

Introduction

Literature is the expression of the life of an individual and the society around him. The thoughts of an individual are seen through language in the form of literature. Literature and life are connected in an intimate way, which is dynamic. Even ordinary books become literature when they bring us into some relation with real life. Literature gets a universal appeal only when it is not just fantasy but goes beyond it by relating itself to life. The primary value of literature is its human significance and so literature should consist of the many events of life put together. Its value depends on the depth and breadth of the life that it paints. Literature is great because of its universality as it does not deal with the particular society of a particular community but rather with society as a whole or in its entirety. Literature changes according to the social changes that happen in history and so one can read the literature of a particular time in history in order to understand the life style of those people. Human personification and attitude towards life are related with their time and age. Human and moral values are changing according to their time and age. What was valuable two hundred years ago is now ignored, what will be ignored two hundred years later is very valuable now. But, literature portrays everything realistically. The characters depicted in the literature are the sample pieces of real human beings of its time. To understand the unique features and common manners of a society at a particular time, going through the characters and society depicted by the literature of the time is enough.

The readers try to understand the forces behind these social changes by reading literature. The value of literature depends on the extent to which it has been able to

express the changing circumstances of social life. Literature cannot be limited to any one genre and any work of art which reflects life and if human beings are able identify themselves with the characters in that piece of work then it becomes great literature. Literature becomes the vehicle of the thoughts and feelings of the common man and the working people only if it is free from its class limitations, and then it tends to become popular and public.

Literature should draw the attention of the people to the emerging truths of life and should lead the people forward to an elevated level of life and thought. Literature therefore must release the mind from its limitations; arouse it to a consciousness of the dynamic urge of life. It is a well-known fact that literature reflects the society and it portrays the good values and the ills of that particular society. Literature plays the important part of correcting the society by mirroring its bad values. At the same time it also acts as a harbinger of good values through which the readers can learn and follow. Literature is an imitation of human action, and it often presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society. Literature portrays human life and action through some characters and those characters by their words and actions communicate certain messages for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. Literature cannot leave out the attitudes, morale and values of the society, since no writer has been brought up completely ignorant of the happenings of the world around him. The character and theme for the literature are taken from the real life characters and society of its time. Writers carry the real-life events in their society into fiction and present them to the society as a mirror with which people can look at themselves and make amends wherever necessary. Literature is different from other works of art because each reader takes something

different from what the author wrote. It is human nature that each person interprets experiences differently. It could be what the reader likes or it could be the personal opinion of the reader that the reader takes from what the author wrote.

Literature is a reflection of the human experience because it allows people to look back on their memories and they can relive the memory or experience through words. Literature also allows people to share human experiences through descriptions in their words and allows people to learn through people's experiences. By reading the literature of various societies human beings are able to learn lessons from the life of other people because they can see through other people's thoughts and memories. Thus, literature is not only a reflection of the society but also serves as a corrective mirror in which members of the society can look at themselves and find the need for a positive change.

English literature is not only the literature of England alone but all the literatures that are written in the English language. Each human being belongs to his race and age and the spirit of his race and age find expression through his writings. English Literature has in store a number of works of the great literary legends of the English people. If ordinary history is a nation's biography then its literature can be considered as its autobiography. English literature should be studied according to the chronological order of history. Drama was first introduced to England from Europe by the Romans. At first the plays were adapted from folk tales that re-told old stories, and the actors travelled from town to town performing these for their audiences in return for their money and hospitality. The medieval mystery plays and morality plays, which dealt with Christian themes, were performed at religious festivals. The period of the early British Drama was

known as the English Renaissance during which poetry and drama flourished under the able patronage of Elizabeth I. William Shakespeare from Stratford-upon-Avon, who is considered as the most famous playwright in the world wrote plays that are still performed in theatres across the world even today. He was himself an actor and deeply involved in the running of the theatre company that performed his plays. Other important playwrights of this period include Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and John Webster. The three types of plays that seem most often studied today are the histories, the comedies, and the tragedies. The English Renaissance paved the way for the sudden dominance of drama in English society. Richard Farr Diertrich in *British drama 1890 to 1950 Critical History* comments thus:

A renaissance is a period of enlightenment. The original Renaissance was awakened to the long-lost past of the Greeks and Romans—its chief reality was that of ancient truth rediscovered, as, for example, the way Aristotelian principles were henceforth applied to drama. In contrast, the modern age, guided by science to be irreverent toward the past and skeptical of received truth (as the maverick Galileo had been skeptical of Aristotle), thought of itself as more concerned with present reality, especially awakening to physical reality, since it could be empirically verified. (13)

This was followed by the restoration period where William Congreve was one of the major contributors to this era. The eighteenth century saw the emergence of two major Irish dramatists, Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who were two of the

most successful playwrights on the London stage in the 18th century. When the Irish Literary Theatre was established a remarkable change was seen in the history of the Irish theatre. The Irish Literary Theatre later became the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in the year 1899. “There is no Irish literature without history. There is no Irish history without literature. Our understanding of twentieth-century Ireland is without doubt on a cultural basis. One can explore Irish Theatre by studying the historical, political, social and cultural contexts of Ireland” <<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/79664891/irish-literature>>.

The Irish drama has been a continuous movement, from its beginnings in 1899 to the present day and it has shown constant development.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, there was a stronger move to an Irish “identity,” not only in Ireland, but in the countries where Irish emigrants had settled and made their mark. Ireland is a country that has produced some of the greatest of English language plays of the past two centuries. The Irish talent for storytelling goes back to its Gaelic roots and has remained constantly in the life of a culture that has passed down this art form for centuries. The immediate and accessible way to document observations and ideas about Irish Theatre can be done only through its Gaelic roots. The history of this theatre is well documented, and its importance can be seen from the list of writers whose plays were first performed here in the early days of the 20th century. These included W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, John Millington Synge, George Moore, and Sean O'Casey. Ireland has made a large contribution to world literature in all its branches though it is a comparatively small island. Irish literature includes works that are both in the Irish and English languages. The island's most widely-known literary works are in English.

Particularly famous examples of such works are those of James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, and Ireland's four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature; William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney. Ireland's oldest literary traditions are found in the Irish language and it is referred to simply as “Irish”. The Irish have the third oldest literature in Europe after Greek and Latin. The strong oral traditions of legends and poetry have helped much in the development of English Literature in Ireland and it is unique from that of the other countries. Moreover, the interaction between the two languages has resulted in an English dialect, Hiberno-English that lends a distinctive syntax and music to the literature written in it.

Before discussing Synge's works it is necessary to study about Irish Literature especially Irish Drama in order to fully understand the depth of meaning that one finds in Synge's plays. Synge was an active member of the Irish Dramatic Movement. One of the most important developments of the modern theatre was the rise of the Irish Drama. Irish writing in the English language is called Anglo-Irish Literature to distinguish it from classical English literature on the one side and literature in the Irish Language on the other. Ireland made no contribution to the stage in modern times until the last decade of the nineteenth century. Then it roused itself in response to nationalistic urges and gave the world the Abbey Theatre. The Irish playwrights had the opportunity to give new life to drama by combining romanticism and realism. W. B. Yeats's contribution lies in his successful efforts as one of the creators of poetic drama. At this juncture, a brief history of Irish Drama is needed as it is essential for the course of this research. The Irish became fully literate with the arrival of Christianity in the fifth century. The earliest Irish

literature consisted of original lyric poetry and different versions of ancient prose tales. The earliest poetry was composed in the sixth century and often portrayed a vivid religious faith or described the world of nature. In the years before the rise of the Irish Literary Theatre, the Dublin stage was in many ways a kind of local English stage. The people of Dublin who went to the theatre depended heavily on English Drama and followed the traditions of the English stage. According to Una Ellis Fermour in *Irish Dramatic Movement*:

For both these reasons, the English and the Irish stage are closely related, the Irish dependent upon the English at the beginning of the story, the English indebted in less definite but more fruitful way to the Irish movement down to the present day. The dramatic history of the two countries is in many ways one at the outset and the story of the Irish development can only be understood in its full significance if we remind ourselves of the common drama up to that development of the date in England. (Fermour 19)

Ibsen and Arthur Henry Jones were a very strong influence during this period. Through most of this long history, Dublin and nearby towns had theaters, but the plays and the players were almost always English in origin or influence.

The many Irish-born or Irish-raised playwrights of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as Congreve, Farquhar, Steele, Goldsmith, Sheridan, etc. were mainly London men who wrote of London subjects, though their plays had a certain satiric edge to them characteristic of outsiders who saw things more objectively than the natives. In the

nineteenth century Boucicault “wrote plays on Irish subjects, but their basis was a lovable, patriotic ‘stage Irishman’ whose charming but sentimental buffoonery rather compromised the ambitions of the nationalistic Irish to free themselves of such stereotyping” (Fermour 20). Later on Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw let the world know about the dramatic genius that could be produced out of Ireland. They did not have a theatre in their native country and so they were forced to immigrate to London in order to thrive. Ireland’s two brilliant writers went to London to create modern drama there but they did not care to preserve the Irishness in their works. As Fermour comments, “Shaw wrote a few plays based on Irish matters, with *John Bull’s Other Island* brilliantly satirizing English misconceptions about Ireland, but these plays were sidelights to his main effort, and Wilde wrote nothing specifically Irish at all”(Fermour 20). W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory felt the need for the Irish Dramatic Movement as Irish writers were slowly losing their identities. The hope for political independence died when Charles Stewart Parnell died in 1891. This resulted in loss of interest in politics in general and led some of the young men of Ireland to turn to cultural matters and a search for national identity in the literature and art of the past. Richard Farr Dietrich in his *British Drama 1890 to 1950- A Critical History* says as follows:

An elite formed various societies that concerned themselves with the revival of the old Gaelic language and the folklore and customs of Ireland’s pre-Christian heroic age: Yeats and his friends formed the Irish Literary Society of London in 1891 and the National Literary Society in Dublin in 1892, and Douglas Hyde, after lecturing that Society in 1892 on ‘The

Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland,' formed the Gaelic League in 1893.

(14)

Yeats was a leader in the general Irish Renaissance, and was instrumental in the development of a national theater. He published his first play, *The Countess Cathleen*, in 1892, and in 1896 Yeats along with Lady Gregory started the Irish Literary Theatre and they were soon joined by Edward Martyn and George Moore.

Lady Augusta Gregory was the widow of a diplomat. After her husband's death, she cycled round the villages near her Galway home collecting on paper the folk-tales the people could still recite from memory. She filled books with them and wrote plays in "Kiltartanese" the English spoken by these Irish whose first language was Gaelic. George Russell popularly known as A.E. also joined them and later on the Irish Literary Society was reborn as the Irish National Theatre Society. Yeats strongly believed that the plays of their society could only be written in a language which lives among the people. It has to be a language spoken by the people but the Irish language had its own limitations. So the next best option was to write the plays in English. According to Fermour, "The only way then to give the ideal actuality was to use a form of English which had somehow escaped contamination, and this, for Ireland, meant the language of the Irish-speaking people of the west, when they translated their native syntax and imagery into English; for to them, though they were nearly bilingual in both, English was generally the second language" (70). An appeal was given to all Irish Dramatists to join their society and J.M. Synge joined them as a young and enthusiastic writer. He was very much encouraged by Yeats

and the other writers which gave him confidence to write plays which were good enough to be staged in front of an Irish audience. Fermour comments thus:

Synge is the only great poetic dramatist of the movement; the only one, that is, for whom poetry and drama were inseparable, in whose work dramatic intensity invariably, finds poetic expression and the poetic mood its only full expression dramatic form... But it is hard to imagine this separation in Synge; poetic and dramatic expression in him are one and simultaneous, as they appear to have been with Shakespeare and with Webster, in whom the presence of a high degree of one mood meant the presence of a high degree of the other, whether the form were prose or verse, the matter comedy or tragedy. (163)

John Millington Synge was one of the most brilliant discoveries of the Irish Literary Renaissance. The plays of Irish peasant life on which his fame rests were written in the last six years of his life. The first two one-act plays, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, (1903), a comedy, and *Riders to the Sea* (1904), considered to be one of the finest tragedies ever written, were produced by the Irish National Theatre Society. This group, with Synge, Yeats and Lady Gregory as co-directors, organized in 1904 the famous Abbey Theatre. Two comedies, *The Well of the Saints* (1905) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), were presented by the Abbey players. The latter play created uproar of resentment among Irish patriots stung by Synge's bitter humour. Synge's later works included *The Tinker's Wedding*, published in 1908 but not produced for fear of further riots, and

Deirdre of the Sorrows, a tragedy unfinished at the time of his death but presented by the Abbey players in 1910.

As more writers joined the society, Yeats and Lady Gregory felt the need for a theatre of their own and thus the Abbey theatre was founded. The Abbey Theatre was founded in 1903 by Yeats and Lady Gregory. Its precursors were the Irish Literary Theatre and National Dramatic Society of the Fay brothers. With patronage from Miss. Annie Horniman, who was a middle-class Englishwoman with previous experience of theatre production, premises were purchased on Old Abbey Street and on December 27th 1904, the Abbey Theatre opened its doors for the first time. Horniman supplied the funds for a small Dublin playhouse which she rebuilt and presented to the company. Thus, the Abbey Theatre became the permanent home of this company. The assembled talent of writers, actors and directors was formidable and within a few years the Abbey was one of the world's most famous theatres.

The Abbey was a unique establishment as all of its actors were mostly amateurs with no training in the professional theatre, and its playwrights were mainly literary figures, not dramatists whose experience had been totally confined to writing drama. The Abbey was also concerned with the creation of the folk-play in a time when the fashion was for realism. The Abbey ranks as one of the most influential and successful national theatres in European history. From 1904 to the present time, it has been faithfully producing plays, by Irish writers some of whom have been ranked as one among the greatest of the era. Besides Synge, Bernard Shaw, Lady Gregory, Yeats, Sean O'Casey and Brian Friel are among the many who have contributed greatly to the reputation of the

Abbey. Yeats felt that the plays should talk about the life round them but it should be rendered poetically. In the creation of poetic drama W.B. Yeats played a major role. He wanted to create a drama which would move the hearts and minds of men in such a way that they would leave the theatre with a new understanding of their nature and fate. The poetic drama should be a living, not a literary thing; and in Yeats' opinion living poetry could be found in the speech of the Irish peasant and his fondness for the heroic and domestic in legend and daily life.

Drama should be chosen to give Ireland a constantly artistic conscience. In Yeats's opinion, the dramatist should picture life in action, with an unpreoccupied mind, as the musician pictured it in sound and the sculptor in form. An action, taken out of all other actions should be reduced to its simplest form, or at any rate to as simple a form as it could be brought to without the audience's losing the sense of its place in the world. Moreover, the characters involved in the action should be freed from everything that was not a part of that action.

<<http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/13/1185/13697.pdf>>

More than any other writer, Synge may be said to have been the creation of the Abbey theatre. Yeats describes in one of his autobiographies how he met Synge in Paris, supplementing a small private income by giving English lessons and translating French poems into Anglo-Irish dialect. He advised Synge to return to his country, learn Irish, and write plays for a new theatre. Synge followed his advice and thus a great dramatist was born. "The minor dramatist echoes his age but the dramatist of genius is one who stands

outside his age or creates his age. Synge came close to creating an age in Ireland. He changed the shape of Irish dramatic writing and showed Ireland to the world through his creative revelation” <<http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/13/1185/13697.pdf>>. Synge also became a popular dramatic because:

he was not much interested in digging up the folklore past, especially for its own sake, but rather was fascinated by the life of a particular flesh-and-blood people, a life somehow retaining some of the simple nobility of an earlier peasant culture, one we call “primitive” but one Synge felt was fundamentally more civilized than modern bourgeois society. (Dietrich16)

The present study is done on the literature of Ireland which is well-known for the works of great authors like Yeats, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. The author taken up for this particular research is J.M.Synge. His greatness lies in the fact that he has brought about the essence of Ireland and its people in all his works. One of the main aims of the researcher is to focus on the unique ‘Irishness’ found in Synge’s works. It is very difficult to understand ‘Irishness’. How do we understand Irishness? When it has so often been written by others, including the English who ruled part of the Irish Ireland for a century? What does it mean to be Irish? The English ruled part of Ireland for a century and so the Irish people faced the problems of language, national identity and representation. Ireland is separated from England by the sea; the two islands are connected by a linguistic umbilical cord, the English language. Linguistic dilemma is faced by every writer and the claim to authentic representation of Ireland largely depended upon an extensive use of Irish speech.

When one analyses why Synge is such a popular Irish dramatist, we find that Synge in all his plays speaks of his own experience of Ireland. Synge's distinguished biographer David Greene concludes thus:

Whether he was dramatizing a tragic fact or incident of violence in contemporary Irish life, exploring the applications of ancient folktale or heroic myth, or merely describing in unpretentious language the daily life of the tinker, the farmer or the fisherman he was interpreting the traditional life of Ireland. It is to him more than to any other Irishman writing in English that we go for an insight to his life. (34)

Synge as one who lives among the people grows to be one of them, identifies entirely with them, and voices their thoughts and emotions, and interprets their every movement. J. M. Synge, no doubt, is one of the greatest playwrights not only of Ireland but also of the entire world who loves to read literature in English. John Millington Synge, a lover of nature grew up in the unblemished natural surroundings of the city of Dublin. The dominance of nature is found in all his major works and his writing has a lot of intensity and boasts of multiple layers of meaning which the researcher is compelled to dwell into more deeply. Synge in his treatment of nature focuses his attention on man and his interconnectedness with nature. He merges the force of nature into man's destiny in all his works and the final outcome is an extraordinary blend of man and nature. As a child he was very lonely and his only companion was the unspoiled nature of Dublin which he grew to admire and revere. He has often been described as a man who responds to the

voice of nature rather than that of man. Daniel Corkery in his *Synge and Anglo Irish Literature* says that:

Synge's attitude to the countryside was not that of a man who are grown up in it, had owned land are worked on it. It is rather that of the naturalist, of the city child who from an early age is fascinated by nature. The average 'country man' - that is, the man who actually works on the land - is frequently indifferent to the aesthetic effects of landscape except at some sub conscious level. It is the sportsman, the angler or bird watcher, those who contact with the country is in the nature of a holiday or escape, who most appreciates natural phenomena in the aesthetic sense. (57)

This obsession with his surrounding is the one thing that differentiates him from other Irish dramatists. Synge is the only writer who has been faithful to the land of Ireland in all his works. George Moore in *Hail and Farewell* comments that, "Irish men have written well before Synge, but they have written well by casting of Ireland: but here was a man inspired by Ireland, a country that had not inspired any art since the tenth or twelfth century, a country to which it was fatal to return" (Greene 17).

The Synge family came to Ireland in the seventeenth century from England and John Millington Synge was born on 1871 at Newtown Little near Rathfarnham, a suburban village in Co. Dublin to an Anglo Irish Family who were all closely associated with churches as they were descendants of Bishop Edward Synge. J. M. Synge's father, John Hatch Synge, the younger brother of the owner of Glenmore Castle in County Wicklow was a Dublin barrister who had inherited a small estate in County Galway. Synge's father

later married the daughter of the church of Ireland rector in County Cork. His ancestors included Bishops and canons and missionaries. John Hatch Synge was a modest thoughtful man who preferred the quiet home life. Synge's mother Kathleen Traill was an evangelical protestant who inculcated in her son, strict Christian values and the fear of God right from his childhood. The Synges usually went into holy orders in the church of Ireland. They were prominent people as landowners and clerics of the established church. Though the Synges were a large and well-known County Wicklow family, they were not of pure Irish origin. Maurice Bourgeois in *John Millington Synge and The Irish Theatre* claims as follows:

They were said to be descended from the Millingtons of Millington Hall, Cheshire (near Knutsford, now a farm-house), who afterwards settled at Bridgnorth, Salop. The surname Synge was originally a kind of nickname or by-name : according to tradition, John Millington, a “ canon” or precentor of the Chapel Royal, sang so sweetly that King Henry VIII bade him take the name of Sing or Synge.(3)

Synge was born in Ireland but he was not a true-born Irishman because of the constant intermarriage of races, which has taken place in Ireland more than anywhere else in those days. His father died of small pox the year after he was born on April 13, 1872, when Synge was quite a small child and so did not affect his upbringing in any way. Synge's mother came to live at Orwell Park, Rathgar about a mile nearer to Dublin which became his home until 1890. He was educated at private schools in Dublin and studied piano, flute, violin, music theory and counterpoint at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Synge was a sickly child and so he studied at home with a private tutor till he went to college. He was a talented student and attended Trinity College where he studied Irish and Hebrew. In 1892 Synge was awarded a B.A degree by Trinity College, Dublin. His interest in the Irish language got him the Irish prize the same year. The Gaelic league was founded in the following year and Synge's enthusiasm for the language deepened. He first travelled to Germany where he struggled to perfect his musical technique, but turned to literature and settled in Paris in 1895. There he studied Breton culture in the classes and writings of Anatole le Braz whose methods he later developed while writing *The Aran Islands*. In childhood Synge was afflicted by respiratory complaints but loved to walk and cycle in the Dublin and Wicklow hills where the family passed its annual holidays. He was a keen naturalist and he began to study the writings of the evolutionist Charles Darwin and slowly drifted away from his strict Christian upbringing. Reading Darwin coincided with a crisis of faith and Synge abandoned his Protestant religion. From an early age he was fascinated by nature. He can be compared to Wordsworth in his taste for the countryside and it is seen in the imagery and description of all his plays. Bourgeois comments thus:

Natural history was undoubtedly what attracted him most. From a boy he joined the Dublin Naturalist's Field Club, acquiring a very fair knowledge of botany and mineralogy, and he is said to have delighted in taking long walks through the country, generally alone, and studying the habits and ways of every living thing. His knowledge of ornithology was especially remarkable. He knew the note and plumage of every bird, and

when and where they were to be found. He had a number of uncanny tricks of speaking to animals and calling them to him. (8)

Later on he developed a fondness for music, French and German Literature. How he himself evolved into a remarkable dramatist is discussed in the third chapter in a detailed manner. Here the researcher would like to dwell more on Synge's biographical details which are intimate and of unpleasant nature in order for the reader to understand "the harsh and pessimistic imagination associated with Synge's name" (Bourgeois, 27). After two of his visits to Paris, Synge went to Italy and then came back to Paris where in the year 1897 he underwent a surgery. A glandular swelling was removed during the operation and he was very weak. His friends in Paris nursed him back to health for which he was very grateful. During his stay in the hospital and while he was sick he wrote *Under Ether* which gives a vivid account of his experiences during the operation. Even while Synge was sick he used to labour for long hours on his writings. Synge was found to be a perfectionist and used to rewrite umpteen numbers of times till he got the desired result. "He was so slow and painstaking that he could not turn out an article within a given time. He would labour for months at a sentence because it happened to have the same balance or the same ending as another. He was over- scrupulous about the choice of his adjectives" (Bourgeois 31). However after the final version arrived he religiously stuck to it and refused to alter any part of the play even when he faced problems in plays like *Playboy of the Western World* and *Tinker's Wedding*.

Obviously Synge did not earn much for his writings and most often he was supported by his mother who provided him with a small annuity. Synge was not much

bothered about money because he did not care for the luxuries of life nor did he want to lead the pompous life of an artist. Synge was a very simple man who dressed himself in practical clothes which suited him. Bourgeois states the following:

Synge was always very plainly dressed, wearing a celluloid collar and heavy boots, and generally muffled up in a white neckerchief and a long black cape, while his broad-brimmed slouch hat... These garments he wore solely for convenience' sake : he said he had come to Paris " to be quiet and wear dirty clothes if he liked" ; and although he found some picturesqueness in the berets or sombreros, velveteen coats, brigands' cloaks, fancy-dress costumes and streaming hair of the green-faced decadents, he strongly disliked their feminine affectation, ... (33).

He cooked his own meals even while he stayed at Aran in primitive conditions where he had to light his own fire. Synge was not much of a drinker but only drank thin tea and occasionally smoked cigarettes which he himself had rolled. He regularly went to concerts, cafes and theatre where he met like-minded friends with whom he enjoyed having serious conversations and debates. Synge went to Germany to pursue a career in music but found that he was not entirely suitable for a profession in music. So in 1894 Synge moved back to Ireland for a short time and then to Paris to study literature and language at the Sorbonne University. In 1896, Synge visited Italy to study language before returning to Paris.

Later that same year Synge met William Butler Yeats who recognized his talent and encouraged him to live in the Aran Islands for a while and then return to Dublin to

devote himself to creative work. In May 1898 he visited Inishmore, largest of the Aran islands and stayed two weeks before moving on to Inishman, where the use of Gaelic was more widespread. His purpose was to learn the language and to study the life and culture of the islands. Synge returned to Aran in the summers of 1899, 1900, 1901, and 1902 spending about eighteen weeks there. Later Synge visited the districts of Connemara and Mayo as well as the West Kerry which further enriched his knowledge of the west, but he did not give up his residence in Paris till 1903. After his first visit in 1898, Synge spent five consecutive summers on the islands collecting stories and folklore. All through his life Synge spent alternate periods in urban and rural environments. In the years between 1895 and 1902 he spent his winters in Paris and summers in Ireland. He was right to claim that he knew the Irish countryside but he did not know it as an Irish countryman. He took with him the knowledge of his Parisian education, but found in Aran the means of transforming academic knowledge into a living, felt reality. According to Dietrich

Synge immersed himself in the life of the Aran Isles, listening to the stories of the *schanachie* (Irish storytellers who were inheritors of a long oral tradition), gaining respect for the persistence of these people in the face of unceasing hardship and danger, and meditating on how this particular life was connected to the cosmos and universal human experience, finding many parallels between the ancient myths, legends, and fables of other lands and those of the Aran Isles. Though he could speak Irish, Synge was more impressed with the natives' blending of English and Irish into a living national tongue, and it was this dialect,

synthesized with the dialect of West Kerry peasants he later visited and the Kiltartan dialect Lady Gregory introduced him to, that formed the richly musical prose dialogue of most of his plays. (16)

Synge drew upon ancient customs and belief that still persisted in the countryside to develop his plot of his plays. He knew Europe, its cosmopolitan culture and its peasant life. This insight into Irish life and his record of his experiences in his prose writings are very valuable as they throw light upon the plays and on Synge as a person. In his youth Synge devoted himself to understanding his surroundings in Dublin and County Wicklow. He took advantage of the opportunities to study Irish history and nature. The notebooks and diaries that he kept in his childhood days show his keen interest on the different forms of life around him. He had a large collection of pets, and by his sixteenth year he knew every turn and crevice of the fields and mountains near Dublin. Though Ireland forms a part of the British Isles the Irish have never really formed a part of the British nation. Race, religion, history, and the social and economical developments have all helped to keep the two peoples distinct. The only native culture which Ireland possessed was the ancient Gaelic civilisation. Ireland became Christian in the fifth century and the golden age of Gaelic culture lasted from the seventh to the twelfth century. The language declined steadily under the British occupation and by the first half of the nineteenth century Irish has ceased to exist as a language for the educated. However, the language has had considerable influence on speaking and writing in English. Synge wrote nothing in the Irish language but the English he used derived its peculiar quality from being frequently a direct translation of Gaelic idiom. He used

Anglo-Irish the kind of English spoken in Ireland first of all by the conquerors and settlers from Britain and later native Irish alongside their Gaelic.

Synge was a superb artist who acquired extreme sensitivity to the nuances of common life and most of his work provided a fusion of reality and imagination. In the Preface to *The Tinker's Wedding* Synge expresses his views on drama in these words:

The drama is made serious not by the degree in which it is taken up with problems that are serious in themselves, but by the degree in which it gives the nourishment, not very easy to define, on which our imaginations live. We should not go to the theatre as we go to a chemist's or dram-shop, but as we go to a dinner where the food we need is taken with pleasure and excitement. This was always nearly so in Spain and England and France when the drama was at its richest – the infancy and decay of the drama tend to be didactic – but in these days the playhouse is too often stocked with drugs of many seedy problems, or with the absinth or vermouth of the last musical comedies. (Preface, *Tinkers* 177)

While it was Lady Gregory who had brought peasant drama and local colour to the stage, Synge was the artist who turned peasant drama into universal drama. He proved that there is an English-language literature that is essentially Irish. Synge translated many Irish works to English and found that if Irish is translated word for word it sounded very poetic and closely resembled the Hiberno-English speech of the native Irish with the same pattern of metaphor and syntax. Synge's greatest distinction, "the thing that gives an acquaintance with him its particular flavour, is his wonderful language, which pleases

us not as a heightened form of a language we ourselves use but as a picturesque deviation from it” (Bourgeois 30). Two things support each other; the setting of Irish character, atmosphere and speech is itself exotically attractive, and it is made more so, pointedly so, by Synge’s exquisite and subtle handling of the imaginative peasant language he discovered in the west. *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* states as follows:

In these English versions Synge attended to the distinctive codes and rhythms of Irish and drawing also upon the persistence in Hiberno-English of Gaelic speech patterns he forged his uniquely bi-lingual dramatic language. He made his dramatic techniques ‘Irish’ as he said, using that word in its fullest significance and deliberately referring to the languages of Ireland, Irish and Hiberno-English. (Welch and Stewart 549)

Synge created a language which was more vital than either English or Irish by implementing and developing Hiberno-English. Synge achieves this fusion of the language based on the actual speech of rural Irish people.

All the characters of Synge talk alike in spite of hailing from different areas. Synge thought that since his plays were going to be staged in Irish national theatre his plays ought to be written in English to appeal to a larger audience and so Synge wrote his plays in English modeled on the Gaelic of national Ireland. This Gaelic influence gives special distinction to Synge’s plays and makes them unique when compared to all other Irish plays. According to Bourgeois

Synge’s dialect, therefore, is not the actual Anglo-Irish dialect. It is too Irish. An adequate rendering of Gaelic into English does not make peasant

speech. Here again we detect Synge's habitual process of communication. 'Literariness' creeps in his language, is crammed and supersaturated with fantastical, overwrought 'strings of gab' borrowed from Irish. Even when he is not actually translating Gaelic he seems to exaggerate the co-efficient of Hibernicism. (228)

Synge's Anglo-Irish, though artificial, possesses a literary value as it has a particular rhythm. Synge was bent on reproducing the peasant speech in its original form and his musical background has helped him to a considerable extent. The only native culture which Ireland possessed was the ancient Gaelic civilisation. Ireland became Christian in the fifth century and the golden age of Gaelic culture lasted from the seventh to the twelfth century. The language declined steadily under the British occupation and by the first half of the nineteenth century Irish has ceased to exist as a language for the educated. However the language has had considerable influence on speaking and writing in English. Synge wrote nothing in the Irish language but the English he used derived its peculiar quality from being frequently a direct translation of Gaelic idiom. Ronald Peacock in his article "*Synge's Idiom*" in *The Poet in the Theatre* utters these words:

The exotic appeal of Synge's work can scarcely be exaggerated; and it is another aspect of his romantic and lyrical character. I think there can be no doubt that Synge himself experienced the language and life he found in the Aran Islands as something rare and strange, beautiful because of its unsophisticated, remote, elemental. It awoke the artist in him as Paris had not been able to do, because he was a romantic. And in this Synge is a

pure artist, without any admixture of the political intentions that have always to be reckoned with in Yeats and other adherence of the Celtic renaissance. (101)

In the Preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* Synge says that he has used a number of phrases used by the herds and fishermen along the coast from Kerry to Mayo. Synge has also acknowledged that he owes much to “the folk- imagination of these fine people” (*Playboy ii*). Synge states this idea thus:

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 form. (*Playboy ii*)

Synge knew that there was no such thing as Irish language drama and he decided that his dramatic language would be a form of English based on syntax of the Irish dialect.

Richard Grene in his *Synge: A Critical Study of the Plays* says these words:

Synge gave direction and form to the peasant’s speech, at times, as we have seen, the direction and form, which were by no means, those of the original. He was aware because of its unfamiliarly, and its exoticism, he could expect from his audience that attention to words for their own sake normally accorded to poetry...it is in this sense ultimately, that Synge’s

language is poetic and his own creation. For the effect of his drama depends not on the representation of peasant characters speaking realistic poetic dialect but on the total structure of the language artistically controlled. (78)

On his way to Paris that November, Synge delivered the manuscript of *The Aran Islands* to a London publisher Yeats had suggested, Grant Allen, who soon returned it. In January 1902 Fisher Unwin, also of London, similarly declined it. His writing career was depressingly unsuccessful; he was still living on an allowance of 40 pounds a year and a new suit in which he looked too shabby. But he doggedly pursued his commitment to the Celtic by following a course in Old Irish at the Sorbonne, where he was frequently the lecturer's sole hearer. These were his seasons of endurance, and they were at last rewarded by a creative outflow; during the next summer, which he spent with his mother in a rented house in Wicklow, he wrote *The Shadow of the Glen* and *Riders to the Sea*, and began *The Tinker's Wedding*. The two completed plays were very welcome to Yeats and Lady Gregory, for their Irish National Theatre was more blessed with talented actors than with plays worth acting. Synge spent twenty-five days in InisOírr in October but did not visit InisMeáin; it was his last trip to the islands and was not reflected in his already completed book. Synge worked hard on all his plays because he wanted each one of his creations to be perfect and realistic. In the *Preface to the Playboy of the Western World* Synge writes these words:

In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by anyone who works among people

who have shut their lips on poetry. In Ireland, for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the springtime of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks. (*Playboy iii*)

Synge has also written poems early in his career and they have a great autobiographical value as he speaks right from his heart and at times the melody of language which one finds in his plays is missing in his poems. Synge draws his inspiration from nature and it reminds the reader of Wordsworth. The early poem *Prelude* even by its title is reminiscent of Wordsworth. His poems are also filled with folk inspiration. Synge tried his hand at ballad –poetry and it became the most successful work among his poems. A strong sense of pessimism and melancholy is also found in his poems. Almost all of Synge's poems were written while he was on his deathbed and may be that is the reason for its autobiographical quality. Synge died when he was thirty seven years old and it is a great loss to Irish drama. It is very rare for a writer to become so famous in such a short span of time. Synge had achieved worldwide reputation as a true Irish playwright which many writers could not achieve in their lifetime. Synge's works are especially suitable for an ecocritical study because, the works of J.M. Synge is very much suited for this study as his plays stand first in bringing out the true beauty of Ireland by his depictions of landscape so pure and beautiful that it brings a sense of pride

and belonging to the people of Ireland. Synge has made a great contribution to the preservation of the native Irish lifestyle.

The researcher especially chose Synge's work for this study as his life and background proved to be exactly suitable because, "Ecocritics have to study the environmental condition of an author's life. The influence of place on the imagination demonstrating that where an author grew up, travelled and wrote is pertinent to an understanding of his or her work" (Glotfelty and Fromm xxvi). The presence of nature is strongly felt in the plays and also in *The Aran Islands* and *In Wicklow and West Kerry*. It is an integral part of each of the plays. As UnaEllis Fermour says,

Nature is a protagonist in *The Shadow of the Glen* and *Riders to the Sea*, so filling the minds of the characters as to shape their actions, moods and fates; it is the ever-present setting, genially familiar, of *The Well of the Saints* and *The Tinker's Wedding*; it remains as a continual and surprising source of imagery and incidental reference throughout *The Playboy* and becomes again a poetic protagonist in *Deirdre*. (Fermour 164)

Synge in his treatment of nature focuses his attention on man and their interconnectedness with nature. He merges the forces of nature into man's destiny in all his works and the final outcome is an extraordinary blend of man and nature. Fermour further explains thus:

For in Synge natural beauty is not merely one form of many beauty that he loves or reveres, and nature is not merely a background in harmony with the play, a kind of setting kept before our eyes by allusions coming

naturally out of the poet's own affection. It is an actor recognized by the other human actors, sometimes (as in the *Well of the Saints*) as a constant, familiar companion, sometimes (as *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *Riders to the Sea*) as a presence or even an agent who forms their moods or draws down their fates. (164)

The readers are able to find “an easy, comfortable friendliness in nature as it is known to the blind beggars of the *Well of the Saints* it is their familiar companion and when, after having their sight for a while, they recover the blessed state of blindness, it is the warmth of the sun and the scent of the broom that gives them their greatest joy” (Fermour 165). The peasants of the Wicklow Hills look on nature with more awe. Those empty, misty mountains offer no easy relationship, but the people in *The Shadow of the Glen* “never lose sight of that presence and betray a constant preoccupation with it telling the time of day by the shadow moving up the glen and the sun sinking in the bog, and admitting as frankly their fear of the melancholy of the mountains that draws the imagination” (Fermour 168). The *Riders to the Sea* is a play where nature plays the role of an important character and it is inseparable from the plot. The harsh reality that the people face while depending on nature is starkly depicted in the play. Fermour opines that:

Nature in *Riders to the Sea* is yet more terrible to man and it is beyond the power of any but the young men, who still have some of its own fierce hardness, to accept it...In this play nature is the main protagonist, actor and inevitably victorious. Yet it is not an alien thing responsible only for

event, but something to which they have grown so akin that their familiarity with its ways takes all astonishment, all horror from their fate. It is the sea that is the real theme of the play and sometimes the human characters seem there only to reveal by their responses what its nature is, like a painting in which grass and trees and clouds serve by their Colour and line to reveal the movement of the else invisible wind. (169)

In *Riders to the Sea*, the sea is a protagonist, a constant influence on the characters, together with the wind- swept landscapes so bare and forbidding that nothing ever comes to their land bias and even horses have to be shipped to the mainland. The land is so rocky and uneven that the grey pony stumbles and knocks Bartley to his death.

This nature is seen from the beginning of the play and there is no serious moment that is not touched with references to it or images drawn from it. Everyone in the play, young and old, women as well as men, know the state of the sea, the signs of the weather, the strength and direction of the tides, the set of the wind. "Nature, no longer an actor in the play, has become an under- tone, but one of a rather curious interests for the brilliance of the colours, standing sharp and clear against each other and giving radiance each to each, convey, no less than the rich and glorious images and rhythms of the talk, the vitality and fertility which are the essence of the play" (Fermour 170). In *The Playboy of the Western World* the direct part played by nature is much less. According to Fermour

It is not a main actor, scarcely even an actor at all. Indeed, in such a play as this, a wild comedy, set, not in a lonely mountain-hut, but in a public house which is the social centre of its district, there would seem no place

for the presence of nature. But Synge and his Mayo peasants know better than that, and their references, though sparser than those of a comedy of outdoor life like *The Well of the Saints*, are significant, perhaps because of their apparent detachment from the main subject. (170)

The Tinker's Wedding, was written as a tribute to the people of the Wicklow roads and it was never staged in Synge's lifetime. In his preface to the text, published in 1907, Synge hopes that the country people, from tinkers to clergy, would not mind being laughed at. Synge writes' "In the greater part of Ireland, however, the whole people, from the tinkers to the clergy, have still a life, that is rich and genial and humorous. I do not think that these country people, who have so much humour in themselves, will mind being laughed at without malice, as the people in every country have been laughed at their own comedies" (177).

In *Deirdre of the Sorrows* nature is as intimate a part of the people's life and speech as ever, but there is "perhaps more definition, almost more consciousness in Synge's perception... in this last play the nature experience of his life-time seems to meet and join hands with that undying tradition of Irish thought and poetry. It is no ornament. It is woven deep. And in the moments of intensest passion it seems more essential than the passion itself" (Fermour 171). The way of life and the speech of the people were very vivacious, colourful and inspiring, and they helped him to combine richness with reality, to project characters who speak a kind of poetry and yet are quite credible because their originals had poetic qualities in their ordinary lives. His plays

directly present ordinary appearances, the people and situations are recognizable and credible, and an audience is in the position of an observer of a portion of actual life.

A profound study is done by discussing all the six plays of the Irish playwright John Millington Synge. The dominance of nature is found in all his major works and his writing has a lot of intensity and boasts of multiple layers of meaning which the researcher is compelled to dwell into more deeply. Human Being is perceived as a cultured individual who is entirely influenced by his dwelling place and hence a study of the Cultural Geography and the Cultural Landscape of Ireland as portrayed in the plays of Synge.

Geography and landscape form an integral part in the study of Ecocriticism and the work of J.M.Synge is very much suitable for this kind of study as his plays have nature as a predominant theme. Cultural geography is a fairly new concept in Ecocriticism and the cultural geographers are concerned with the relationship between human beings and environment and how nature is perceived by different human societies. The researcher talks about two kinds of geography i.e. physical and cultural and tries to bring home the point that culture and nature are interdependent and one cannot exist without the other. The two terms nature and culture are given equal importance in the study of cultural geography. If nature exists and is inhabited by man then culture is created by man who is adapted to that nature. Raymond Williams in his 'Idea of Nature' traces the various concepts of nature from the perspective of the changing face of human history. Nature is seen as a thing, a force, a principle, monarch, God, destructive nature, etc. among which man was included as a central element. Therefore the researcher feels

that as culture is determined by nature there need not be a dichotomy between nature and culture.

The researcher has made an attempt to analyse the culture found in each of Synge's plays, depending on the physical setting. As most of the plays take their source from the Aran Islands the culture of the Aran society is given in great detail. The values, practices, customs and habits that are found in the life of the people of Aran are described and in turn the same is illustrated through each of his plays. One of the implicit goals of the approach is to recoup professional dignity for what Glotfelty calls the "undervalued genre of nature writing" (Glotfelty xxxi). Lawrence Buell defines "ecocriticism . . . as [a] study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis" (430). The second and the third chapter of this research work are purely based on the study of cultural geography and cultural landscape. Culture depends on the geography of a particular region and geography is nothing but the specific landscape of a place. These changes are brought to light with the help of modern concepts like Cultural Geography and Cultural landscape.

The researcher discusses the Geography of Ireland and justifies the reason for considering Synge's plays as most suitable for this kind of study. Though Ireland is a land filled with scenic beauty it also has its fair share of nature's cruelty with bitter cold and harsh winds. In Synge's time that nature was unspoiled and yet unexplored by the modern man. The Irish landscape was of great importance to Synge because of his intense sensitivity to nature. Many writers associate landscape with geography and it is termed as "Literary Geography". One such writer is Han Lorzing who explores this idea

in his work, *The Nature of Landscape: A Personal Quest*. Lorzing devotes the entire book to the study of landscape and the relationship between man and landscape. Lorzing is of the view that there is a certain relationship between human being and the landscape that surrounds him. Human beings affect landscape and at the same time are also affected by it. Lorzing also talks about four levels of interaction between man and landscape (i.e.) layer of intervention, layer of knowledge, layer of perception and the layer of interpretation. It can also be termed as man –made, factual, visual and emotional respectively. The importance of environment, the effect on personality of the natural world is marked. In the Aran Islands Synge sensed a profound, almost mystical, sympathy between people and their surroundings which brought both joy and terror and led to the wide development of individuals in charm and intelligence and in skills such as fishing, clothes-making, farming, building and in folk- culture.

Ecocriticism is a fairly new concept but it has gained importance rapidly. More and more scholars have become aware of it and they are eager to do their research in the field of Ecocriticism and other areas associated with it. Here is a list of few theses that have been done in Ecocriticism in the recent years in Tamilnadu, which will be useful to scholars interested in this field.

Ms. G. Ruby, Head, Department of English, Nandha Arts and Science College, Erode was awarded her Ph.D. degree by the Bharathidasan University, Trichy in the year 2008. The thesis is entitled *Poems of Robert Frost: An Eco-poetic Dimension*. The researcher has tried to view Frost's poems in an ecological perspective using the Oikopoetic method. Dr. K. Premkumar, Lecturer in English, Bishop Heber College was

awarded Ph.D. degree by Bharathidasan University, Trichy for his thesis entitled, *Symbiosis in the Schemata of Tagore's Poems* in the year 2008. Ms. Cheryl Davis completed her Ph.D. Viva on her thesis *A Derelict Man in a Derelict Land: An Ecological Dimension of V.S. Naipaul's Novels* in December 2011. Ms. K. Shanthi is awaiting her viva on her Ph.D. thesis *Ecoconsciousness in the Novels of John Steinbeck*. The above mentioned scholars worked under the able guidance of Dr. Suresh Frederick, Associate Professor and UG Head, Department of English, Bishop Heber College, Trichy and also the Vice president of OSLE-India.

Dr. Rayson K. Alex was awarded his Ph.D. degree for his thesis entitled, *Symbiosis in the Songs of Mudugar*, from the Department of English, Madras Christian College in the year 2009. Mr. Rayson has worked extensively with the community of Mudugar, a Dravidian tribe in the Nilgiri Biosphere in the Western Ghats. He uses the ecological concept of symbiosis in his thesis to study the narratives of the community. He worked under the guidance of Dr. Nirmal Selvamony, Head, Department of English, Central University of Tamilnadu, Thiruvavur and the President of OSLE-India

Dr. K. Chitra was awarded her Ph.D. Degree for her thesis entitled, *The Spirit of Biocentricism: An Ecocritical Analysis of Select Indian English Novels*. She took four Indian Novelists and worked on one of their novels each. She has worked on Allan Sealy's *The Everest Hotel*, Geetha Mehta's *A River Sutra*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Sohail Abdullah's *The Mad Woman of Jogare*. She was guided by Dr. U. Sumathy, Associate Professor, Department of English, Government Arts College, Coimbatore.

The title of this thesis is *Blemish in Unblemished Landscape: A Study of the Plays of John Millington Synge*. The researcher hopes to prove through this research that nature is the only thing that remains unblemished in the plays of Synge. The researcher feels that though human beings live in the midst of such pure nature his heart is not so pure and flawless. The characters in each of Synge's plays are blemished with one weakness or the other which ultimately is responsible for all the things that happen in their lives. The next chapter entitled "Roots of Ecocriticism" gives a brief history of the gradual growth of Ecocriticism as a modern literary approach. Ecocritics lay emphasis on the preservation of landscape in order to save the human race. Ecocriticism not only lays emphasis on the 'harmony' of humanity and nature but also talks about the destruction caused to nature by the changes which take place in the modern world for most of which man is directly responsible. Culture depends on the geography of a particular region and geography is nothing but the specific landscape of a place. These changes are brought to light with the help of modern concepts like Cultural Geography and Cultural landscape. The dominance of nature is found in all his major works and his writing has a lot of intensity and boasts of multiple layers of meaning which the researcher is compelled to dwell into more deeply.

The third chapter entitled, "Landscape created by the mindscape" begins with the introduction of Synge's monumental prose work *The Aran Islands* as it forms the source book for all his plays. It plays a very important part in the life of Synge. It has shaped his writing skills and the Islands are the place where he drew his writer's inspiration. The Aran essays are considered as crucial to Synge's development as a writer. Synge speaks

here of his own experience of Ireland and his involvement with life of the Irish people. A short description of the geography of the Aran Islands forms the next section of this chapter. The area in which Synge has used the stories of the *Aran Islands* as source for his plays is discussed briefly. It is not actually his life on the Islands that Synge gives an account of but rather steps aside and acts merely as an observer of the life of the native Aran people.

“Cultural Geography” forms the fourth chapter and it is the study of many cultural aspects found throughout the world. It also deals with how culture relates to the different spaces and places. The main cultural phenomena studied in cultural geography are the language of the people, their religion, their economic status, art, music and other cultural aspects. The study of these aspects helps to explain why people behave the way they do in the particular environment in which they live in. These aspects of culture are able to travel across the world due to globalization. This chapter deals with the Cultural Geography of Ireland and how it is incorporated in the plays of Synge. Culture is important in the development of mankind and Cultural Geography is one of the most dynamic and important sub-disciplines in contemporary Geography, with considerable influence on wider developments in the social sciences and humanities. Cultural Geography’s key focus is on the interconnections between place, landscape, environment and identity has profound relevance for the world of today. A thorough study of the life and culture of different characters found in the six plays of Synge is made in this chapter. A detailed description of the peculiar habits and the work of the people who live in perilous situation with the natural calamities of the place in which they dwell are given.

Thus this chapter deals with the Cultural Geography of Ireland and how it is integrated in the plays of Synge.

“Cultural Landscape (Visual and Emotional Landscape)” is the theme of the fifth chapter and here the researcher has discussed the Geography of Ireland and has also justified the reason for considering Synge’s plays as most suitable for this kind of study. Though Ireland is a land filled with scenic beauty it also has its fair share of nature’s cruelty with bitter cold and harsh winds. In Synge’s time that nature was unspoiled and yet unexplored by the modern man. The Irish landscape was of great importance to Synge because of his intense sensitivity to nature. Here the researcher explains about landscape and gives varied versions of the definitions of landscape. Landscape is a very complex term which has a number of meanings and interpretation. Though many have a clear image of the word landscape, defining the term is not so simple. There are a number of definitions found in dictionaries for the term “landscape”, all of which stress on the visual as well as the territorial aspect. Descriptions of a landscape will be the same but what that particular landscape means to them will definitely vary from person to person. Landscapes reflected also the habits, customs and values of those who shaped them. Many writers associate landscape with geography and it is termed as “Literary Geography”. One such writer is Han Lorzing who explores this idea in his work, *The Nature of Landscape: A Personal Quest*. Lorzing devotes the entire book to the study of landscape and the relationship between man and landscape. Lorzing is of the view that there is a certain relationship between human being and the landscape that surrounds him. Human beings affect landscape and at the same time are also affected by it. Lorzing also

talks about four levels of interaction between man and landscape (i.e.) layer of intervention, layer of knowledge, layer of perception and the layer of interpretation. It can also be termed as man –made, factual, visual and emotional respectively.

In the fifth chapter the writer has done a study of the landscape of Synge's plays keeping in mind this theory and concept of Han Lorzing. Of the four different landscapes only the last two is taken into consideration for this study ,(i.e.) layer of perception and layer of interpretation (visual and emotional landscape respectively). Each play is dominated by either one of these landscapes or in certain plays both. These two levels of interaction between the human race and landscape as said by Lorzing are clearly evident in all his plays. *Riders to the Sea*, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, *Deirdre of the Sorrows* and *The Well of the Saints* are four of the plays in which the readers find both visual and emotional landscape in equal measure. Lorzing also calls this layer of perception and layer of interpretation. *Riders to the Sea* is a play where the visual landscape is explicitly portrayed. In *The Playboy of the Western World* the landscape is purely visual. Christy Mahon, the protagonist literally, sees, hears, smells and feels the place in which the action is taking place. Here we see that nature is not only a background but also an inseparable part of his life. Synge has written another two act play *The Tinker's Wedding*. This is treated as a comedy and the role of landscape here is very minimal. The setting is similar to the other plays but Synge does not give much importance to the landscape. The landscape that is seen here is entirely visual and there is no role for emotional landscape in this play. The other two landscapes that Lorzing speaks of are factual and manmade landscape.

This chapter closely observes the relationship between the natural environment and the people who live in it and the focus and complete attention is more on the landscape and the people rather than on the land. Nowadays we see human activity as the main influence on landscapes. The approach of environmental determinism of landscapes was the leading view on landscapes for such a long period. The environmental determinism approach says that landscapes are mainly determined by the environment. Thus there can be no free will on the part of human beings. Nature plays an important role in the creation of a landscape. Nature determines the environment and by doing this nature also influences the way humans act. The environment only allows the strongest to survive. This goes for nature as well as for humans, and is based on the 'survival of the fittest' by Darwin.

Thus the researcher has attempted to prove her point by studying the plays of Synge by using modern ecocritical theories like landscape and cultural geography. Synge's works are especially suitable for an eco critical study as his plays stand first in bringing out the true beauty of Ireland by his depictions of landscape so pure and beautiful that it brings a sense of pride and belonging to the people of Ireland. Synge has made a great contribution to the preservation of the native Irish lifestyle. In the following chapter the researcher has given a brief history of Ecocriticism and the various concepts that one finds associated with it.