

CHAPTER - II

THE ANALYSIS OF DRAMATIC DEVICES

I

P L O T

Synge's imagination was filled with what he had seen and heard on the Aran Islands. He was very much interested in the tales and the anecdotes told by the islanders. He observed intimately and with interest the situation in which they were placed and realised that the situation worked hard on them. But the manner in which they respond to their surrounding circumstances appealed to his artistic senses. He found that they did not allow themselves to be crushed under the impact of situation. The intrinsic simplicity of their lives and their vitality attracted him so much that he devised his plots so as to give full justice to his characters.

The truth of the above statement can be exemplified from his notes on the Aran Islands wherein he has depicted his experiences. In Aranmore, he saw nothing but grey floods of water sweeping everywhere upon the limestone, passing between a few small fields of potatoes or grass hidden away in corners that had shelter. He could see nothing but the mist curling in the rigging, and a small circle of foam. The place was almost desolate but he found that "the rain and cold seemed to have no influence on their vitality"¹. He was very much interested in the people of the Aran islands and was enchanted by their life-style. Therefore, he made

extensive use of the situation in the design of his plays so as to make his characters fully alive in the context of plays.

In Synge's plays, the plots play much significant role in the development of his characters. In other playwrights, we find that the characters create the dramatic situation due to their characteristic flaw. For example, in Shakespeare's Hamlet, Hamlet, the Prince was caught in a psychological dilemma viz., "to be or not to be". His very inability to take decision had created a tragic situation around him. In Synge, we find that the characters emerge from out of the situation. The situation in which they are placed is perpetual. They do not create the dramatic situation but it is the situation that creates the concrete characters. If cut away from their surrounding circumstances, the characters would lose their individual identity and the force of life in them. For example, the tragic view of life, Synge had felt on the Aran Islands had provided for the plot of Riders to the Sea and the character of Maurya, the protagonist, appears to be more strong against the perpetual and terrible impact of the sea. It is of great importance therefore, to see the plots of all his plays and to study how they contribute to his art of characterization.

The plot of Riders to the Sea is simple. Maurya, an old and poor woman is living with her two daughters

viz., Cathleen and Nora and a son, Bartley. She has lost her other sons viz. Stephen and shawn, Sheamus and Patch. The sea has devoured them. Her husband and her father-in-law were also drowned. Michael, her another son is recently drowned. Maurya is afraid of the sea. She is anxious about Bartley's Safety. She tries to prevent him from going to the sea. But he must go .In the moment of anxiety she fails to give him her blessing. She forgets to give him bread. Therefore, she goes to the spring Well to give Bartley his bread. There she has a vision of her dead son, Michael ,riding on grey pony behind Bartley, riding on red mare. She feels that Bartley, her only living son, will be lost. She makes up her mind to sustain the blow of fortune. Bartley is drowned . His dead body is brought to home. Maurya cannot help but lament pathetically on his death.

In this play, the tragic situation created by the sea is permanent and Maurya cannot alter it. She is rendered helpless due to the surrounding circumstances of her life. She is a mother but can do nothing for the safety of her sons. Her heart is scalded. In his notes on the Aran Islands Synge Says :

"The maternal feeling is so powerful on these islands that it gives a life of torment to the women. Their sons grow up to be banished as soon as they are of age, or to live here in continual danger on the sea"².

Against this tragic situation Maurya's character shines forth with vitality.. The force with which she struggles with her fate determined by the sea makes her alive. There is magnanimity in her character. In the end her struggle with the sea is ended, her passions are calmed down and she accepts the reality of life without ~~regist-~~^{resignat}ration. She is at peace with the thought that Michael has a clean burial in the far north and that Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards and a deep grave. She says, "No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied"³.

Through her fluctuations between hope and despair and through her long tragic journey, she arrives at a destination where all the human beings must reach.

The plots of Synge's other plays are also simple and they are based on the actual stories and anecdotes he had heard on the Aran Islands. The plot of The Shadow of the Glen is developed on the folk-story of an old husband and a young, faithless wife. Synge knew the literary version of the Widow of Ephesus tale out of petronius and had also heard it actually on the Aran.

Dan Bruke, an old husband is jealous of his young wife, Nora. He suspects that she is unfaithful towards him. Therefore, he plays a trick on her to catch her red handed with her lover. He pretends to be dead and put a curse on her if she touches his dead body. Nora is

deceived by his trick. That night, a tramp comes to their house for shelter. Nora goes out to call for Michael Dara, a young farmer, in order that he might tell the people down into the glen, about Dan Burke's death. Meanwhile, Dan Burke confides in the tramp and involves him into his plan. Nora comes back along with Michael Dara. They speak about Patch Darcy, Nora's supposed lover, who is now dead. Nora speaks about Dan Burke's old age. She complains about loneliness. Michael Dara proposes her for marriage. But Nora is not willing to get married with him, as she thinks that soon they will be reduced to old age and that they will have to suffer the agonies of loneliness. Dan Burke comes to know her treachery and drives her out of the house. Michael Dara, now denies to marry her. The tramp sympathises with Nora and assures her protection in his company. Nora leaves the house of her husband and goes with the tramp.

Apparently, the actions of Nora may strike one as immoral. But the plot of the play supports her point of view. She is caught in such a situation that there is no way of escape to her. She is struggling against loneliness. She wants a companion to talk with. But her husband has closed all the ways to life unto her. She cannot leave the house and the protection of her husband. She cannot escape the impact of loneliness. The rain and the mist chills her soul. She is terrified of loneliness. The situation worked hard on her. Her last hope for the protection of her

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~~husband. She cannot escape the impact of loneliness. The rain and the mist chills her soul. She is terrified of loneliness. The situation worked hard on her. Her hope for the protection of her husband's house is shattered .~~
 She is all alone in this big world. But there is vitality in her character. She does not collapse under the crushing impact of the situation. The spirit of life in her is awakened. She decides to go away with the tramp and to fulfill the cup of life with sweet words from the human being. Her character is fully justified against the background of this particular situation. Rather, the situation has developed her character.

The plot of The Tinker's Wedding is drawn upon the Vagrants of Wicklow. The story of the play is that Sarah Casey, a beautiful tinker girl, takes a fancy to marriage. She is living with Michael Byrne without marriage. She persuades the priest to wed them. The priest agrees to perform the marital rites in return for ten shillings in gold and a can. But Mary Byrne, Michael's mother replaces empty bottles in place of the can. The priest is annoyed and accuses them in harsh words. Michael loses his temper and pulls down the priest. The priest threatens them that he would tell the peelers about their villainy. The tinkers are frightened and they run away to save themselves from the peelers.

The plot of the play justifies the characters. The tinkers are match-making and marrying themselves for the

year that is to come. They do not believe in marriage institution. They swap the women among themselves. This tradition of free love and their disregard to the decent ways of life contributes much to the understanding of these characters in this play. Sarah's desire for marriage is the main issue around which the plot is involved. But the situation created around her due to the social differences frustrates her desire. The priest is prejudiced against the tinker community. Moreover, Mary Byrne is not willing to break the bounds of tradition of her community. Therefore, she frustrates their plan of marriage by replacing empty bottles in place of can. And the Priest is convinced of their treachery. The interaction between the representatives of different social categories create such a situation where Sarah can do nothing to fulfill her desire.

The social set up in which the tinkers and the priest is placed, gives rise to the clash between them. It has moulded their temperament and their characters. They fail to understand each other's ways of life and therefore to think sympathetically about each other. That is why, in the end, the matter comes to blows and has deepened the prejudice against each other. Therefore, Sarah's tragedy is the outcome of situation created mainly by social discrimination.

The plot of The Well of the Saints is invented one. Here, Synge worked on the parable - like story of the

blind beggars who prefer blindness to eyesight. Probably, the story of the 'ramp who married at ninety and "his fierce quarrel with his wife and his lament for his long white hair which was cut off in prison, must have been in Synge's mind when he imagined Martin Douln⁴, the main character in this play.

The story of the play is that Martin and Mary Douln are the blind beggars. They are a happy couple. They live in the world of imagination where Mary is the most beautiful woman. The Saint comes there. He restores their eyesight by the power of the holywater of the 'Well of the Saints'. Martin's dream is shattered. Mary is utterly ugly and wrinkled woman. They quarrel fiercely with each other and separate. But they see the ugly reality of the world around them. By the grace of God, once again they are restored to the blissful state of blindness. Now, their minds are grander and nobler. They come together. They seek happiness in the nature around them. The Saint comes again. This time Martin resolutely denies to be cured of their eyesight. The villagers become angry. Martin and Mary Douln leave the place and decide to go to the other cities in the south.

The most significant moment in this play is Martin's refusal to be cured of their eyesight for the second time. It is the crowning moment in the development of Martin Douln's character. He is reached at a stage of perfection wherein lies the greatness and liveliness of his character. Synge has arrived at this moment by the skillful handling of his plot. The design of the

plot is three-fold. In the first phase of the plot, the baggars are blind and they are living in the world of illusion. In the second phase, they are restored to eyesight and they see the actual world around them. And, in the third phase, once again they are blind and are not willing to be cured of their eyesight.

This transition from blindness to blindness with the interval of eyesight lies at the core of characterization. It is through this transition that they are alive and concrete characters. It has brought a drastic change in their vision of life. The blissful state of eyesight is temporary. During this period they see the ugly reality of life. Their illusion ^{is} ~~of~~ shattered. They experience the hardships of life, they have to sustain the sneers and to face the harsh criticism against them. They meet with unsympathetic treatment by the people. The world becomes a hard place to live in. Martin realises that eyesight has brought to them nothing but sorrow. He comes to know the blindness of the seeing people. He knows perfectly well what he wants and therefore resolutely denies to be cured of eyesight.

The vision of life which Martin and Mary Coul present before us, is the most appealing one. They want that peace of mind which they were enjoying previously in the state of blindness. If the plot was otherwise, there would have appeared nothing interesting and appealing

in their characters. What interest should be there in the lives of blind beggars ? But Synge's handling of the plot creates in us ~~the~~ interest for them. Their illusion, their quarrel and their transition from illusion to reality contributes much in the concrete development of their characters and attributes reality to them.

The plot of The Playboy of the Western World is based on the actual story. A Connaughtman killed his father with the blow of a spade when he was in passion and ~~fired~~ fled to the Aran. In spite of a reward which was offered, the people protected him and after much trouble he was safely shipped to America. With certain alterations and adaptations, the same story is used by Synge in the plot of this play.

Christy Mahon, the main character in this play, struck his father in the head with a loy and ran away. He comes to the Public house in Mayo, where men admire his deed as a heroic one. Pegeen, the daughter of the publican, falls in love with him. There , he is appointed as a pot boy. The other girls come to see him. Men invite him to the sports. In sports, christy wins all the prizes and praises of the people. He becomes 'The Playboy of the Western World' for them. Now, christy is in high spirits. He asks for pegeen's hand in marriage. Though she is already engaged with Shawn Keogh., she accepts his proposal willingly. Michael James, the publican, gives his permission to the marriage. When all

the things are thus going on smoothly and in favour of ~~Christy~~ ^{Christy} ~~charisty~~, old Mahon, his father comes there. The glamour Christy has created around him is, at once, shattered. Pegeen loses her interest in him. But he wants to win Pegeen by all means. Therefore, he strikes his father, once again, in the presence of all men. They are taken aback by his hideous deed. They held him a criminal. They tie him with a rope. Christy struggles hard to escape. Pegeen scorches him. He feels frustrated. At this stage, old Mahon, who has survived the blow, comes there. He unties the rope and asks Christy to go away with him. Now, Christy becomes aware of his powers. He dominates his father and decides to go on romancing through a romping lifetime.

This play is a comedy of situation and Christy is the product of situation. The situation created in the beginning of the play is turned upside down in the end and Christy, who is caught between these two contrasting situations comes to himself and becomes a concrete personality. The magnanimity with which he overcomes the situation create our interest in him.

In the beginning of the play, Christy is shown to be very shy and in-articulate. But the people among whom he comes are romantic by nature. They love the heroic and the manly. It is their romantic fantasy for the heroic that makes Christy indulge in the flights of fancy. He comes to know that they admire his deed as heroic one.

In order to win more admiration he exaggerates his deed and allows himself to be played over by the people. But with the arrival of his father, the situation changes. Men are torn between fantasy and awful reality. They as well as Pegeen, lose their interest in him. He is held a criminal. In the end, he is brought down to the earth from his flights of fancy.

Christy is tortured between admiration and hate, the two contrasting situations. He ^{is} frustrated. Through frustration and psychological suffering he finds out his real self. He realises his powers. He no longer depends for mercy or for protection on any person. Rather, he needs neither mercy nor protection. He emerges as a ~~stark~~ strong man out of this situation and dominates his father and the crowd. His development is complete. In the end, he becomes the master of the situation. The shy and dirty, the liar and the talker of folly, Christy becomes manly and is able to mould his life into the shape of his hearts' desire.

The plot of Deirdre of the Sorrows is outside the previous range of Synge's material. In this play, he works on ~~the~~ the ancient heroic legend of Deirdre which was already used by Yeats. Synge was very much interested in the old Irish Saga's and especially in the Deirdre legend. The single lines from the saga in Lady Gregory's version held his imagination. In Lady Gregory's version, Deirdre

pursues Naoise who is out walking with his brothers, Ainnle and Arden. They know the troubles foretold. Therefore, they try to prevent Naoise turning to meet her. At that time, Deirdre cries out for three times :-

"Naoise, son of Usnach, are you going to leave me ?"⁵.

This line held Synge's imagination. But he wanted to do something different from Yeats and Lady Gregory. He wanted to give substance to the characters of the legend who were alien and remote to the contemporary audience.

In Synge's play, therefore, the first meeting of Deirdre and Naisi is shown in different situation. Lavarcham persuaded Naisi and his brothers to leave Deirdre's hut. When Naisi is fumbling with the bolt of the door, Deirdre comes from the inner room and says; "Naisi ! Do not leave me, Naisi. I am Deirdre of the Sorrows"⁶.

Deirdre is the most beautiful girl. She is the daughter of Fedlimid. Conchubor, the king of Emain, wants to marry her. He keeps her away from the men of Ulster. She is living with Lavarcham and an old woman, the maids appointed by Conchubor, in Slieve Fuadh. But Deirdre is not willing to marry ~~with~~ Conchubor. She sees Naisi passing through the wood and falls in love with him at first sight. She meets Naisi in the wood and tells him to take shelter in her house there, but does not disclose

her name. Naisi comes to his^{er} house. Deirdre expresses her love towards him and requests him to take her away from the clutches of conchubor. Ainnle, Naisi's brother wed Deirdre to Naisi. They leave for Alban and live there happily for seven years. Ainnle and Ardan remain bachelor for their sake. But conchubor becomes restless. He designs a plan to win Deirdre. He sends Fergus to Alban, and calls them back to Emain. Ainnle and Ardan try to prevent Deirdre and Naisi from going to Emain. But they decide to go to Emain. As soon as they arrive in Emain, Conchubor's men kill Naisi and his brothers. Deirdre is left alone and broken. Conchubor asks her for marriage. But she presses a knife into her heart and becomes one with Naisi in death.

Deirdre is a romantic myth, rooted in celtic mythology. Yeats wanted to create a memorable character out of this myth. But he conceived the plot of Deirdre (1906) as a practical expression of a complex of ideas about what the theatre ought to be and do. On the contrary, as is said before, Synge wanted to give substance of real life to his characters. "He wanted to create a full tragic pattern, to set a positive force of life against the reality of death, a sense of life strong enough to stand in tension with it"⁷. Therefore, the plot of Deirdre of the Sorrows is designed in such a way as to make the legendary characters viz., Deirdre and Naisi, human and life-like.

The end is foretold. Deirdre and Naisi know what is foretold. But they fight with their fate with all the force of life in them. Their attempts come to nothingness. In the end, ^{they} arrive at the destiny which is foretold. But this arrival is not automatic. There is a great gap between the beginning and the end which is filled by Deirdre and Naisi's spontaneous efforts to fulfill the cup of life with joy and love. Love is conceived in the first Act. The awareness of fate works no pressure on them. In the second Act, love is fulfilled. But they are made aware of the mortal reality of everything and they prepare themselves for the final blow of fate which is to come in the third Act.

The tragic situation is created around Deirdre due to the conflict between love and hate. She loves Naisi and hates Conchubor. On the contrary Conchubor loves Deirdre and hates Naisi, his rival. Naisi loves Deirdre and hates Conchubor, the obstacle in his union with Deirdre. This love triangle has created a tragic situation which ultimately destroys Naisi and Deirdre. In a given situation, their spontaneous response to love, their vitality and their knowledge of the reality of the world is all human and we are obliged to feel for them as our fellow beings.

II

S e t t i n g

Aristotle speaks of plot as the mainspring controlling all the intricate machinery of the play. But it is the setting, the place of action, that controls the plot. Without appropriate setting the story would appear to be arbitrary and the audience would lose its interest in it. Sometimes, setting in a drama becomes more useful for deepening the nature of characters. Synge knew well the art of giving appropriate background to his characters. They grow more alive due to the specific background against which they are portrayed. His plots become authentic and the characters alive due to the appropriate setting he has employed in his plays.

In fact, drama, like other genres of literature, creates a world of fiction. Though the life that we see on the stage is fictional, it must have some flavour of reality. of course, we do not expect to see the drama of real life enacted by real characters on the stage. But , at least, the fictional characters in the play must appear to be life - like. Because the greatest beauty of the play will always be its faithfulness to reality whereir lies the success of drama. In the theatre, we are interested in the characters. Therefore, for successful characterization, the dramatist ought to provide authentic setting which determines the actions, the language, the manners and the particular view of life of the characters.

Zola, in his preface to *Therese Raquin* says;
 "I have attempted continually to harmonize my setting with the ordinary occupations of my characters, so that they might not seem to 'play', but rather to 'live', before the spectators"⁸.

Synge has done almost the same thing in the creation of his characters. His imagination was filled with those ~~xxxb~~ turbulent and the most imaginative people of the Aran Islands that he set out to characterize them using whole of the rural Ireland for setting of his plays. It justifies his plots and the types of characters that emerge from out of the plot.

Riders to the Sea (1904) is set in Aran. From Synge's notes on the Aran Islands we come to know that the place is almost desolate. There is nothing but dreary rocks and grey floods of water sweeping everywhere. The sea is their enemy. They live in constant danger of accidents. But there is no escape from the sea. In spite of the danger of accident men must go to the sea. Therefore, the main tragic^c action in the play, initiated by the sea long before and ending in Bartley's drowning appears to be authentic. Moreover, Aran was extremely backward in the early decades of the Twentieth Century. The people believed in fairies and witchcraft. Certain houses were supposed to be ^{gun} haunted. Certain wells had the reputation of curing blindness. Their superstitions beliefs had provided a supernatural dimension to their

life-style. They seemed to have a pre-vision of what is to come. Therefore, Maurya's vision of Michael, does not appear to be artificial or merely sensational. There appears nothing allegoric or symbolic in her vision. This particular background against which the play is set, force the audience to believe that the characters are really alive.

The Shadow of the Glen (1903) and The Tinker's Wedding (1909) are set against the background of Wicklow. Synge had a keen power of observation. In Wicklow, he observed that the tramps and the tinkers had formed a different social category. While the tramps were a welcome in the Wicklow community of peasants, the tinkers were looked down upon by it. The tramps enjoyed some social respect but the tinkers were social outcasts. This background of social discrimination is accurately used by Synge in these plays in the development of his characters. From the very atmosphere that is created in these plays, it is apparent that The Shadow of the Glen is set in "Glenmalur" and that The Tinker's Wedding is set in "Ballinaclesh".

Nora, in The Shadow of the Glen admits the tramp into her household without fear or without suspicion. But the priest, in The Tinker's Wedding regrets having dealt with the tinkers. The actions and view points of the characters are justifiable in the context of social background. Nora's unwillingness to leave her husband's house, the tinkers violence and their disregard to the

decent ways of life, seem to be real. Their dispositions are moulded in this specific setting which attribute authenticity to the plots and thereby ultimately in the creation of life like characters.

The plot of The Well of the Saints (1905) is based on the parable like story of the blind beggars who prefer blindness to eyesight. Here, Synge was confronted with the problem of providing authentic background for the realistic portrait^{ya} of his characters. Once again, he conceived the West of the Ireland to be the proper setting for the play. In the body of the play itself he describes them as the "starving people"⁹ of Ireland. The main characters in the play viz., Martin Doul and Mary Doul are beggars. Probably, Synge had had in mind the economic backwardness and hard landscape of Ireland which reduced men to beggars. Therefore, the setting of the play is Ireland. It is further exemplified by the vitality they possess, the characteristic^{te} feature of the men of ~~the~~ Ireland and their nature worship, deeply rooted in their psyche.

As has been said before, Synge wanted to give expression to the life that had never found expression. For this purpose he set out to characterize the people of Ireland focussing on every dominant trait of their personality. In The Playboy of the Western World (1907) Synge has presented a different trait of their nature viz., their love of the heroic and the manly. The

play is set in Mayo, where Christy came from Kerry. The people of Mayo always love to indulge in fantasy. It is out of their love for the heroic and the manly, they admire Christy's deed. It is their worship of the daredevil that transforms Christy, a runaway murderer into a hero. They not only protect him but also admire his deed as a heroic one. In his notes on the Aran Islands Synge says;

"This impulse to protect the criminal is universal in the West. It seems partly due to the association between justice and the hated English jurisdiction, but more directly to the primitive feeling of these people who are never criminals yet always capable of crime. - that a man will not do wrong unless he is under the influence of a passion which is as irresponsible as a storm on the sea. If a man has killed his father and is already sick and broken with remorse, they can see no reason why he should be dragged away and killed by the law"²¹⁰.

Though they incline to protect the criminal, they know the difference between the crime and the fantasy. Therefore, Christy's exaggeration of his deed and his second deliberate attempt at killing his father and the crowd's different reactions to his deed seems but natural.

In writing Deirdre of the Sorrows once again Synge was confronted with the problem of providing appropriate background to his characters. He was completely ignorant of the ways of life of the saga people and of their habitation. He was interested in the legendary characters than the legend itself. All his interests were centred around the 'Human' in his characters in the complex and mysterious process of life. Therefore, in Deirdre of the Sorrows Synge did not want to reconstruct an ancient civilization. He realised the kinship of the world of the old legends and its modern descendants. He felt the need to give the reality of contemporary peasant life to his characters. In a different way, the people of the Aran Islands were his source of inspiration in whom he found the quality of aristocracy in the midst of primitivity and simplicity.

The action of the play begins in slieve Faudh, an island in Ireland where Deirdre meets Naisi for the first time. In the second act the action is temporarily shifted to Alban, in Scotland. Again, in the third act, with great craftsmanship the action is brought back to Ireland, the appropriate setting in the development of his characters, where his nature - worship - seems to be more appropriate. The romantic and independent nature of Deirdre and Naisi, their vitality, their courage in the face of death all seems to be authentic and gives them the substance of real life. The setting is not only

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strange, imaginary and purely celtic but is rooted significantly in the contemporary reality also.

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III

THEMES

Death and desolation, a sense of loneliness and helplessness are the dominant and recurrent themes in the plays of J.M.Synge. The feeling of isolation and frustration, the moment of first love and the beauty of nature were the areas in which Synge spoke with authority where he was sure that what he was evoking was real. These themes are very successfully projected in his characters, who give them full justice. The separate treatment of every dominant theme in the plays will help us understand the characters more closely.

1) The Theme of Death and Desolation :

Death and desolation are the dominant themes in both the tragedies viz., Riders of the Sea and Deirdre of the Sorrows. The theme of death in Riders to the Sea, is developed along with the theme of conflict between man and nature and the inevitability of human defeat in the struggle with the nature. In this play, the sea symbolises the destructive force in the nature which renders men helpless in the face of it. Maurya, the main character in the play, is living under the constant shadow of death. She has witnessed a number of deaths in her household. In her struggle with the sea she is always defeated. She ceases to hope against the terrible power of the sea but her spirit is not lowered down. She continues to fight with the sea. She tries her best

to prevent Bartley, her only living son, from going to the sea but he must go. And her life-long struggle with the sea ends in utter despair in the occasion of Bartley's death by drowning. Once again, Maurya is defeated and the sea becomes victorious. Once again, she is confronted with death, the ultimate reality of human life and thereby with desolation.

The character of Maurya has been given an extraordinary power of endurance by the theme of fate and death. Moreover, her life-long sufferings have brought to her the knowledge of the reality of life. She has a vision of Michael, her recently drowned son, riding on grey pony behind Bartley, riding on red mare. At once she realises that it is the vision of death and makes up her mind to sustain the final blow of fortune. Her vision of Michael is nothing but the vision of death, the universal truth, though in the pattern of the play, it is restricted to the superstitions^u beliefs of the characters. Her vision comes out true. Bartley is crowned. No prayers, no blessing prevent death.

The character of Maurya becomes human due to the manner in which she reacts in the given situation. She knows well that Bartley will be drowned. But she hopes against hope which is shattered. She cannot alter her fate which is determined by the sea. When she is convinced that Bartley will be lost, she remains

indifferent to the death. She assumes that melancholic and indifferent posture which is permanently imposed on her character, in her constant desperate struggle with the sea. But she cannot keep this posture for long as she is a human being. She laments pathetically on Bartley's death. Her keening symbolises the universal tragedy of human existence.

This theme of death and desolation is further developed in Deirdre of the Sorrows. In this play, it is handled with more complexity as it is interwoven with the theme of love. Death and destruction is foretold. But Deirdre and Naisi do not submit themselves to the impact of death. They determine to fight against their fate by all means. The force of life and love proves to be more strong than the force of death and desolation. The undying power of love is implied by its own strength. They run away to Alban, far away from their fate, and fulfil their love and their vision of life. After seven years, the hardness of death comes between them. It makes everything else fade into unsubstantial nothingness. They lose their faith in love and in each other. For example, when Naisi insists on going to the help of his brothers, Deirdre says,

"Go to your brothers. For seven years you have been kindly, but the hardness of death has come between us"¹¹. Thereupon, frantically Naisi says, "They'll not get a

death that's cruel, and they with men alone. It's women that have loved are cruel only¹².

Their love is cut short by death like mid-May trees and flowers seen against the thunder clouds gathering behind them. In the end, love and immortality breaks through the grave and death. The unavoidable death devours love, life and hatred and almost every other thing. Naisi is killed. Desolation sweeps over the life of Deirdre and she puts an end to her life.

The characters in this play very successfully exemplify the theme of death. No man, howsoever mighty he may be, can reverse the course of fate. Howsoever away the men might run from it, and whatsoever the course they might take, in the end they arrive at the same destiny. It is not within the power of men to defeat the death. Deirdre and Naisi, like the rest of human beings, try to avoid their fate. But fate dominates them. Deirdre decides to go to Emain .Lavarcham, who symbolically stands for wisdom, fails to convince her of Conchubor's evil design. She fails to persuade Conchubor from carrying out his evil design. That is, even wisdom can do nothing in the face of destiny. The Power of love also fails to prevent Deirdre and Naisi from going to Emain. The other worldly considerations proved to be more powerful than the love of life and love itself.

But the play is not a glorification of death. Deirdre's keen over Naisi's grave is, indeed, a song of life though it springs from the close knowledge of death which alone can measure life. In Riders to the Sea, there is no such foretale of death and destruction. Life runs smoothly. No jealousy, no hatred, no battle but the battle with the sea, and no love triangle is there. There is only love of life the course of which runs to the sea of death.

The characters in these tragedies are aware of their mortal existence and of the insecurity in this big world. Their knowledge of the reality of life is significant. But what is more significant is their vitality with which they strive hard for life and cling to the shaky shore of their existence, even at the point of total destruction.

2) The Theme of Isolation :

Sometimes, the theme of isolation elevates the isolated characters just because the audience concentrates more on the mood and movements of such characters. Such a theme of isolation is handled by Synge in The Tinker's Wedding and in The Well of the Saints.

The tinkers are the social outcasts . They are the socially isolated lot and are aware of their isolation . They disregard all the norms of decent

society and from a different social category of their own. It is clear from the speech of Mary Byrne where she points out the different tradition of tinker community. She says,

"It's sick and sorry we are to tease you; but what did you want meddling with the like of us, when its a longtime we are going our own ways-father and son, and his son after him, or mother and daughter, and her own daughter again; and it's little need we ever had of going up into a church and swearing..... a word no man would believe, or with drawing rings on our fingers...."

This theme of isolation is drawn perfectly well in the portrait of Sarah Casey by showing how her desire for marriage and her longing for a decent life is shattered in the end and how she is forced into her social isolation.

Sarah is living with Michael Byrne without marriage according to the tradition of tinker community, which do not believe in marriage institution. She gets a fancy to marriage. She persuades the priest to wed them . The priest is not willing to have any dealings with them. But he agrees to perform marriage rites in return for ten shillings in gold and a can. But Mary Byrne is against their marriage. She clings to the tradition of free love of her community and is not willing to break it. Cunningly,

she puts the empty bottles in the place of can. The Priest is annoyed. He expresses his disapproval towards them in harsh words; "It's a wicked, thieving, lying, scheming lot you are, the pack of you"¹⁴.

He warns them not to come to the church where they have no business and threatens them that he would inform the peelers of their villainy. Sarah's desire of marriage is frustrated. She is forced to run away along with Mary and Michael Byrne, into her social isolation.

This theme of isolation brings forth the characteristic traits of Sarah's character. She is strong, independent and sensitive. She is not willing to live in social isolation. She wants to come out of the filth into which she is placed. She dares to go against the accepted norms of her community in her plan of marriage. But she is compelled to live in the same filth by the conventional minded people around her. The character of Sarah is fully alive in that her desires and her ambitions are really human. She does almost the same thing which a sensitive and socially aware person would do in the same social pattern. There is something more than the desire of marriage in Sarah's action. In fact, she wants to break the bounds of social discrimination. But as usual, she is defeated by the narrow minded, representatives of the society, prejudiced in favour of traditional norms. The force of society against single individual proves to be more strong and she is rendered helpless to fight with it. In the end she is restored to what is designed by

her fate and what is desired by the society.

The social force once again proves to be more strong in The Well of the Saints. The blind beggars, Martin and Mary Doul think of themselves to be isolated from the seeing people. Their sense of isolation is so acute that they create a world of their own around themselves. They feel that they are not fit in a society which fails to understand them and which disturbs their peace of mind. Therefore, they impose upon themselves a conscious isolation and decide to go away to other cities in the south. Their isolation is a psychological reality while Sarah's isolation is a social reality. In both the cases, the sense of isolation is too acute and their respective spontaneous reactions to it are human. Hence, the theme of isolation makes these characters real and life-like.

3) The Theme of Loneliness :-

The theme of loneliness is brought forth dominantly in The Shadow of the Glen. It is the most fundamental of the human themes. Nora is suffering from the sense of loneliness. The huge and awful mountain and the mist and the rain cast a shadow of melancholy on her life. Her relation ~~is~~ with Patch Darcy is more than love. She sought in him a companion to talk with. she says, "It's in a lonesome place you do have to be talking with someone, and looking for someone, in the evening of the day....."¹⁵

Further she says,

"What way a woman live in a lonesome place the like of this place, and she not making a talk with the men passing ?"¹⁶.

Dan Burke, her husband, drives her out of the house because he thinks that she is unfaithful towards him. But he fails to understand her. The shadow of the glen is more than the shadow of the old age and death. The theme of this play resembles the theme of Synge's unpublished play When the Moon has Set where Colum takes away sister Eileen from the house of death and a conventional religion, as the Tramp gives Nora a definite alternative to the misery of a loveless marriage.

The story of the play has no specific moral, rather it appears to be non-moral. But Synge is neither praising the non-moral attitude nor does he proclaim such an immoral way of life. Here, he works out prominently the theme of loneliness, the impact of which crushes the consciousness of men and drives them towards death. Besides Nora, every other character in the play suffers from loneliness. Patch Darcy went mad and died in the rain. The Tramp also is leading a miserably lonely life. Therefore, he knows very well the feelings of Nora and sympathises with her.

4) The Theme of Frustration :

Frustration is the dominant theme in The Playboy of the Western World. In a way, there are various levels

of meaning in the play. There are no short cuts to the plays meanings and therefore the theme of the play is not certain. J.F.Kilroy argued that "The playboy of the Western World dramatises the gradual development of the poet's - craft from his first uncertain expression to the full display of mature art"¹⁷.

But Christy is not a poet in the literal sense of the word. He is ^athe man capable of imagination, like other characters in Synge's plays, a peculiar Irish temperament. Rather, it is like the Oedipus myth with Christy as a father dominated figure about to be married to a woman who had 'suckled' him. Therefore, the relation between the father and the son can be the theme of this play. Parent -child relationship is yet another theme in the play. Pegeen's relation with her father is friendly, natural and balanced. But Christy's father always dominates him. Their relation is married by hatred that comes between them. Moreover, still another theme in the play resembles the theme of the folk-tale story of a fool proving himself more shrewd and intelligent than his wiser brothers or sisters. The religious theme of initiation is obvious in the act of attempted murder.

Besides all these themes, the ^{theme} of frustration appears to be the most dominant. The frustration, Christy experiences leads him towards self discovery which is the real theme of the play. Christy is a very simple young man. He is emotional. His emotions are pure and

strong. He acts on the first impulse. He know not the ways of the world. Such simple minded and innocent men cannot stand the excess of anything and suddenly get excited. Christy's first attempt at murdering his father is eertainly, not initiated by selfish considerations. He commits this deed when the situation intolerably goes beyond his control. He is fluctuated between love and hatred, between hope and despair.

Pegeen engenders the flame of love in his heart and he is almost mad in love. His love is strong, therefore he attempts murder for the second time to win pegeen's love. But Pegeen loses her interest in him and he is frustrated. He is held in high esteem by the people in Mayo. But later on the same people held him a traitor. He hopes for their admiration but meets with their disapproval. His dream of life viz., a little nice house a loving wife and friendly people around is shattered. In fact, the home in his heart is shattered before it is built up. The world where people were friendly and sympathetic is no more. Christy is frustrated in every sense of the word. But his frustration has brought to him the knowledge of the world. He comes to know the hidden powers in him and discovers his real-self.

Sarah casey in The Tinker's Wedding is also frustrated. She is very sensitive and emotional girl. With the coming of the spring she gets emotionally excited. She desires for marriage, a decent way of life. But the

representatives of the different groups of society impose on her a compulsory isolation. Thus, the theme of frustration in these two plays, shows that lack of understanding between the society and the individual always results into individuals frustration. In a society mens interests are always conflicting and most of the happiness of the single individual depends on the approval of the society and in most of the cases he is destined to suffer from the decision of the group of men. Christy Mahon and Sarah Casey's frustration occurs due to fluctuating mob mentality.

5) The Theme of Illusion and Reality :-

The theme of illusion and reality is developed in The Well of the Saints, The Playboy of the Western World and Deirdre of the Sorrows . In The Well of the Saints Martin and Mary Doul has created a world of illusion around them. Martin thinks that Mary is the most beautiful woman. She also thinks the same. In their world of illusion ~~is shattered~~ they are very happy. But their illusion is shattered. When the saint cures their eyesight, they are faced with the reality. Both of them are utterly ugly. The illusion of beauty is shattered. It breaks through ugly reality. They not only see the physical ugliness of their own but also see the ugly reality of life. They came to know that the people around them are liars and snob^bish and that they are not willing to let them live in peace.

Now Martin is attracted towards Molly Byrne.

He loves Molly. But Molly chooses to marry Timmy the smith. She shows Martin his right place. She says,
 "..... let you go after the tinker girls is above running the hills, or down among the slits of the town; and you'll learn one day, maybe, the way a man should speak with a well-reared, civil girl the like of me"¹⁸.

Martin's illusion of love, too, is shattered. He comes to know that Molly is only playing with him.

In the Playboy of the Western World also the theme of illusion and reality is developed perfectly well. The people in Mayo create a world of illusion around Christy. On the contrary, they themselves are living in the world of fantasy. Christy's deed appears to them as a heroic one. It is their worship of the heroic and the manly turn Christy's head. He exaggerates his deed and provides all that they want. Moreover, he feels that the people appreciate his deed. Therefore, once again he strikes his father in their presence. But his as well as their's illusion is shattered. They come to know the difference between fantasy and crime. They cannot stand the bitter reality. And Christy also comes to know their real self and is disillusioned. The sudden change in their attitude destroys him thoroughly. Likewise, his ~~is~~^{is} illusion of love towards Pegeen and Pegeen's illusion of love towards him is shattered. In fact, their love itself is ~~is~~^{is} illusion. Pegeen falls in love with Christy attracted by his heroic deed. Once she realizes that

there is nothing heroic about him she loses her interest in Christy. He is desperately disappointed when he comes to know that Pegeen's love is frail.

In Deirdre of the Sorrows, the illusion of the power of beauty and the immortality of love is shattered in the face of mortal reality. Deirdre thinks that her beauty can prevent Naisi from going to Emain. She feels that her love is powerful enough to prevent Naisi from thinking about other things. But Naisi grows weary of the life in Alban. He is realistic. He knows that old age will come over them. The intensity of love is decreased. He has grown weary of Deirdre also. He says, for example,

"I,ve a dread upon me a day'd come I'd weary of her voice, and Deirdre^h see I'd wearied"⁹.

~~Deirdre's love~~⁵⁰ However intense the love may be and howsoever charming the physical beauty maybe, it is not everlasting. Life is a complex phenomena and love alone cannot hold the imagination of any man for long.

6) The Theme of Nature and Man's Helplessness :

Nature plays much the significant role in every play of Synge. It attributes the quality of vitality to his characters. The nature in his plays, symbolises two forces viz., the creative force and the destructive force.

It is the destructive force in the nature that renders men helpless. There are certain limits to the man's power but the power of nature is unlimited and unrestricted. This theme is brought forth significantly in Riders to the Sea and The Shadow of the Glen and by implications in The Playboy of the Western World.

In Riders to the Sea, the sea signifies the destructive force in the nature. The sea devours men and becomes a constant threat to them. Maurya, the protagonist is weak and helpless in the face of the sea. She has no power to fight with it and to reverse the course of her fate determined by the sea.

In The Shadow of the Glen, the huge mountains signify still another terrible force in the nature. The huge mountain and the mist cast a shadow of melancholy on the lives of the men. Its impact crushes their consciousness and denies their being. Patch Darcy is the victim of this destructive force. Nora is almost on the verge of madness. She cannot change the natural surrounding of her life. She cannot escape from the cold circumstances around her. Her feeble attempts to overcome the impact of loneliness amount to nothing.

Likewise, in The Playboy of the Western World, the landscape wherein the people are situated cast a constant mood of despondency on them. The dreary rocks, the bare sea-shore and the damp, melancholic atmosphere

compell them to indulge in fantasy. They indulge in fantasy as a sort of escape from the dull and melancholic atmosphere. But fantasy cannot hold them longer. They are ^{cu}actually aware of the reality and ~~s~~therefore, life becomes a tedious affair for them.

In these plays we see that the characters are rendered helpless due to the nature around them. In a way their fates are determined by the nature and not by some supernatural entity. They fight with the natural forces but are defeated. They grow more and more helpless in confrontation with the nature.

7) The Theme of Marriage and Married Life :-

The apparent theme of all the four comedies is marriage and married life. The socially accepted and approved happy marriage life is, indeed, a healthy situation where the law of nature and the laws of society are at perfect harmony with each other. The institution of marriage is really a sound and sobre system. But the tinkers in The Tinkers' Wedding follow the tradition of free love in total disregard towards the institution of marriage. Sarah Casey and Michael Byrne are living with each other as husband and wife but they are not husband and wife in a conventional sense of the word. Sarah thinks that married women enjoy social respect, Therefore, she wants to marry ~~with~~ Michael and to save herself from the ~~shere~~ ^{shere} of society. But she is obliged to follow the tradition of her community.

Man is a social animal and marriage is the foundation of decent society. Therefore, the responsibilities of the partners in marriage are too great. They must be sympathetic, in the first place, towards each other. They must try to understand each other. The wife is not the property of husband and the husband is not the provisional store of his wife. Husband and wife are the human beings in the first place, brought together by the ties of marriage. In marriage they are one person. Therefore, they should abolish all personal considerations and should devote themselves for the happiness and welfare of each other. But the couple in The Shadow of the Glen fails to fulfil all these expectations. Their married life is a loveless and unhappy affair. Dan Bruke, the husband, fails to sympathise with his wife, Nora. He is not even ready to give her a necessary freedom. There is no understanding between them. That is why, the marriage ties are broken down and the marriage comes to an abrupt end.

The ideal couple and the perfect marriage life is to be seen in The Well of the Saints. In the end Martin and Mary Doul are reached at the stage of perfection of married life. It is not that they love each other all the time. They quarrel fiercely. They fight with each other. They hate each other. But all through this they come together more and more. From the beginning of their married life they try to understand each other. They accompany each other in happiness as well as in distress. They have gone through the turns of

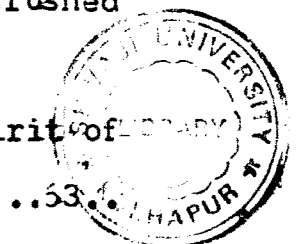
fortune. But at last, they are united against the world at large and seek comfort and solace in each other's company. Theirs is a perfect union, a marriage of true minds.

There is no such union of minds in The Playboy of the Western World. Therefore, the marriage is only conceived but is not performed. Pegeen declines to marry with christy. She feels that she is deceived by christy. She feels that christy has played with her emotions and therefore, she decides not to marry the person who plays with her emotions.

The theme of marriage and married life thus shows that the characters look at marriage with concern and sincerity. All of them want an emotional security. They feel like us. Therefore, this theme very clearly brings out their nature which is not different from the real men and women.

8) The Theme of Vitality :

In the foregoing discussion we have seen the dominant themes in the plays of J.M.Synge. From the close perusal of all these themes yet another theme comes on the surface viz., the theme of vitality. We come to know that there is vitality in all the characters of J.M.Synge. They do not allow themselves to be crushed under the impact of situation. The frustrating circumstances around them fail to chill their spirit of



life. They fight against the terrible nature, against their fate and even against the death. They are not passive and pessimistic. They are fully alive and active.

This theme of vitality is thus occurs in every play by synge. Maurya, in Riders to the Sea, knows that Bartley will be lost. She knows the sea more intimately. But she does not cease to hope against the sea. She hopes against the hope and tries her best to prevent Bartley from going to the sea. Nora, in The Shadow of the Glen is terrified of loneliness. But she shows courage in escaping the death like cold circumstances of her life. Even, she does not hesitate to break the bounds of tradition and to leave the house of her husband. Sarah Casey in The Tinker's Wedding is frustrated and is compelled to go back into isolation. But she is a strong and courageous girl. We cannot think that she has totally abandoned her ambition. Her spirits are great and we are forced to feel that some or the other time in future, she will definitely carry out her desire of marriage.

Christy, in The Playboy of the Western World is utterly disappointed at frustrating experiences. But in the end, he determines to go on romancing through a romping lifetime. Moreover, Martin and Mary Doll in The Well of the Saints find out the fantasy of white hair to keep them alive. They know that they are ugly. Now there is nothing with them to indulge in and to

seek happiness from it. Therefore, they find out the glory in Martin's long white beard and Mary's white hairs.

In Deirdre of the Sorrows, Deirdre and Naisi fight with their fate. They run away to Alban and keep their fate away from them for seven years. Deirdre shows vitality in choosing her life-mate by herself. Naisi also is not afraid of the king and the death. He faces both of them boldly. Thus, the theme of vitality presents before us a vision of life which is true to the test of time also.

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IV

L A N G U A G E

"Synge proposed to do with the speech of the inhabitants of the Aran Island something like what Shakespeare has done with the speech of the Elizabethan Englishman"²⁰.

The characters in Synge's plays are chosen directly from the Irish Peasantry. He had captured the springtime of the local life full of fiery, magnificent and tender imagination. He, therefore, selects a conventional utterance for them in order to add a realistic flavour to their speech. He used the very words he heard on the Aran Islands, in Wicklow and Kerry. In the preface to The Playboy of the Western World, he expresses his view of language in the following words :-

"In writing 'The Playboy of the Western World' as in my other plays, I have used one or two words only that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland, or spoken in my own nursery before I could read the newspapers..... When I was writing 'The shadow of the Glen', some years ago, I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the Kitchen. This matter, I think, is of importance, for in countries where the imagination of the people, and

the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry in a comprehensive and natural form²¹

But how²⁰ever realistic the language may be, it would be intolerably tedious on the stage if it has no artistic touch. Synge knew well that pale and pallid words possess only ephemeral worth and that "on the stage one must have reality, and one must have joy"²². Drama, in the first place, is an art and language is the only medium capable of expressing subtle emotions. In this connection. Yeats's remark on language is noteworthy. He says :

"If one has no fine construction, one has not drama, but if one has not beautiful or powerful and individual speech, one has not literature, or, at any rate, one has not great literature"²³.

The language Synge has employed in his plays is poetic in itself. Moreover, he handled it poetically for artistic purposes. Therefore, there is a fine mixture of beauty and reality in the language of his plays. He has deliberately attempted to Gaelicise the language. The characters frequently use the very words of their real-life counterparts. But it is the dialect of studied artifact. The language is poetic and is capable of appealing both to the Irish Peasants themselves as well as to the

foreign people. The language is, no doubt, based on the recorded speech of Irish countrymen but from the history of the Celtic languages and from the study of the peculiar features of Gaelic, it appears that Synge has created a dialect of his own, more appropriate to his characters.

In Aran Islands, English was still a second language. But in Synge's plays we find that all the characters speak almost the same dialect, whether they belong to Mayo, or Wicklow or the Aran Islands. Despite the geographical and dialectical differences in real life, the basic syntactic pattern is the same in all the plays. Thus, the language his characters speak, is not the literal imitation of the language in real life, rather it is a literary product out of which Synge has created a world of his imagination, where the speech of the people is essentially poetic.

One more remark of Yeats about Synge's language clearly brings out the significance of his peculiar dialect in the creation of his characters. He says:

"..... if Mr. Synge had been born a countryman, he would have spoken like that. It makes the people of his imagination a little disembodied; it gives them a kind of innocence even in their anger and their cursing. It is part of its maker's attitude towards the world, for while it makes the clash of wills among his persons indirect and dreamy, it helps him to see the subject-matter of his art with wise, clear-seeing, unreflecting eyes; to

preserve the integrity of art in an age of reasons and purposes. Whether he write of old beggars by the roadside, lamenting over the misery and ugliness of life, or of an old Aran woman mourning her drowned sons, or of a young wife married to an old husband, he has no wish to change anything, to reform anything; all these people pass by as before an open window, murmuring strange, exciting words"²⁴.

Thus, Synge's use of his peculiar dialect has enhanced and deepened the vitality of his characters. It is one of the tools in his hand by the aid of which he has achieved a successful characterization. Though the syntactic pattern of his dialect is studied artifact, he uses the actual words, he has heard among the country people. It is very interesting to note how he uses the actual words of the people in his plays for enhancing the reality of his characters. Pat Dirane, the old story-teller of Inishmaan, told Synge a story of unfaithfull wife. He (Pat Dirane) was going to Dublin. Rain started and he took shelter in one house where he saw a dead man laid on the table. The lady of the house asked him.,

'Stranger ,would you be afeared to be alone with himself ?'

'Not a bit in the world, ma'am', says, I, 'he that's dead can do no hurt"²⁵.

The same words are used in The Shadow of the Glen. Nora says, 'Maybe, if you're not easy afeared, you'd stay here a short while alone with himself';

'I would sufely. A man that's deäd can do no hurt"²⁶,
says the Tramp.

This realistic language adds a realistic flavour to the characters. They do not use the unnecessary high sounding phrases or do not exaggerate themselves. Such language makes us feel that the characters are true to themselves. The Tramp, in this play is a fearless man. He is a great wanderer. Moreover, he knows very well that there is no harm in the company of a dead man. Therefore, his short answer strike a note of reality as well as helps us to understand him more closely. He is neither exaggerating his courage nor is he trying to impress Nora. He is totally indifferent towards her and is ready to obey her out of his sense of duty.

The language is basically unfamiliar to the middle-class intellectual urban audience. But Synge has frequently repeated a few constructions in order that it would be comprehensible to the non-Irish audience. For example, the verb 'to be' is used in such a way as to lay stress on meaning rather than on form. The most important words come immediately after the verb 'to be' for example, the Tramp says,

'Is it getting the curse on me you'd be, woman

of the house ?" 27

Further, this style of the verb 'to be' is utilised in forming tenses and moods. For instance, Widow Quin asks, "It was drink may be ?" 28

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Sarah Casey Says,

'Let you be sitting here and keeping a great blaze
..... and let you seem to be working, for it's great love
the like of him have to talk of work' 29.

The words carry the mood and the meaning.
Sometimes they signify much more than the verbal expression. Sometimes the same word express different meanings and different moods. For example, the word 'queer' expresses a variety of moods and meanings. The Tramp says,

'It's a queer look is on him for a man that's dead'.

Nora says, 'He was always queer, stranger; and I x
suppose them that's queer and they living men will be
queer bodies after' 30.

Here, the Tramp wanted to say that it was a
strange thing to look at the dead man. But Nora used the
word 'Queer' to mean that Dan Burke was always
'eccentric'.

Syngeⁿ was interested in the exploitation of such single words. And the situation in which the word is used makes us realize the mood of the character. Some other syntactic features in his plays are noteworthy for the general effect they produce on characterization. For example, the construction 'what way' is used for 'how'. Timmy the smith, for example ,says;

"She's no call to mind what way I look, and I after building a house with four rooms in it above on the hill"³¹

The word 'the way' is used^d for 'so that'. For example, Honor says,

"Look at that, He's been sleeping there in the night. Well, it'll be a hard case if He's gone off now, the way we'll never set our eyes on a man killed his father ,...."³²

From this speech it appears that Honor is very naive. ~~He~~^{She} is excited. ~~He~~ is not willing to lose the opportunity of seeing the man who has killed his (that man's) father. Honor represents the mentality of the people of Mayo. ~~He~~ is neither disgusted nor is ~~she~~ angry with Christy, rather ~~she~~ appreciates his deed as something of the heroic quality.

Some other features of Synge's dialect add a charm to the speech of his characters. At certain places he has

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deliberately distorted the grammatical form of the sentence construction. There is a comprative shortage of common verbs in Gaelic. Synge has very frequently used the prepositions 'on' and 'after' for expressing the emotions of his characters and for expressing the perfect tense respectively. For example Martin Doul says,

".... and I do be thinking it should be a hard thing for the Almighty God to be looking on the world, bad days, and on men the like of yourself walking around on it, and they slipping each way in them muck"³³.

Martin Doul is destroyed with hard work. He curses his eyesight. The people like Timmy the smith do not allow him to beg at the roadside. He feels that the world around him is hard place to live in and that God is also sad seeing the hardships he has to face. He is not happy with his eyesight. He wants to see only the beauty in the nature and is not prepared to face the harsh realities of the world.

/ The preposition 'after' is very skillfully used to express perfect tense. For example, Cathleen says,

"It wa^{sh}~~as~~ Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial, by the grace of God"³⁴.

Such construction creates a poetic mood. His another

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favourite construction is 'the like of' instead of English form 'like', which furthermore adds a poetic flavour to the speech of his characters. For example, Lavarcham says,

"When I was a bit of a girl the big men of Ulster had better manners, and they the like of your three selves, in the top folly of youth" ³⁵.

This grammatically distorted language creates the illusion of simplicity of the lives of the characters. The lack of grammatical precision makes us feel that the language springs from the depth of their heart and that the speakers are naive, true to their own self. The progressive form of the verb used by Synge, emphasises the point of view of the character and attracts our attention to what has been said by him earlier. For example, Cathleen says, "Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you?"³⁶.

Cathleen is anxious about Bartley. Michael is drowned. Therefore she asks Maurya about Bartley. But Maurya is not in a state to listen to anyone. She is almost out of her senses, because she has a vision of Michael. And Cathleen is trying to attract her attention.

The uneducated manner of speech forced the characters towards lyrical eloquence. But some of the characters are to be distinguished as poets in that they express their emotions self-consciously. Christy Mahon, Martin Douli and to a lesser degree the Tramp and Mary

Byrne are the poets. They have a feeling for the language, as it is the only medium of expressing their joy and sorrow and hatred and all other shades of feelings. For example, Martin Doul says,

" Lying down across a sop of straw, and I thinking I was seeing you walk, and hearing the sound of your step on a dry road, and hearing you again, and you laughing and making great talk in a high room with dry timber lining the roof. For it's a fine sound your voice has that time, and it's better I am, I'm thinking, lying down, the way a blind man does be lying, than to be sitting here in the grey light taking hard words of Timmy the smith"³⁷.

There is a dreamy quality to this speech. Martin is a dreamer of dream. His^{love} for Molly makes him a poet. In his poetic mood he raises the most ordinary things like the road and the timber to something most appropriate in the dreamland. In his flights of imagination he transforms the ordinary experience into the poetic experience.

The same dialect is further used to create comic laughter in the theatre. No tricks of speech, such as favourite expressions or distinct linguistic mannerisms - are used by Synge. Rather he has arranged the words in such a manner as to create instinctive laughter. The particular words and the situation in which they are uttered creates a comic laughter in the theatre. For example, in The Shadow of the Glen, Dan Burke comes out

of the sheet. The Tramp is terrified. At that time, Dan Bruke says, "Don't be afeard, stronger; a man that's dead can do no hurt"³⁸.

The same words are used by the Tramp previcusly, when Nora asks him to stay alone in the house. Because he has believed that Dan Burke is dead. But it is not so. Burke is alive. He has heard the Tramp. And, therefore, sa^rcastically he reminds the Tramp that 'the dead man can do no hurt'. He makes fun of the Tramp's courage. The ironic situation in which the words are uttered creates laughter.

But the poetic prose more ably expresses the tragic view of life than the comic vision of life, a melody symbolic of higher and more universal symphony. If the story of Othello were told in plain prose, it would be but a sordid story of a faithful wife, and a de^cceived husband aver^ging his honour. The story of Hamlet would be but a sordid tale of a murdered king and a semi-incestuous attachment. When Iago saw Othello blind with passion, he bursts into poetry;

"Not poppy, nor mandragon^{ci},
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sl^{ee}pp
Which thou owedst yesterday"³⁹.

Though the poetry is not in accord with Iago's

character, it is in accord with the genuine tragic motif, stilling the horror and pain which the ^{ce}same might have aroused in our hearts. Synge has done exactly the same thing with his language in tragedies.¹ In The Ridders to the Sea, Maurya's lamentation strikes a note of universal grief:

"They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me.... I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening"⁴⁰.

The tragic rhythm of her note ~~xxx~~ raises the tragic^c passion to much higher and universal level. Maurya is at peace with the thought that the cause of her grief is over, as there is no living son with her. Now she has nothing to fear about death. Her struggle with death is at last come to an end. But this restrained posture of calmness is only temporary. She is acutely aware of the human sorrow. Though she feels that she has nothing to do with the wrath of nature, the terrible forces in the nature will continue to destroy men. Though she assumes indifference towards the grief of other women, she knows well that the other women will also lost their sons and will be destined to the same grief. Her indifference

towards the grief of other mothers is not real. She is aware of the fact that though her personal struggle is over, the course of life will run the same way and that there will be no end to human sorrows. Therefore, she feels for the other mothers and indirectly laments for all the sons of all the mothers destined to the same grief. Thus, Maurya breaks the bounds of personal sorrow and strikes the note of universal grief. The impersonal quality of her speech thus makes her character human and real.

In the end, it may be said that the language Synge has employed in his plays is rich and living. It attributes to his characters a quality of simplicity and naturalness. The language is powerful enough to express their moods and feelings and thereby ultimately helps the audience or the readers to understand their characters. The language is used not for its own sake but it exploits the intrinsic characteristic traits of the characters which are human and real. In this regard Nicholas Grene's remark is a very appropriate one :

"Unfamiliar constructions and archaic vocabulary may appear superficially picturesque; but at the highest level of Synge's craftsmanship they serve to renew the very springs of meaning"⁴¹.

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V

N A T U R E

Nature plays a significant role in shaping the characters of J.M.Synge. It is not there for its own sake but it is the dominant force^s that determines the actions, moods and fates of the characters. It is the indivisible part of their existence. If cut away from their natural surrounding, the ~~characters~~ characters would lose their identity. The mountains, the sea, the mist, the birds and the animals are not only a source of delight but they stand in close relationship with the people. And this relationship between the man and nature, is mystic as all of them are unconsciously aware of its presence. It is at once a source of their live^{li}hood as well as of destruction. In Synge's plays Nature and man appears to be part of the one and the same existence. In his notes on the Aran Islands, Synge says,

"In Inishmaan one is forced to believe in a sympathy between man and nature"⁴².

It is the natural surrounding that shapes the characters of Synge to a large extent. In Aran, for example, the sea is their adversary, a force mightier than human will and capacity. Men revolt against the sea but are destined to be drowned and the others are broken by it. The force of Nature is too terrible. Maurya has witnessed a number of deaths in her household. She knows the sea intimately. Therefore, a constant mood

of melancholy and depression is cast over her. She ceases to hope against the sea. That is why, she tries her best to prevent Bartley from going to the sea. Her joys and sorrows are closely connected with the sea. Rather, her life is dependent on the sea. She is a mother and wants the security of her sons. But she knows well that it is the sea that takes away her sons from her.

But Bartley must go to the sea as it is the life of a young man to be going on the sea. He cannot avoid the sea and is destined to be drowned. Thus the thoughts and actions of the characters are determined by sea. Their fate also is determined by the sea. The sea become the inseparable part of their existence. They know every movement of the sea. Cathleen baked a cake for "Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara"⁴³. Maurya hopefully thinks that "he won't go this day with ~~day with~~ the wind rising from the south and west"⁴⁴. Nora feels that, "it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's taking from the east"⁴⁵.

The presence of the sea is felt from the beginning till the end of the play. The tragic action initiated by the sea ends with it, Bartley, the only living son of Maurya is drowned. The sea brings about a complete desolution in the life of Nora.¹

The Mountain signifies still another terrible ~~form~~

force in the nature which crushes man's consciousness and denies his being. The hills are to the Wicklow men what the sea is to the Aran islanders, at once their source of livelihood and a potentially terrible enemy. It is that power of the mountain which fills the minds of the characters in The Shadow of the Glen. It creates the sense of loneliness and worthlessness in the minds of the characters and drives them almost on the verge of madness. The truth of this fact can be verified from Synge's account of the man who ran away into the hills and was eaten by the crows. In The oppression of Hills, a Wicklow essay, Synge gives this account ;

".... there was a poor fellow below reaping in the glen, and in the evening he had two glasses of whiskey with some other lads. Then some excitement took him. and he threw off his clothes and ran away into the hills. There was great rain that night , and I suppose the poor creature lost his way, and was the whole night perishing in the rain and darkness. In the morning they found his naked footmarks on some mud half a mile above the road, and again where you go up by a big stone. Then there was nothing known of him till last night, when they found his body on the mountain, and it near eaten by the crows"⁴⁶.

The man can easily be identified with Patch Darcy in The Shadow of the Glen. Patch Darcy also went mad and ran wildly towards the mountain in the great rain

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and the fog. They found him after three days but the corpse was nearly eaten by the crows. The awful mountain cast a shadow of loneliness on their lives. It is further intensified by the mist creating a constant mood of despondency. Nora is almost on the verge of depression due to sense of loneliness. There is no charm in the nature around her. She sees "nothing but the mists rolling down the bog^g, and the mists again and they rolling up the bog, and hearing nothing but the wind crying out in the bits of broken trees were left from the great storm, and the streams roaring with the rain"⁴⁷.

Even the Tramp, who is a great wanderer is afraid of the fearful nature around him. But he is able to be in harmony with Nature. He says, "If myself was easy afeard, I'm felling you, it's long ago I'd have been locked into the Richmond Asylum, or maybe have run up into the back hills with nothing on me but an old shirt and been eaten by the crows the like of patch Darcy..."⁴⁸.

Nature, in Riders to the Sea and The shadow of the Glen plays the role of protagonist. But in other plays it is more friendly and sympathetic. Especially, in The Well of the Saints, nature is the familiar companion and a source of joy and comfort to the characters. The hills and the bushes, the sweet and cool air are their companions. Martin and Mary Dougl and all other characters look on the nature more with joy than with awe. For them, nature is the God's glory,

the divine blessing and the incarnation of God's love. The saint restores Martin and Mary Doul's eyesight with the divine power of the water of the 'Well of the Saints'. But when Martin sees the ugly and wrinkled face of Mary, he ~~hmmwx~~ bursts into anger. At that time, the Saint invites them to look "on the splendour of the Spirit of God"⁴⁹. Further, he assures them that they will see it "an odd time shining out through the big hills, and steep streams falling to the Sea"⁵⁰.

The Saint thinks that if they look on the nature's glory, they will not be minding the faces of men, but will be saying prayers and praises to God. It comes out true Martin comes to know that beautiful faces do not bear sympathetic hearts. Therefore, when once again they are restored to blissful state of blindness, they find comfort and consolation in the nature around them. Mary Doul hears gaily the sound of the twittering yellow birds coming from beyond the sea in the springtime and hopes that,

"there'll be a find^e warmth now in the sun, and a sweetness in the air, the way it'll be a grand thing to be sitting here quiet and easy, smell^{ing} the things growing up, and budding from the earth"⁵¹.

Martin feels at ease with the smell of the furze on the hill. He takes delight in the sound of the lambs of Grianan, mixed up in the great noise of the river flowing in the glen.

The saint comes again to cure their eyesight the second time. But Martin is not willing to have their eyesight restored. He implores the Saint to leave them at peace, at the crossing of the roads. The saint is surprised and says that he has never heard of any person having no joy "to be looking on the earth, and the image of the Lord thrown upon men"⁵². Further he asserts that Martin is mad as he has no wish to see,

'the grand glittering seas, and the furze' and 'the hills shining as if it was fine creels of gold they were, rising to the sky'⁵³.

But the saint is mistaken in his worship of Nature. The relationship between man and nature is subtle one. For the appreciation of the nature's beauty and glory, the heart must be beautiful. The incarnation of God's love can not be seen but be felt in the depths of heart. Martin is right when he says,

"..... it's ourselves had finersights than the like of them..... till we'd be looking up in our own minds into a grand sky, and seeing lakes, and big rivers, and find hills for taking the plough"⁵⁴.

Nature is neither a blind force nor an unfeeling entity, a static background in the lives of men. Nature is a living entity. It manifests its vivid powers and

moods in the life of man. Men and nature are so intimately related that the very moods and powers of nature shape the moods and destinies of men. The Tinker's Wedding exemplifies how the nature shapes the character of men. The tinkers are the vagrants, wandering from place to place. The nature's freedom from all artificial norms enters their being and they are free, fearless and powerful men. They work in the open air in the day and sleep in the ditches in the dark night, by the roadside. The hills are their natural abode. The birds are for their music instead of concert halls. The great winds, the streams and the hills are their companions. The power of the hills makes them stout and sturdy and violent. The hills are deeply rooted in their memory. Sarah is tired of walking up and down the hills but the very freedom of nature makes her romantic in the springtime, "... when there is a bit of sun in it, and a kind air, and a great smell coming from the thorn-trees..."⁵⁵

The romantic mood of the nature is further developed in Deirdre of the Sorrows. Deirdre, the beauty that has no equal, has been brought up and schooled in the company of nature. Moreover, "she is used to every track and pathway, and the lightning itself wouldn't let down its flame to singe the beauty of her like"⁵⁶ Nature is an intimate part of the life and the speech of the characters in this play. The people are the direct descendants from that older natureworship where men swore by "the sun and moon and the whole earth," and called upon "the air to bless them, and water and the wind, the sea, and all the hours of the ...85...

sun and moon." 57

For Naisi and his brothers the woods are their natural abode of joy. The power of the deep woods endow them with that courage which defy the fear of death. Deirdre has the same power of defiance. She says,

" I'm a long while in the woods with my own self; and I 'm in little dread of death..." 58

The characters ~~from~~^{of} the part of nature itself. Their imagery is drawn in terms of nature. Fergus argues that Naisi will grow weary of the woods in Alban and of Deirdre. Naisi accepts the truth but he would not leave it for Emain. He says, " I've had dread, I tell you, dread winter and summer, and the autumn and the springtime, even when there's a bird in every bush making his own stir till the fall of night; but this talk's brought me ease, and I see we're as happy as the leaves on the young trees, and we'll be so ever and always, though we'd live the age of the eagle and the Salmon and the crow ~~eagle~~ of Britain." 59

Nature, in this play, is a half-human, sympathetic power. Nevertheless, it plays the part of the poetic protagonist.

Sometimes, nature is indifferent and does not directly influence men. Still, its presence is felt at the level of unconscious mind. And, of course, there is no escape from nature as there can be no existence apart from it. This idea is brought forth in The Playboy of the Western World. The play is set in North - West Mayo, within the sight of the sea and of Nephin, a great mountain. The rain-washed air cast a melancholic mood on

the people. The characters meet inside the public house but nature is always present in the background of their minds. Their being inside the public-house is a temporary condition as their minds, are engrossed with their surrounding circumstances. They carry with them the memories of the sea-shore and of the shallow sands, the river and the stepping stones.' They are mindful of the power of darkness and the silence broken by the ^breathing of sleeping cows. Christy, remembers the distant place from where he has come, a windy corner of high, distant hills. His feelings for that windy corner of high hills are real. It is there he was sporting in the dark night poaching rabbits on hills. He says,

" and there I'd be as happy as the sunshine of St. Martin's Day, watching the light passing the north or the patches of fog, till I'd hear a rabbit starting to screech and I'd go running in the furze. Then, when I'd my full share, I'd come walking down where you'd see the ducks and ^{and} geese stretched sleeping on the ^highway of the road..."⁶⁰

Synge's love for nature is great. But in his plays, we see that nature is not a mere background and that the natural beauty is not merely one of many forms of beauty. It is an actor, recognized by the other human actors, a part of the one and the same creation.

(Chapter II)

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