Translations, Brian Friel

History: Set in Ireland
Takes place in a
Spoken in Gaelic but translated in English
Irish speaking community in Donegal
History characterized by brutal oppression of Irish by English
Question of identity → heavy link to language you speak.

All characters part of a dramatic metaphor, represent something.
Manus: damaged by cultural intervention in the past
Twins: kill horse in the beginning; most likely have killed Yolland in the end. Sort of resistance fighters who employ violent means to resist the colonizers (IRA).
Yolland: benevolent colonizer
Lancey: less benevolent
What does Hugh represent?
What does baby without father represent who dies soon after? (illegitimate and dies soon after → failed rebellions or failure of Irish to establish their culture)
Each character as representing something else.
Sarah: “my name is Sarah” → declares her identity

Act I:

- Characters defined often by their physical capacities.
- Importance of Sarah as an observer of the scene; seems very attached to Manus as he is the only one who seems to help her and care for her. Very sensible to the way Manus reacts
- Manus seems to have wanted to marry Maire.
- Jimmy as prodigy
Comic aspect with Hugh and his pauses to quiz his students with “too slow” → comic relief.
Also comic relief with Doalty and his interventions.

- Very rural; do not speak English and heavy reliance on agriculture (specifically corn).
- Owen admired by all as he has succeeded → has gone to the city and is relatively wealthy (owns 9 businesses).
- Arrival of English Lancey and Yolland as element of perturbation; difference between English intentions and translation made by Owen to the Irish.

Act II:

- Comic difficulty in communication: Maire attempting to talk with Yolland ends up in funny translation cycle with Owen involved