

Tribhuvan University

Characterization on J. M. Synge's *The Play Boy of The Western World*

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities Ratna
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for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis
“Characterization on J. M. Synge’s *The Playboy of The Western World*”
submitted to the Department of English Faculty of Humanities and Social
Science at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus for the award of Master of Arts in English
is the result of my own independent work and expect to extent assistance from others
in the design and conception is the thesis duly acknowledged.

All sources used for thesis have been fully and properly work cited.

It contains no material which led to a substantial extent has been

accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan

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made in the thesis.

.....

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July 2018

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Letter of Approval

This Thesis entitled “Characterization on J. M. Synge’s *The Playboy of The Western World.*” submitted to the department of English Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus by Sagar Dhungel, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The drama, *The Playboy of The Western World* shows the rustic life style of people who involve in farming and pastoral activities. They work all day and in the evening they visit pub. The writer of this play John Millington Synge has blended tragedy and comedy together to create entertainment to audiences. He has used the phrases from herds and fisherman along the coast from Kerry to Mayo or from beggar women to balled singer nearer Dublin. In this drama, several characters have played and all of them appreciate the patricide. They think those people are brave who kill their fathers. The protagonist of the play involve in patricide and he is gloried. But when people know he is not successful to kill his father, he becomes humiliated again. Here I am going to address the issue of Characterization which is made by Synge in this play and how the characters have played vital role in this drama. I am also going to make an analysis of protagonist, antagonist, confidant, foil, flat and round; and static and dynamic characters and their roles.

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Introduction

Character in *The Playboy of The Western World*

Character is the one who performs his\her role as a real person or thing in drama or any fictional genre. In drama, many people act and they show their performance to audiences. So those people are called characters. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines character as “all the qualities and features that make a person, group of people and places different from others (246)”. On the basis of this definition, everything is different from one to another whether they are persons or group of people or places which are made by qualities and features so it creates the situation to make different from one to another.

Likewise Carl H. Klaus defines character in *Elements of Literature* in this way:

Although characters in a play are like real people in some respects they are no means identical to people in real life. Real people after all, exists in the world as it is, whereas character exists in an imaginative world shaped by the theatrical contexts and imaginative purpose of drama. In the classical Greek theatre, for example, a character was defined visually by the fixed expression of his or her facial mask. Clearly, it would have been impossible for spectators to regard such characters as identical to complex human personalities. And if we look at *Oedipus*, we can see that he is conceived in terms of a few dominant traits that could be projected through the bold acting required by the enormous size of the ancient Greek Theatre (39-40).

It means characters are look like real people but as a matter of fact they are not real identically. They just pretend as if they are real one. Klaus further says real people actually exists in the real world but characters exist in the imaginative world which is made by theatrical contexts and imaginative purpose of drama. He has given the example of classical Greek Treater where Character was defined visually because they used to wear mask while performing drama. So that audience could know that they were not real characters. Klaus describes *Oedipus* from which he is conceived by role of characters from the ancient Greek theatre. Unlike Greek theatre Irish theatre is quite different. In this theatre Characters play the role as if they are real people. We can take the example of *The Playboy of The Western World* where we can see the real face of the people in early twentieth century.

Characters have been presented in *The Playboy of The Western World* in this way. There are several characters they are as follow:

Christopher Mahon: He is protagonist of the play. He is young man who enters pub from far village and tells the story of killing his father to all people who have visited pub.

Old Mahon: He is Christy's father who is almost killed by his son. He is an antagonist of the play because he is strongly against of his son. He is coming to pub looking for his son and reveals the secret that his son didn't kill him. Because of his statement his son Christy is forced to deny that he is not his father. But no one believes him. So he again attempts to kill him to show his bravery.

Shawn Keogh: He is decent character in this play. Because of his decentness, he is regarded as coward man. He wants Christy to get away from Pegeen because he

is her fiancée and still wants to marry her. Actually he is contrast with Christy so he is a foil character in this drama.

Pegeen Mike: She is the daughter of Michael James Flaherty and also fiancée of Shawn Keogh. Although she is fiancée of Shawn, she is in affair with Christy Mahon. Her personality is round character in this drama because she has complex psychology in this play.

Widow Quin: She is smart thirty year old woman. She tries to help both Christy and Shawn in difficult situation. When Shawn wants Pegeen to marry him, she tries to make Christy to go away from Pegeen. Likewise, when Christy father is telling the truth, she tries to stop his mouth to protect Christy. Her personality is confidant character in this drama because she has been trusted by protagonist.

Michael James Flaherty: He is Pegeen's father and also the owner of the pub. He offers Christy to stay with Pegeen to protect her. He is also drunkard man so he makes decision sooner without thinking anything. He is flat character in this drama because he never changes his personality and he becomes drunk anytime.

Jimmy and Philly: They are small farmers of Mayo and also drinking partner of Michael James. They work in a day in farm and drink liquor every night. This is how they spent their lives. They seem also flat character in this play.

Sara, Susan, Honor and Nelly: They are dandy village girls. They come to visit Christy to hear the story of killing father and also want to closer with him. As a matter of fact they have played significant role to make Christy hero in this drama.

The Playboy of the western world is the one of the dark comedy drama. This a dark comedy drama, because it focuses on patricide as a good deed. More over people

from Mayo society are also supporting this kind of activities. Some critics have given their reviews in this way.

Peter Crawley says in *The Irish Times*:

A murderer is on the run, staggering towards a Mayo shebeen where nothing ever happens. This is a place so barren and wind-beaten that the low stone wall of Jamie Vartan's ascetic set, marking the rear of the pub, seems to slouch away as though giving up. With Pegeen Mike laboriously drawing up a stock order, Blue Raincoat's fascinating new production of J. M. Synge's classic leaves everything similarly blanched and exposed. Here is a life of dismal marriage plans, joylessly alcoholic wakes and occasional eccentricities. A man who has killed his father should make for some excitement.

He means to say that Christy ran away after killing his father and reached Mayo and this incident never happened there. So he became extra ordinary over there.

Likewise Norman Podhoretz describe in *Twentieth Century Interpretation of The Playboy of the Western world* "Christy we are told 'kills' his father for two reasons: he is tired of being goaded on the score of his physical and sexual timidity and more immediately, he refuses to marry the old woman who had nursed him as a baby (72)". According to him, Christy might have told that he kills his father for two reasons one is he is too angry with him and next is he doesn't like the woman to marry whom his father showed him. He further says about Pegeen "who can perceive greatness but cannot rise to it, because of the social barriers. Her experience is really tragic. That also is a paradox and irony at which Synge wants us to evaluate the complexity of the work (73)". It means the character of Pegeen is too paradox and

irony because Pegeen wants to marry murderer. When she doesn't get chance to marry him then she feels sorrow. As we know those girls are scared of those men who involve in patricide. But Pegeen is quite different from other girls.

Anita Gates further says in *The New York Times*:

Women love bad boys, but in J. M. Synge's timeless comedy *The Playboy of The Western World* a whole village falls in love with one a young man who staggers through the pub door one evening and soon confesses that he killed his father. In the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's saucy and hilarious new production, new production the title character, Christopher Mahon known as Christy is played by an actor with the distinctive name Michael A. Newcomer. Mr. Newcomer captures Christy's combination of puzzlement (why are people being so nice to him?) and growing confidence and charm, as he comes to accept their high opinion of him.

She means to say that women love bad boys but to her surprise, whole village girls fall into his love which is extra ordinary thing. In this way Gates has made review about the protagonist character.

According to Michael Billington, in 1907, this play caused riots at the Abbey theatre because it shows how Christy Mahon's achievement for sexual status and symbol by killing his father. Moreover there is still fun for his so-called bravery act. When barmaid, Pegeen Mike, finally tells Christy, 'There's a great gap between a gallows story and a dirty deed.' He means to say that this drama brought riot on theatre because Christy has acted playboy by killing his father which is completely immoral and awkward in the society. But this drama was still funny and people could

enjoy it. As a matter of fact, because of Synge's drama many Irish people shows their angers because its moral directly goes with violence.

Similarly, Sinead Kirwan says about this play in *Socialist Review*:

Set in the early 20th century, this darkly comic explores the fascination and frustration of country life. It follows the fate of Christy Mahon. A runaway, who finds himself a guest at the pub belonging Michael James Flaherty's daughter Pegeen. Christy acts as a mirror for the people of the town, building his boastful stories upon their own desires, only to have them turn on him when he finally tries to live up to their ideal.

When first performed, the play was attacked was attacked by members of Sinn Fein, including founder Arthur, Griffith as a slight on Irish womanhood. The sexuality of dominant two female characters Widow Quin and Pegeen, undermined the image of the chaste catholic nation that was being carefully constructed by the new nationalist movement.

The female characters in the play certainly were not the paragons of female virtue expected in the newly opened Irish National Theatre, something that comes across very clearly in John Crowley's new production at the Old Vic.

On the basis of his review, this drama is the setting of 20th century, when the society was fascination and frustration. It is all about the luck of Christy Mahon. He was on the run and finds himself as a guest at the pub of Michael James Flaherty's daughter Pegeen. Christy pretends mirror for the people. It means he reflects the people of the town on himself. He even tells his boastful stories and became perfect enough to impress girls. He further says the female characters of the play were not virtue which

was not expected in the Irish Theater. It resembles the production of John Crowley's at Old Vic.

Playwright J. M. Synge has used different characters with different manners and activities. The protagonist of the play Christy involves in patricide. But other characters are in the favor of him. Pegeen who is a fiancée of Shawn Keogh is in the affair with Christy. So Christy becomes a hero in this play. In Mayo society, those people are regarded as great who involves in evil activities. Unlike other plays, this play *The Playboy of The Western World* has supported bad character as good one and vice versa. Christy who involves in patricide is a good character. He is also playboy and fond of girls. But Shawn who looks decent and is also a true lover of Pegeen is a bad character. Though he is true lover, his love doesn't have any value at all. So, I would like to raise the questions. Why does playwright use such abnormal characters? Why does he represent bad character as well as good character? Why is the person gloried because of killing own father? Why do the girls from Mayo society fall in love with murderer?

There are different characters in the play because in Mayo society, People are psychopath, immoral, careless and rude which lead them to alcoholism, patricide and dirtiness. We can see the pub of Michael James which is completely dirty and unmanageable. Talking about other characters, farmers Philly and Jimmy are extremely drunkard who drink with Michael James. Likewise, protagonist of the play Christy Mahon symbolically kills his father to get appreciation from the people. Moreover, the heroine of the play Pegeen also likes brave person to get married. So, she thinks Christy is best for her because of killing own father. The other girls from the village are the fans of murderer. These are the reasons why people from Mayo society do abnormal activities.

The Playboy of the Western World emphasizes important aspect of drama. I am going to research about characterization being based on some books and with the help of internet. In J. A. Cuddon's *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, he describes the abbey theater is most famous of Irish theatres where Synge's drama was also performed. He says "Later came Synge's *The Playboy of The Western World* (1907), which caused riots because Irish morality was offended by a reference in the text to a women shift (i.e. a chemise)" (1). On the basis of this source, it was riot on theater because of the evil performance of characters. Cuddon claimed that this drama offended the morality of Irish people. Talking about tragicomedy, M. H. Abraham and Geoffrey Harpham mention in their book *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, "Tragicomedy wants [i.e. lacks] death which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it (408)". We can understand the character of Christy's Mahon's father who is believed to be dead, but it was not tragic. It creates humor and laughter to the audience. In a way, the character has played little bit tragic role but in comic way. For example, Christy who is protagonist of the play, he was forced to marry a woman who he doesn't like. So, he hit his father with spade and ran away. Actually it sounds like tragic but when the people know that Christy killed his father, he gets praised and gloried and it looks humor and laughter.

Similarly, Cyril Cusack stresses "Synge's agitation and observation, in his desire and striving for identification with reality Synge is the greatest of the Irish dramatists (54)". Cusack had joined the Abbey Theatre, in 1932, where he could find in the exhibition the material of Synge's drama's *The Playboy of the western world* collection of museum pieces like attire of characters and stuffs they use. He says when he first joined the Abbey Theatre, at its old Marlborough street house in 1932, Synge repertoire was stalling into a collection of museum pieces. No longer, *The*

Playboy of the Western world conjured up a popular reaction of any kind. On the basis of his experience, it is easy to research about the character because he has joined Abbey Theater by himself where the drama *The Playboy of The Western World* was also performed. Through this theater, he got chance to research about the character on the basis of a collection of museum pieces.

Character and Characterization in *The Playboy of The Western World*

Character is the important part of the story, drama or any fictional genre. Characters are not only the persons but also the places, and abstract and concrete objects too. Those are definitely different from others. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines “all the qualities and features that make a person, group of people and places different from others (246)”. It means person, group of people and places are different according to their features and quality. Similarly the Greek Philosopher Aristotle defines character in his essay ‘Tragedy’ in this way. “By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do- which the aim of poetry though it affixes proper name to the characters; by a singular statement, one as to what, say, Alcibiades did or had done to him (13-27)”. On the basis of his definition, the aim of poetry sticks with character. Alcibiades who was Greek politician he used to do it for himself. Actually, Aristotle compares politician with characters and his speech with poetry.

There are several types of characters like protagonist, antagonist, confidant, foil, flat and round; and static and dynamic.

Protagonist: Protagonist is the central character of the play who is regarded as hero. Protagonist is always appreciated and gloried by society. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines protagonist as “the main character in a play, film/movie

or book- compare HERO (1213)". On the basis of this definition, protagonist is the hero of any play film movie or book. In J. M. Synge's play *The Playboy of the Western World*, Christy Mahon is protagonist because he is a hero of the play. J.A. Cuddon defines:

The first actor in a play; thence the principal actor or character. In Greek Tragedy, the playwright was limited to the protagonist (first actor), deuteragonist (second actor) and tritagonist (third actor). It is probable that in the first place Greek drama consisted of a Chorus and the leader of the Chorus. Thespis is believed to have added the first actor to give greater variety to the dialogue and action. The second and third were added by Aeschylus and Sophocles respectively. The protagonist came to be the equivalent of the hero. (706).

On the basis of his definition in the play who is known as first actor is protagonist. But in Greek Tragedy there was limited to the protagonist first actor, second actor and third actor. Thespis focused on the first actor to give greater variety to the dialogue and action. Whereas, Aeschylus and Sophocles focused on second and third actor respectively.

Antagonist: Antagonist is such a character who always goes against hero or protagonist. He always plays the role of villain in the life of protagonist and finally he defeats. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines "a person who strongly opposes sb/sth (55)." It means a person who is against of protagonist. In *The Playboy of The Western World*, the father of Christy Mahon is antagonist character. Likewise Cuddon defines. "In drama or fiction the antagonist opposes the hero or protagonist. In *Othello* Iago is antagonist to the Moor. In *Mayor of Casterbridge*, Farfrae is

antagonist to Henchard. (41)" In this definition Cuddon gives example of two dramas to know antagonist. Similarly In *The Playboy of The Western World*, Old Mahon is antagonist to his son Christy Mahon.

Confidant: Confidant is such a character whom a protagonist have strong trust. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines "a person that you and who you talk to about private or secret things (318)". On the basis of this definition, protagonist can freely tell about his secret matter to that character who is known as confidant. In *The Playboy of The Western World*, Widow Quin is known as Confidant character whom protagonist have strong trust on. So, she protects him from the difficult situation. J. A. Cuddon says that Confidant character has little effect on the action and listen to the intimate feelings of protagonist. Cuddon has given examples of Horatio in *Hamlet* and Maria Goestrey in *The Ambassadors*.

Foil: Foil is such a character who contrasts with another character especially protagonist. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines "a person or thing that contrasts with and therefore emphasizes, the qualities of another person or thing (599)". On the basis of this definition, foil is the person who contrasts with another person and it also emphasizes the qualities of his/hers. In the context of drama, foil compares and contrasts with protagonist and others. Actually playwright creates foil characters in drama to help the highlight the personality of other characters. In *The Playboy of The Western World* Shawn Keogh can be taken as foil character because we can compare him with protagonist. Both Shawn and the protagonist Christy like Pegeen Mike. But Christy is known as brave person whereas Shawn is coward one in the eyes of Pegeen Mike.

Flat and round: Flat character is character who doesn't change his personality, quality or idea till the end of the drama but round character is such a person who has complex personality. In *The Playboy of The Western World*, Pegeen is presented as round character. It's because she changes her decision now and then. At first, she is fiancée of Shawn Keogh and later becomes a lover Christy Mahon.

J. A. Cuddon defines flat and round characters in his book *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* in this way:

Terms used by E.M. Foster in *Aspect of the Novel (1927)* two basically different types of character and characterization. A 'Flat' character doesn't change in the course of a story or play; a 'round' one develops and thus alters. Foster cites Mrs. Micawber as a flat character and Becky Sharp as a round one. Shakespeare's *Henry IV (Pts I and II)* provides a suitable contrasts in the Shape of Hotspur and Prince Hal. The former is a 'flat' character; the prince changes and develops considerably in the course of the play (321).

On the basis of this definition flat character doesn't change his personality quality or idea whereas round character changes now and then. In *The Playboy of The Western World* Michael James Flaherty is known as flat character whereas his daughter Pegeen known as round character because she changes her decision now and then. In the book *Literature* by Kirsznner and Mandell, they also describe that E. M Forster classifies round character as well developed, closely involved in responsive to the action and flat character as barely developed or stereotypical. It means round character is developed in responsive action whereas flat character is stereotypical. In most of

stories major character plays the roles as round character who is usually complex and fully developed.

Static and dynamic: Characters are either static or dynamic in every drama. A static character is one who doesn't suffer from any significant change in character personality and behavior. And static character will be same person who is in the beginning. Whereas dynamic character are changed through a life event, conflict or other transition. In *The Playboy of The Western World*, Christy is known as dynamic character because he undergoes from his changing personality and behavior. At first he is a normal person when he tells his story, he is appreciated and gloried by people and becomes playboy. When his father's appearance in the stage, he suffers and looks for the help of Widow Quin.

Kirszner and Mandell define about static and dynamic character in this way:

Character may also be classified as either dynamic or static. Dynamic characters grow and change in the course of story, developing as they react to events and to other characters. In "A&P", for instance, Sammy's decision to speak out in defense the girls-as well as the events that lead him to do so-changes him. His view of the world has changed at the end of the story, and as a result his position in the world will change too. A static character may face the same challenges a dynamic character might face but will remain essentially unchanged. A static character who was selfish and arrogant will remain selfish and arrogant, regardless of the nature of the story's conflict. In the fairytale *Cinderella* for example a title character is as sweet and good nature at the end of the story-despite her mistreatment by her family as she is at

the beginning. Her situation may have changed but her character has not. A familiar example is the title character in William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* who lives a wasted empty life, at least in part because she unwilling or unable to accept that the world around her and the people in it have changed. A story's minor characters are often static (94-95).

On the basis of their definition in every drama there is whether dynamic or static character. They have two stories for example: *Cinderella* and *A Rose for Emily* where former is example of static and later is example of dynamic. In first one there is changing of situation but not the person's character so it is static whereas second one is dynamic though minor characters are static.

Point of View

Point of view is the the mode of narration that an author or writer makes readers or audiences hear and see what takes places in a story, poem, essay or play. It is the narrator's position in the term of telling story. We can say that every narrative story, we make an analysis with first, second or third person narrative point of view. But basically first person or third person narrative point of view used in every story or play. But in drama, Character is narrator because drama is not a story being told it is just a live performance of theatre. In *The Playboy of The Western World*, the character Christy Mahon is narrator because he tells a story how he killed his father now and then. Basically, writer can choose either first person point of view or third person point of view to tell the story. First person is related with 'I' and 'we' whereas third person related with 'he', 'she', 'it' or 'they'. In most of drama playwright uses third person narrator and third person narrator is divided into three categories. They are

omniscient, limited omniscient and objective. Omniscient speaks from outside a character. They are not involved within the character in drama. Limited omniscient narrator only focusing on what a single character experiences. Objective is dramatic point of view. In this point of view Narrators tell the story only by reproducing dialogue or recounting events.

According to Kriszner and Mandell define point of view as:

All stories are told, or narrated by someone, and one of the first choices writers make is who tells the story. This choice determines the story's point of view- the angle or vantage point from which events are presented. The implications of this choice are far reaching. Consider for a moment the following scenario. Five people witness a crime and are questioned by the police. Their stories agreed on certain points: a crime was committed, a body was found, and the crime occurred at noon. But in other ways their stories are different. The man who fled the scene was either tall or average height; his hair was either dark or light; he either was carrying object or was empty handed. The events that led up to the depending on who tells the story. Thus the perspective from which a story is told determines what details are included in the story and how they are arranged - in short, the plot. In addition, the perspective of the narrator affects the story's style, language and themes (168).

It means that the point view deals with plot of story its narration and perspective of the reader. He further gives example of culprit and police and describes the situation to find what kind of point of view. So as a reader we can make an analysis that this

story is defined as third person narrative with omniscient point of view. It is because writer is narrating about several people in order to describe them.

In *The Playboy of The Western World*, Christy tells and retells the story of killing his father among the characters of the play. He is narrating about himself how he killed his father. In this way we can say that this drama is made on first person narrative point of view. It is because character Christy Mahon is using first person narrator in this drama.

Characterization is the technique of creating character and it is also a process of making character in drama or any fictional genre. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines "the way that a writer makes characters in a book or play seem real. (246)". It means character looks real in book or play. There are two types of characterization: indirect characterization and direct characterization. Indirect characterization is a process by which writer shows character's personality through speech, actions and appearance. There are some methods are used in indirect characterization. Such as:

Speech: It is all about what character says and how he speaks. For example; in *The Playboy of The Western World*, Christy enters and said with relief voice. "It's a safe house, so". Through his speech we can easily guess, he is in trouble.

Thoughts: It is all about character's thought and feeling through which we can understand about the nature of character. For example; in *The Playboy of The Western World*, in the end of first act, Christy thinks that he has supposed to kill his father earlier because girls are fighting to be his beloved. In this way we can understand that Christy gives importance to girls than his father.

Effects: It is about how the characters effect on audiences or people. For example; *The Playboy of The Western World*, when Mayo society appreciates the patricide and glory Christy for killing his father, it directly affects the audiences and they can take this scene as humor and satire.

Actions: It is about what characters do and how they act in different situation. For example; in *The Playboy of The Western World*, when everyone believes that Christy has killed his father, all people from Mayo society begin to praise him and girls are surrounding him. But when they knows he couldn't kill his father then everyone begins to disrespect him. So, finally he attempts to kill his father for the second time.

Looks: It is all about characters' appearance, attires and personality. For example; in *The Playboy of The Western World* in the first act, playwright describes "Pegeen, a wild looking but fine girl of about twenty, is writing at table. She is dressed in the usual peasant dress". Through this statement we can easily guess the personality of Pegeen.

Likewise, direct characterization tells the audience about the personality of the character. For example; In *The Playboy of The Western World* "Christy looking bright and cheerful, is cleaning a girl's boot". Here, the dramatist is directly telling the audience about the personality of Christy who looks bright and cheerful.

The Playboy of The Western World is a one of the significant drama where several characters have played their significant roles. As we know characterization is a process of making characters in drama or any fictional genre. J. M. Synge has characterized in this drama using several characters. They are Christopher Mahon, Old Mahon, Shawn Keogh, Pegeen Mike Widow Quin, Michael James Flaherty,

Jimmy Philly, Sara, Susan, Honor and Nelly. Actually Synge has taken the characters' attires and languages from herds and fisherman along the coast from Kerry to Mayo or from beggar woman and ballad singer nearer Dublin. Unlike other plays, Synge has used strange characters in this drama, because every character of this play appreciate patricide. The people who can kill their fathers are gloried and praised by society.

Talking about characters, Christopher is the hero in this play. He is the central character and believed to be protagonist of the play though he killed his father. He is also known as Christy. He accidently enters the Michael James Flaherty's pub. When he enters there, he looks quite weird and tired. He describes his story to all of people who have visited pub. He said that he killed his father:

CHRISTY. [twisting round on her
with a sharp cry of horror] - Don't strike me. I killed my poor
father, Tuesday was a week, for doing the like of that.

PEGEEN. [with blank amazement.]-
Is it killed your father?

CHRISTY. [subsiding.] With the help
of God I did surely and that the Holy Immaculate Mother may
intercede for his soul. (1.1.122-26)

When Christy enters the stage, he looks quite horrified and terrified but when he tells that he killed his father everyone is thankful because they thought they have met brave person. So the owner of the pub Michael James Flaherty offers him a job to give security his daughter. Actually, Flaherty's daughter Pegeen falls in love with Christy although she has already had fiancée. She falls in love because she thinks Christy is brave person. Moreover several girls from village also run after him and he

becomes a dream boy of the village girls. When his father suddenly appears in the stage, he feels humiliated and those people who already praised him suddenly turn against and hate him. So he is forced to say that the man is not his father. But no one trusts him this time. So he hit his father to death again though he did not literary die. So that everyone can trust him he is really brave one.

Old Mahon is another character who is known as father of Christopher Mahon and also the antagonist of this play because he always goes against his son. He was hit with spade by his son. He almost died but later recovered. He came to pub looking for his son and revealed the secret to Widow Quin that his son didn't kill him because when he appears in the stage, at that time there is only Widow Quin at the pub. Actually, Old Mahon is looking for his son and come towards Widow Quin but she pretends as if she doesn't know anything. His son Christopher hides behind the stage and he sees his father. So, Old Mahon explain everything to Quin. In the end of the drama, Jimmy and Philly are talking about the village game which has been arranged by Widow Quin. Meanwhile, Old Mahon enters the stage asks them if they see his son. After a while, Quin enters the stage and convince Jimmy and Philly that he is a lunatic person. So that secret could not be revealed. But finally everyone knows the truth. So he again gets again attacked by his son.

Next character is Shawn Keogh who is fiancée of Pegeen Mike and he is seemed as foil character because he contrasts with protagonist. When Pegeen is alone at the pub, he enters there out of fear. He describes about scary dark night and tells Pegeen that she is not supposed to stay at pub alone. So he wants there Widow Queen for her company. So, Pegeen is arguing him about his fear and she is about to quarrel with him:

SHAWN. [timidly] Would I fetch
you the Widow Quin may be?

PEGEEN. Is it the like of that
murderer? You'll not, surely.

SHAWN. [going to her, soothingly]
Then I am thinking himself will stop along with you when he
sees you taking on, for it'll be a long night time with great
darkness, and I am after feeling a kind of fellow above in the
furzy ditch, groaning wicked like a madding dog, the way it's
good cause you have, maybe, to be fearing now (1.1.57-65).

In this extract Shawn speaks being scared. So he wants to send Widow Quin for Pegeen's company. But Pegeen is not afraid at all. It is clear from the above dialogue that Shawn Keogh is scared of dark night. When Christopher Mahon gets a job to give security to Pegeen, Shawn is the one who is against him. He does not want Christy to stay with his finance. So he has several tried to send Christy away from Pegeen. Shawn even tries to convince Quin to marry Christy. So that Pegeen marries him. But his attempts are futile. When everyone knows Christy didn't kill his father, at that time Pegeen also denies Christy and Shawn Keogh has hope again to get Pegeen. This time he again failed to get Pegeen. Finally, Christy also leaves that place. But Pegeen does not want to come back in his life. As a matter of fact Shawn Keogh is decent person but his decentness is turned into coward person. So he has to lose his fiancee.

Pegeen Mike is another character who is fiancee of Shawn Keogh but she dumped him and likes Christy Mahon. When she knows that Christy didn't kill his father she is again about to leave him. So she changes her thought now and then. So

she is a round character of this play. She thinks Christy is brave person because he has killed his father. Actually, she is a barmaid girl and also a daughter of Michael James Flaherty. She is also fiancée of Shawn Keogh but she dumped him because she doesn't think that Shawn Keogh is brave person. She blindly trust and love Christy. She even fights with village girl for him. Once village girls came to see Christy in order to listen his story killing his father but later Pegeen chases all girls and warns Christy not to meet village girls again. In this way we can guess how much Pegeen loves Christy:

PEGEEN. [severely] You'll be shut
of jeopardy no place if you go talking with a pack of wild girls
the like of them do be walking abroad with the peelers, talking
whispers at the fall of night.

CHRISTY. [with terror.]- And you're
thinking they'd tell?

PEGEEN. [with mock sympathy.]-
Who knows, God help you (1.1.190-93).

In this extract Pegeen tries to warn him not to talk any girl otherwise he will not be safe at all. As a matter of fact, Pegeen loves Christy because of his bravery only. When the secret reveals that Christy has not killed his father, she is about to leave him. So, Christy is forced to kill his father for real. He attempts second time although his father doesn't die. So that Pegeen could trust him. Finally, Christy leaves the stage and Shawn again tries to impress her but she doesn't want him. She would rather shows her grief for losing Christy. Actually Pegeen has become a blind lover. So, she needs Christy any cost. From her character we can understand that the women of

twentieth century can break the relationship if they get better men. Because she thinks Christy is better than Shawn because of Christy killing his father but when she knows that Christy did not kill him, she is even ready to leave him.

Widow Quin is also the important character of this play and also presented as confidant character because she is the one whom Christy can trust on. She is smart thirty year old woman with helpful nature. From the middle of act I and the beginning of act II, she is impressed by Christy Mahon because of his fake bravery. She wants to stay around him and listen to him. She also arranges village game for him. She tries to help Shawn Keogh to let Pegeen come in his life. So she is trying Christy to get away from Pegeen life. Although she tries to make Christy send away from Pegeen she also helps him in difficult situation. When Christy father comes to catch his son, she helps him to hide behind the stage. Similarly she helps Shawn in this way:

SHAWN. [in an imploring voice.]-

Let you not take it badly, mister honey, isn't beyond the best place for you where you'll have golden chains and shiny coats and you riding upon hunters with the ladies of the land. [He makes and sign to the widow Quin to come to help him.]

WIDOW QUIN. [coming over.]- It's true

for him and you'd best quit off and not have the poor girl setting her mind on you, for there's Shaneen thinks she wouldn't suit you though all is saying that she'll wed you now. [Christy beams with delight.] (2.1.276-80).

In this extract Shawn is asking for help with Widow Quin indirectly and she helps him but Christy doubted that they try to bribe to leave that place. Indeed, she doesn't

only help Shawn Keogh but also helps Christy in difficult situation. In the end of act II, Christy's father appears in the stage and tell the truth to her. Christy begs her not to tell the truth with others. So she helps him in this situation. She also helps him for village game to win. In the beginning of act III, Philly and Jimmy are talking and meanwhile Old Mahon enters the stage. When he is talking about his son with them, Window Quin tries to shut his mouth up. She tells them that Old Mahon has wound in his head and he doesn't know anything because he has deep injury. Although she helps him both Shawn Keogh and Christopher Mahon, It doesn't work because neither Shawn gets Pegeen back, nor Christy can hide his secret. In this way, we can say Quin has played the role as round character in this drama. In a way, she is against of Christy because she helps Shawn to get Pegeen back but when she does so it directly affects to Christy because he is also fall in love with Pegeen.

Michael James Flaherty is a next character who represents the owner of the pub. He is also drunkard man. He is represented as static character because he doesn't change his personality till the end of drama. When Shawn and Pegeen are discussing, suddenly he enters the stage with Jimmy and Philly being drunk and involves in discussion. Actually, he drinks alcohol too much and takes his decision easily. When he meets Christy for the first time, he decides that Christy can give security to his daughter. In fact, he is supposed to think if Christy is capable or not. He is also father of his daughter but because of his alcoholic nature he looks irresponsible. He doesn't thinks if her daughter will be safe under his security and if he is trustworthy person or not. He doesn't care anything what's going on. In the middle of act III, he again decides Shawn deserves for her daughter because everyone knows that Christy has not killed his father. In this way we can say that he is not capable for making decision. His personality may represent the common people of Mayo society, this is the reason

why the people from Mayo society appreciate the patricide which is completely unacceptable in normal society.

Jimmy and Philly are local framers in this play. They are always together. They work in farm in a day and they visit pub at night. Like Michael James, they also drink alcohol too much. As a matter of fact, they are drinking partner of Michael James. We can see in the act I, they enter the stage with Michael James being drunk and involve in argument between Pegeen and Shawn. Although they are minor character in this play, they have played vital role. Actually their characters are also important in this drama because of their characters we can easily guess how the people from Mayo society do work for living. In this way, it is apparent that most of people from Mayo society work in farm in day and they visit pub at night to involve in unnecessary gossip. This is how they spend their life to get pleasure.

Finally, there are other characters who represent the role from dandy village girls, they are Sara, Susan, Honor and Nelly. They are visible in the beginning of the II act. They come to visit to see Christy because they think, Christy is a brave person who has killed his father. So they are also curious to hear the story of Christy how he has killed his father. As a matter of fact, they are also in illusion that Christy has killed his father but this rumor separated all over the village that's why they are willing to see Christy. Unlike girls from other society, they are fan of murderers. As we know all girls are scared of those man who kills their father. But the girls from Mayo society is different from others:

NELLY.

Are you thinking them's

his boots?

SARA. [taking them up] - If they are, there should be his father's track on them. Did you never read in the newspapers the way murdered men do bleed and drip?

SUSAN. Is the blood there, Sara Tansey? (2.1.31-37).

In this extract, four girls go to see Christy and outside the door they are looking at the boot to check the blood. They are confused whether there is mud or blood. There after they go to meet Christy in order to talk to him and listen to his story. They even make breakfast for him and dream of him. Actually, Christy is surrounded by those girls and also get flattered. They seem as if they are thankful meeting him. When Pegeen Mike comes towards them. They flee from there. In short they have played vital role to make Christy hero in this play.

In this drama, *The Playboy of The Western World*, Playwright has used good character as bad one and bad character as good one. Christy Mahon who is known as murderer of his father has been a good character. People from Mayo society praise him because of his bravery act. In my opinion I guess they are psychopath, immoral, careless and rude which led them to alcoholism, patricide and dirtiness. Michael James who is flat character in this play owns the pub. His pub is dirty and unmanageable. He is also drunkard and looks psycho because he takes his decision easily without thinking anything. To my surprise, he is ready to give job to Christy as a security guard for his daughter. He doesn't even guess if his daughter will be safe or not under the control of Christy. However, Pegeen is also ready to accept him and gradually falls in love with him though she has had already fiancée. Because of her

changing thought, she is known as round character. Christy is also known as playboy because he is fond of girls. But he is presented as protagonist. In the end of first act, he thinks he should have killed his father earlier because girls like him because of his patricide quality. Moreover several girls from village also come to see him. As we know, the one who kills his father is never accepted by the society. He would rather be hated and scorned. Girls would also be scared of those people who kill their fathers. But Mayo society is completely different. So Christy Mahon becomes hero and he seems playing good role in this drama.

Likewise, Christy's father Old Mahon and Shawn Keogh are supposed to play bad role because they both go against Christy. Christy's father always tries to control him and he also forces his son to do what he doesn't like. That's why Christy has tried to kill his father. Actually Old Mahon comes to pub looking for his son but Widow Quin doesn't help him to find him. Because she is also supporter of playboy Christy. So, we can say Old Mahon has bad role in this drama because of being villain of his son life. Talking about Shawn Keogh, he wants to marry his fiancée Pegeen but she has an affair with Christy. So she wants to marry Christy not him. But Shawn Keogh can't leave her. So, he makes a plan to send Christy away. So that he can get his love back. Pegeen dumps Shawn because she thinks that he is not brave person and he can't do anything for her. In her opinion Shawn is a coward man. So he doesn't deserve her. In this way, we can say that Shawn has played the role of villain in Pegeen's life. In our society, we find the character of Shawn as good and decent one. But in Mayo society, those people are regarded as useless man. Those kind of people don't have any value in that society. Thus Shawn Keogh has bad role only because he is coward and truly loves Pegeen and he is not playboy like Christy.

Some writers have defined character and characterization in their books.

According to J. A. Cuddon the concept of character is most popular in 17th century. Although Character has long history the study of character analysis began from this period. Cuddon also describes about 'Abbey Theatre' where the drama *The Playboy of the Western World* was performed. Actually Abbey Theatre directly deals with characters of this play *The Playboy of The Western World*, because he says that Irish morality was offended by this drama on which there is significant role of character. So there was riot during this time while performing drama. It is because in this drama, Playwright J. M Synge uses many characters whose performances directly affect the audience.

Likewise according to M. H. Abraham defines character and characterization in this way:

The character is the name of literary genre, it is short and usually witty, sketch in prose of a distinctive type of person. The genre was inaugurated by Theophrastus, a Greek author of the second century B.C., who wrote a lively book entitled *Characters*. The form had a great vogue in the earlier seventeenth century; the books of characters then written by Joseph Hall, Sir Thomas Overbury, and John Earle influenced later writers of essay, history and fiction. The titles of some of Overbury's sketches will indicate the nature of the form: *A Courtier, A Wise Man, A Fair and Happy Milkmaid* (48).

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Talking about the character of this drama, Cyril Cusack says that he wrote out of his experience of playing Synge. He further says “When I first joined the Abbey Theatre, at its old Marlborough street house, in 1932 repertoire was stalling into a collection of museum pieces (54)”. So on the basis of his experience, through this drama playwright himself is searching him in this drama. He also describes all characters are close enough to playwright as well.

Characters and Their Role in *The Playboy of The Western World*

There is most important role of characters in this play *The Playboy of The Western World*. It is because, without characters audiences can't feel anything and they don't know who does what in the drama. As a matter of fact, drama is an image of society. To sketch the society, characters needs to play the vital role of people. So, they are extremely needed to emerge the events and situation of the society in drama or play.

In *The Playboy of The Western World*, the playboy is what Christy becomes. In the beginning, Christy is like other people. He doesn't have any value or importance. When he tells his story to others frequently that he kills his father then he becomes valuable person and he gets praised and appreciation. He is also surrounded by several girls from the village and this is how he becomes playboy. In this way, dramatist makes characterization to the people understand what and who is playboy. According to Kate Prudchenko in *Why is Character an Important Elements on Short Stories?:*

Characters are an important element in short stories because they drive the story as a whole. The types of characters that are involved in a story create different types of conflicts and tensions as well as different

types of resolutions. For example, a story about a prostitute who tries to start a new life by going to college will have a different set of tensions, conflicts and resolutions than a story about a truck driver who kills a hitchhiker and tries to make amends for his crime. These characters' desires, hopes, dreams and thoughts are the driving force of the whole story.

He means to say that character is most important because they lead a story whole. There are different types of characters it creates different kinds of conflict and tension as well as different types of resolution. Prudchenko further gives example of Prostitute and truck driver who goes college and kills a hitchhiker respectively to show different set of tension and resolution. On the basis of his definition, Christy who kills his fathers is known as playboy and it creates tension to the audience.

The main role of the characters in *The Playboy of The Western World* is to sketch out what kinds of people stay in the Mayo and how normal human being changes in to playboy. Moreover what encourages people to kill their fathers? Talking about Pegeen Mike, her character shows the quality of modern woman who runs after playboy. In the early twentieth century, most of women used to be looking for those men who looked hunk, powerful and brave. So, Synge satires on those women like Pegeen Mike and other village girls Susan, Nelly, Honor and Sara who are running after so called brave men. Moreover, we can understand the people of early twentieth century were against of arrange marriage. So Christy becomes against of his father because his father is looking for a girl whom he doesn't like. So, he is forced to kill his father. Similarly, Pegeen dumped his fiancée Shawn Keogh. Likewise, the character of Pegeen's father shows the men of early twentieth century were excessively drunkard. Actually, playwright J. M. Synge has made good

characterization in this drama because unlike other plays, it is quite strange and interesting. This kind of characterization satires on those people like Christy who are happy on fake glorification and men who think themselves playboys and women who run after so called brave men. After all these things are good for nothing.

In conclusion, the role of characters in *The Playboy of The Western World* is most important. The characters of this play reflects the lives of Irish people and societies of Mayo to Kerry Island in the early twentieth century. So through the characters of this drama, we can understand that the life style of people is so miserable in early twentieth century. It is because the people of that period was untidy, alcoholic and follow immoral activities.

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