

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the study

The thesis writer chooses a play to be analyzed because it is more interesting compared to other literary works. She thinks that through dialogues, a play is open to interpretation. Through a play, the thesis writer can notice the kind of situation or emotional feelings that each character has to deal with and also find out about their reactions through what each character says. A play gives brief and concise details of the situation in which the conversation takes place. Because of her interest in analyzing a play, she chooses an Irish play.

The early nineteenth century was the beginning of modern Ireland. This era had been a “fruitful period” of Irish parliamentary politics that had been dominated by two men of genius: Daniel O’Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell. After the death of Parnell, the young generation of Irish intellectuals and writers turned from politics to art. The new generation of intellectuals and writers derided

English culture and exalted all things Irish as their reaction to England and its colonial policies in Ireland (Benson 5-6). From the criticisms, the thesis writer sees that the movement against England and its colonies raised the cultural nationalism among Irish people, especially when W. B. Yeats initiated the opening of the Abbey Theatre. Because of this movement, the Irish became braver to show their culture. After living under English colonialism for many centuries, finally, Ireland rebelled against the English. They fought for their independence. At that time, the Irish were able to show their nationality. This rebellion was also shown in their reaction toward crime. There was an ‘impulse to protect the criminal’ and it was ‘universal in the west’ because of ‘the association between justice and the hatred English jurisdiction’ (Benson 116). The action of protecting criminals showed Irish’s hatred to the police, symbol of English colonialism.

In this period of the new Irish cultural movement, there were some writers of genius such as W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, J. M. Synge, and Sean O’Casey. They represented the political, social, and religious life of Ireland. Among those Ireland writers, the thesis writer chooses J. M. Synge to be studied because among the writers, Synge grounded his dramatic art specifically in Ireland. Besides that, the thesis writer also sees that Synge was an important person in the development of British drama, especially Irish drama.

“Isolation” in his plays was usually based on Synge’s experiences in the past life (Watson 35). The thesis writer notices that Synge’s past had a great influence in writing his plays. It can be seen in his college life that he found no friendship or community to “compensate” for his alienation from his family and their

Protestant faith. He ignored student activities, and only focused on music and Irish culture. In his letter to Molly Allgood, his fiancée, he used to sign himself ‘Your old tramp’ (Benson 23). Like tramp and tinkers in his plays, Synge chose to isolate himself from the community. In his plays, he created a character as an isolated person which was based on his isolation experiences. From here, it can be seen that Synge used his isolation experiences from family and society as a basic situation in his plays. Besides that, it can be said that Synge was a realist because he created his characters in his plays based on his experiences, and the story became more alive because it was based on a real situation (Cubeta 696).

J. M. Synge was a key figure in the Irish literary Renaissance in the early twentieth century. “Although Synge only wrote six plays, he was nevertheless one of the finest dramatists of the Irish theatre as well as an important figure in modern drama. His influence on Irish drama and literature had been particularly important” (Hochman 603). The thesis writer sees that although Synge only wrote six plays, he was able to give a great influence on Irish drama and became an important person in modern drama. Besides that, the thesis writer notices that Synge had an important role in the development of Irish drama. He gave an unusual and a special form of drama in English and it influenced a lot to the other dramatists. “The fluid, poetic prose, rich in colorful imagery drawn from the speech of the western counties and the Aran Islands, is unequalled in modern drama in English. It is a special form of dramatic expression forged from the union of poetry and the particular intonations of Ireland” (Hochman 604). The thesis writer sees that Synge’s language was very special because he was able to

combine a poetic language with the native language that was used in Ireland. Besides that, Synge also used legends that he heard in the Aran islands as the sources for his plays, for example the legend about a Connemara man who killed his father with a turfing spade and fled to the Aran islands where the society hid him from the police. It is said that it is “Ireland’s most famous legendary figure and represents a new departure for the dramatist” (Hochman 604). The use of language and legendary stories that Synge used in his plays was new for the world of English drama, and it made him different from the other dramatists in his era. So, it can be said that Synge gave a great influence to the development of modern English drama because he was able to represent a new form of drama.

J. M. Synge (1871-1909) was one of modern Irish dramatists. The Irish cultural movement influenced Synge to learn more about Irish language. Especially during his years in Paris, when he was studying literature and languages, his interest in Irish culture and the Irish language deepened. His meeting with William Butler Yeats had become the most important event in his literary life. He encouraged Synge to develop his ability in writing plays. *So*, he advised him to go to Aran Islands. In the islands, he found “an almost untouched peasant culture, with Irish as the universal language, and an extraordinary beauty dignity in the bare cottages” (Coxhead 308). From the quotation, the thesis writer notices that in that place, Synge found what he was searching **for**. He found a society that was rich of Irish culture and was not yet touched by modernism. The natural condition of the environment still could be seen, and it made Synge become interested in its naturalism. Besides that, he also found “the legends, the

folktales, and the speech” of the people there (Benson 1). The thesis writer sees that every society must have its own legends, folktales, and language, and they might attracting other people. Synge was interested in the legends, the folktales, and the language in the Aran Islands. Having taken Yeats’s advice, Synge spent a month in the islands in the late spring of 1898 and returned each summer for the next four years. His visits to Aran Islands had importance in shaping his vision and his art. The result of his visits was When The Moon Has Set. Although it was not a good play, it was the beginning step which led Synge considered to leave Paris and moved to Ireland forever (Benson 9). The thesis writer sees that although he did not succeed at the first time, he did not give up easily. Even, he found a place that expressed all of his interest, so he decided to move to Ireland and deepened his interest about Irish in the Aran Islands. His trips to the islands had a great effect on his plays, because he used his findings for the materials of his plays, Riders to the Sea, The Well of the Saints, The Playboy of the Western World, Deirdre of the Sorrow, The Tinker’s Wedding, and The Shadow of the Glen (Benson 1). Between those plays, the themes of four of his plays were taken directly from the islands, those of The Playboy of the Western World (1907) and Riders to the Sea (1905) from the actual happenings, those **of** The Shadow of the Glen (1905) and The Well of the Saints (1905) from folktales (Coxhead 308). Besides those themes, Synge also “celebrates the richness **of** the solitary ...” (Benson 1). Like in The Playboy of the Western World, it is written that the action of the play takes place near a village, on a wild coast of Mayo and in Riders to the Sea, it is written that the scene is on an island off the West of Ireland. The thesis

writer sees that the scenes of those two plays proved that Synge presented his interest in solitary places to make them as the materials for his plays.

Among Synge's plays, the thesis writer chooses The Playboy of the Western World. The events in this play are based on actual occurrences in the West including the violence, the lawlessness, and the hard life in Kerry and Mayo society. Besides that, Synge combined the harshness and a romantic situation. It can be seen from the play that there is an action when Christy tries to kill his father in front of the villagers and also, there is a 'growing love interest' between Christy Mahon and Pegeen Mike. Synge also wanted to show that the islanders had sheltered a parricide because they felt he was sincerely repentant and had suffered enough (Armstrong 312). In the story, Christy Mahon comes to the village as a shy and frightened boy in order to escape from the police after he has killed his father with a loy (a long thin spade used for cutting turf or sod). He finds out that the people of the village accept him and the girls admire him, his self-confidence rises. Actually his father, Old Mahon, is not dead yet and he comes to the village to **look** for his son. Old Mahon realizes that his son already has his own self-confidence, and Christy makes his own decision to leave the village with his father.

The thesis writer chooses the topic about the emotional development of Christy Mahon in Synge's The Playboy of the Western World. After she reads the play, she sees that Christy is the most developed character in this play. He is able to develop from a boy who is frightened to be a man who is brave to accept the reality. The thesis writer notices that it is interesting to analyze this topic. On his

first arrival on the west coast of Ireland, in a country public house, Christy **looks** so frightened. But after sometimes, he is able to gain admiration from the villagers and get attention from the girls, and be proud of it. The thesis writer notices that the climax of Christy's development is at the end of the play. In the end of the play, he is able to accept the reality about his father and brave to go against the villagers and his father. From this, it can be seen that Christy experiences the emotional development that brings him to maturity.

#### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The thesis writer wants to know how Christy Mahon's experiences lead him to his emotional development that shows his maturity.

#### 1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the steps of emotional development that are experienced by Christy Mahon. Each steps shows that Christy is experiencing a process of maturity.

#### 1.4. Importance of the Study

The thesis writer chooses to study about John Millington Synge, an Irish dramatist, in her thesis because she notices that there are only a few students who want to take J. M. Synge's plays for their thesis. The thesis writer hopes that after she wrote about J. M Synge, the other students who read his work and his life will have interest to study and to analyze one of his plays. Through his playwriting, the

readers are able to know about the Irish, including the life of the people. She wants the readers of her thesis to become curious and wants to know more about Irish identity, especially about J. M. Synge.

The thesis writer thinks that it is good for the readers to know about J. M. Synge and his plays because J. M. Synge was different from the other dramatists, especially modern Irish dramatists. Although he only wrote six plays, his distributions for English drama were great. He gave a lot of influences in drama by presenting a new and special **form** of drama. He was also a realistic dramatist because his plays consisted of the real life of a society, especially in Ireland. He was able to combine the positive and negative sides of human beings, such as love, poverty, and brutality. The thesis writer hopes that after the readers read her thesis, they will be encouraged to analyze J. M. Synge plays.

Besides that, by choosing the topic about the emotional development of Christy Mahon, the thesis writer wants to make the readers understand that the development of someone's emotions show someone's growing process. She notices that every human being must experience emotional development that might influence someone's life. She sees that the changes of someone's emotion are influenced by the people around him/her and it might develop someone. Also, the thesis writer wants the readers to know that the surroundings are able to influence the changing of someone's emotion and develop him/her character. In this case, family and society that live around us give a big influence to the development of someone's emotion.



### 1.5. Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is on each step of emotional development that are experienced by the main male character. The limitations of this study are on Christy Mahon as the main male character who experiences the emotional development, and also the society and Old Mahon, Christy's father, that give a big influence in Christy's development.

### 1.6. Methodology

The thesis writer uses library research in doing her thesis. Firstly, she chooses the topic that she wants to discuss, and then she looks for the books that contain the critics about J. M. Synge and his play, The Playboy of The Western World. To analyze the topic, the thesis writer uses literary approach. She uses literary tools such as characterization, setting, and conflict to analyze Christy Mahon's emotional development. Besides the literary approach, the thesis writer also uses some psychological concepts to support her analysis on emotional development. She uses the theory of emotional development, fear, and denial. By using these theories, she can analyze about the steps of emotional development that are experienced by Christy Mahon.

### 1.7. Organization of the Study

The thesis writer divides this thesis into four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that consists of background of the study, statement of the problem,

purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations, methodology, and organization **of** the study. The second chapter is the review of related literature. The third chapter is the analysis of the thesis. And the fourth chapter is the conclusion.