women in Irish history". (BabyNamesofIreland. com) The disguise: The hat and the wig. Is the Sargent really fooled. Is it a symbol for the mask that the Sargent is hiding behind? On the rising of the moon, I

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believethis is the rising from oppression from British rule. The ragged man at the end of the play tells the Sargent, " Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down... when we all change places at the rising of the moon. " The barrel is where the ragged man hides behind when the other two policemen come back.

I believe it was not only hiding the ragged man but the Sargent's true inner feelings of patriotism. The ballet unites the two as Irishman and as they share a pipe the Sargent corrects the ragged man when he miss sung some lyrics and the Sargent corrected him. The disguise performs the entire journey towards the discovery of the Sargent's " true" identity underneath his mask of law and duty; the use and exchange of the disguise are similar to the exchanges of identity between the Irish man representing British rule and the Irish man representing the rebellion. (Marina, June 2005)