
UNIT 2 CRITICAL ANNOTATIONS TO *THE PLAYBOY*

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The Primary objective of this Unit is to enable you to assess the play by drawing your attention to certain key questions on it and then providing study notes.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Playboy of the Western World is one of the finest plays of this century by the Irish playwright John Millington Synge (pronounced sing). Remember there are two other dramatists of Irish origin in your course, Bernard Shaw and Samuel Beckett.

2.2 HOW TO USE THE STUDY MATERIAL

- (i) A play is meant to be put on the stage. So the best way to start your work on the play is to see it staged first. But since that is not always possible the next best thing is to read the play aloud with fellow students participating in the reading.

The reason behind this is that it is important to respond to the play directly before turning to criticism or to an account of the riots over *The Playboy's* performance.

There is so much of wild imagination and poetry in it that you must let it come through to you and work upon you. And the only way to do it is to read the play aloud. You must remember that a play achieves its full effect only in a good performance.

- (ii) Your first reading of the play should be a general reading.
- (iii) Please ensure that at least one of your readings of the play is a detailed reading. When you do this, you should make use of the notes provided in the material and any other help that you can get from any other source.
- (iv) We have tried to make this material self-contained. But you will need to look up some other material on the play mentioned in the suggested readings.
- (v) The text of the play that we have used in preparing this Study Material is contained in *The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge*, edited by T.R. Henn (London : Methuen, 1963) reprinted as a University Paperback in 1968. But you should feel free to use any other text of the play.

2.3 KEY QUESTIONS

Before you begin to read, I would like to suggest several questions that are central to any meaningful discussion of the play and that you could keep in mind as you read it.

1. What is the play about? This will lead you to the question — what kind of play is it?
2. Does it remind you of some other comedy or comedies that you have read? Is it different? In what way?
3. Is it an 'extravagant comedy'? Does it have elements of farce?
4. What about the serious elements in it?
5. How do you respond to the language of the play?
6. Why do you think the play offended its first audiences in Dublin and USA?

2.4 STUDY NOTES

Notes: An effort has been made to provide fairly exhaustive annotations to meet the requirements of distance students as not all of them may have easy access to libraries.

2.4.1 Synge's Preface to the Play

Synge here explains how he has been able to combine realism with poetry in the play. He says he has used only one or two words in the play that he has not heard from the country people of Ireland.

Lines 1-12 In writing *The Playboy* . . . compared with the fancies one may hear in any little hillside cabin in Geesala, or Carraroe, or Dingle Bay: Synge lived among the Irish peasants in the Aran Islands when he visited the islands for years from 1889. Synge had been in Paris in 1896 when Yeats met him and advised him to go and live among the Irish people and 'express a life that has never found expression.'

I have used one or two words only that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland . . . This, according to Synge's biographer, was not an exaggeration and "it must have angered him when his Dublin critics accused him of foisting an outlandish vocabulary upon the peasants of the West of Ireland" (Green, 144).

Lines 12-23 *All art is collaboration . . . let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kitchen:* The key sentence here is: *All art is collaboration.* It is a collaboration because in this case the language used by the dramatist has been provided by the people. He counts the Elizabethan time among the happy ages of literature, happy in its use of language in the use of 'striking and beautiful phrases' that the poet has heard from the people, that have just come hot from the oven of the people's imagination.

Lines 24-28 *in countries where the imagination . . . in a comprehensive and natural form:* Notice Synge's emphasis on 'rich and living' language and 'reality,' which according to him is the root of all poetry. He finds fault with modern literature because it lacks this combination.

Mallarmé Stéphane (1842-98) French symbolist.

Walt Whitman, Karl Jorja: Writer and critic, in his *A Rebours* (1884) translated as *Against the Grain* (1926) he describes the perverse life of Des Esseintes, a dedicated aesthete who prefers artificial flowers and man-made scenery to living nature.

Ibsen, Henrik (1828-1906) Norwegian dramatist generally recognized as the founder of modern prose drama. He influenced Shaw (among others) who introduced his work to English theatre.

Zola, Emile (1840-1902) French novelist and dramatist. He is the high priest of the naturalistic movement in literature. His essay *Naturalism of the stage* (1880) was widely influential. According to Zola, imagination has no place in literature and that nature is sufficient without modification or pruning.

Musical Comedy a form of theatrical entertainment that developed in the USA during the 19th century. It combines song, music and spoken dialogue. Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1902) was

2.4.2 The Text of the Play

Act I

shebeen: a house selling alcoholic liquor in Ireland.

settle: a bench with a high back and arms and often with a box fitted below the seat.

turf fire: fire fed with grass.

creel cart: cart that has high movable sides, used for carrying turf, pigs, sheep, etc.

Kate Cassidy's Wake: *Wake* is a watch beside a corpse before burial. T.R. Henn gives this description of the ceremony of a wake: 'The body, dressed in its shroud and "tidied" - usually by some women, not of the family, who has known skill in this—is laid on a table in a corner of the room, candles burning at head and feet. As each visitor enters he lifts the cloth from the face of the dead to make his farewell. The visitor kneels down to say a prayer. At one time it was customary to place a conical mound of snuff on the navel of the corpse, from which each took a pinch as he went by. Then, one by one, the callers pass to the group round the fire. Each is given a new clay pipe, ready loaded with tobacco. There is whisky and stout in whatever quantity the means of the relatives allow, and tea for the women.

'The talk round the fire develops, first, as a series of praises of the deceased, reminiscences and anecdotes (always favourable) about his or her life; and finally might develop into something like an orgy. The whole ceremony is pagan, down to the symbolism of the new claypipes, overlaid with Christian ritual.' (From Introduction to *The Shadow of the Glen in The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge*, ed. T.R. Henn [London: Methuen, University Paperback, 1968], p. 29)

Scruff of the hill: slope below the summit.

Aren't we after making a good bargain: Apparently dowry was prevalent.

Father Reilly's dispensation: It is necessary because Pegeen and Shawn are marrying in the month of Lent, i.e. the period of fasting and penitence. The dispensation finally arrives in Act 3

Queer lot: the word *queer* recurs in the play several times.

The like of Daneen Sullivan Knocked the eye from a peeler: who knocked . . .

Peeler a policeman, originally a nickname given to the Royal Irish Constabulary, instituted under the Secretaryship (1812-1818) of Sir Robert Peel.

Maiming ewes: disabling ewes; a favourite way to settle grudges against one's neighbours. Or landlord.

He a great warrant to tell: he is highly skilled and famous for telling.

Father Reilly has small conceit: would not have allowed.

Is it the like of that murderer?: Pegeen's objection to Widow Quin is because she is 'a murderer.' But ironically later she is to urge her father to employ Christy as a potboy because he is a murderer and brave.

Himself: Master of the house, i.e. Pegeen's father.

When he sees you taking on: when he sees you getting frightened?

I'm after feeling a kind of fellow: I have a feeling there is a kind of fellow.

Well, you're a daring fellow: Pegeen is using these words ironically here. The same words are used for Christy Mahon also but in a positive sense.

don't let on: don't reveal this secret.

Whisht: (Scot & Irish dialect) be quiet, hush.

God bless You! The blessing of God on this place: A customary greeting used by an Irish peasant, a neighbour or a stranger, on entering a cottage. The Irish peasant of the time used these blessings almost without thought of their significance.

Stooks of the Dead Women : rocks on the sea-shore; a stook is a conical cluster of sheaves of oats set up to dry. "Do you see that sandy head, he said, pointing out to the east "that is called the Stooks of the Dead Women; for one time a boat came ashore there with twelve dead women on board her, big ladies with green dresses and gold rings, and fine jewelleries, and a dead harper or fiddler along with them." (*In Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara*, 1911), p. 119.

Bad cess to them : bad luck to them.

Gripe of the ditch : hollow of the ditch

Leave me go : There is a lot of horse play in *The Playboy*.

old Pagan : Shawa uses the phrase for Michael probably because what he wants him to do is something so unlike a Christian.

Penny pot-boy : a serving man in a cheap public house.

Lonesome West : The emphasis throughout is on the "lonesome" West.

You'll have no call : you will have no need

God save all here : Cf. *God bless You?* (P. 178).

A bona fide : a bona fide traveller, so exempted from licensing "hours"; here genuine.

You're wanting, maybe? : you are probably wanted (by the police)? This question by Michael is the beginning of the snowballing of the lie.

He did what any decent man would do : probably attacked and killed the man who came to evict.

divil a one : (colloq.) not even one or not at all.

gentle, sim'lar : Gentle here means of good social position as against common people.

He'd beat Dan Davies-circus! : The exaggeration suggested is typical of the people here. Note the vivid imagination of the people.

Boers : South African of Dutch origin.

Kruger : Full name - Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger (1825-1904) South African soldier and statesman. He led the Afrikaners i.e. the whites esp. the whites of Dutch origin to victory against the British in the First Boer War in 1881. He died in exile in 1904.

With the help of God I did . . . : Notice comic incongruity of religious piety and murder.

Crusty : irritable.

I'm a law fearing man : Notice the oddity of the situation where a man who says he had murdered his father claims to be a law abiding man. But the irony is wholly unconscious.

Hanged his dog from the license : because he could not afford to pay for it.

I just rix the loy : I just raised the loy; a loy is long thin spade.

Aye, I buried him then : Note the force of the stage direction Considering. Christy is now committed to circumstantial story and its elaboration;

Spuds : Potatoes.

Oh, a distance place, . . . a windy corner of high, distant hills : That Christy is now making up his story is clear from the vagueness of his reply.

The sense of Solomon : wisdom of Solomon. Solomon was the king of Israel c. 970-930 B.C. known for his wisdom and magnificence.

Poteen : (Irish) illicit liquor made from potatoes, oats or rye. Its manufacture was once a major industry in the West of Ireland, and the search for "stowed" whisky a major preoccupation of the police.

The peelers is fearing him : Note how others join in building up Christy's self-esteem.

Bravery's a treasure in a lonesome place : Cf. "There's a daring fellow" in Act II.

Loused khaki cut throats : This is one of the reminiscences of the Boer War.

The walking dead : The phrase anticipates Old Mahon's reappearance later in the play at the wrong time.

If they're not fearing You : There is a reversal of situation here. At first Christy was afraid of the police and asked if the shebeen was safe from the police. Now Michael believes that the police would probably be afraid of Christy.

drouthy : thirsty.

Let You stop a short while anyhow: Pegeen has shifted her attentions to Christy now.

Himself in it too : The master of the house himself has no objection to his (Shawn's) staying with Pegeen during the night.

I'm tired surely . . . waking fearful in the night : This is the real Christy.

a kind of quality name : aristocratic name. Christy promptly accepts this suggestion that he belongs to the landed gentry. The Mahons were a famous military family.

You've said the like of that, maybe : The eternal response of a woman in such situations.

Streelem : chat.

You'd have as much talk and streelem : Pegeen attributes the qualities of a poet to Christy.

I never killed my father : Pegeen's apology for not killing her father is highly comic.

it's most conceit you'd have : *Conceit* here means personal vanity.

And I after, toiling, moiling, digging . . . : again the real Christy.

Poaching : catch (game) illegally.

I was a divil to poach : I was

St Martin's Day : 11 November; St. Martin's summer means a period of fine mild weather about this date.

Gaudy officers : wearing the striking Edwardian uniform of the militia.

Banbhs : young pigs.

I a seemly fellow with great strength in me and bravery of . . . : This interruption of Christy in mid-sentence is eloquence. His reaction to the knocking is highly comic. Contrast Christy's boasting with Old Mahon's account of his son in Act II.

I'm in terror of the peelers : As soon as he hears a knock on the door, all his veneer of bravery goes and he appears as one who is afraid of the police.

Stringing gabble : continues talking.

curiosity man : man who had aroused the curiosity of others. What other titles are given to Christy? Make a list.

Priesteen : little priest

penny poets : selling ballads at fairs.

Never overed it : never got over it, Widow Quin's murder "a sneaky kind of murder" contrasted with the hero murder by Christy.

Houseen : little house. The Irish suffix -een is used to form diminutive nouns. Make a list of such diminutives.

Without a tramp : It's true the Lord God formed you to contrive indeed : This match of abuse between women is highly comic.

A sop of grass tobacco : dried but uncured tobacco leaf.

I hefer stay : I would prefer to stay.

There right torment will await you here . . . : Widow Quin's prophecy about Christy's torment at the hands of Pegeen comes true in Act III.

Act II

County Clare : in the province of Munster in the Republic of Ireland.
Cruceen (or knockeen) : little hill.

gamy : sensational.

"*You squinting idiot,*" says he : Here find another evidence of the growth of the Christy's lie about having killed his father.

He was letting on . . . : he wanted to give the impression.

Under a dray : *dray* is a low, strong flat 4-wheeled cart without sides, used for carrying heavy loads.

That's grand story. He tells it lovely : These comments sum up the attraction Christy's story has for the people here. Why is it considered 'a grand story'? What makes it 'lovely' in the telling? What makes Christy such a good or lovely narrator?

he gave a drive with the scythe : Christy gives an immediate proof of his skill as a story teller. He is inventing details of the epic fight.

Supeen : a little sup.

You're heroes : It what sense are they 'heroes'?

Drink a health to the wonders of the Western world . . . : Sara is proposing a mock toast to an odd assortment of people.

a white shift : a white undergarment.

huffy : rudely proud.

Lepping the stones : crossing by stepping stones.

That lot came over the river. The reference is to the girls who came to see Christy.

It's not three perches : *perch* is a measure of length of land of 5 1/2 yards.

Frish-frash : froth-like substance like beaten egg.

Shut of jeopardy : safe from danger

It's queer joys they have : Note Pegeen's sadistic description of hanging. This is her reaction to Christy's flirtation with the girls.

Lonesome : keyword for Christy.

Coaxing fellow : flattering, persuasive.

Esau : the elder son of Isaac and Rebecca in the Bible.

Cain and Abel : sons of Adam.

Neifin : the name of a mountain west of Loch Conn, between Newport and Bollina.

Erris plain : Erris is a barony in northwest Mayo.

The needy fallen angels do be looking on the Lord : Note the biblical comparison made by Christy to describe his own need of a woman.

What call have you? : You don't have to?

I'm thinking you're an odd man : Pegeen is truly puzzled and also affected by the talk of Christy.

Wattle : thin stick.

mitch off : sneak away, play truant.

Inveigle You off : to trick you away from

thra'teen : bit of thread, shred.

Cleeve : basket

Kilmainham : a notorious jail in Dublin.

It's hard case to be an orphan : Shawn is sincerely lamenting his not having a father. Or else he could kill him and be a hero like Christy. This is comic.

rye path : path by the side of a small rye field.

turbary : right of cutting turf on a stretch of bog.

the long car : a kind of small waggon once popular in the West for postal services.

one blow to the breeches belt : Note how the stroke becomes magnified steadily as the story is re-told. Cf. "he split to the knob of his gullet" (p. 197).

Where'll I hide my body from that ghost of hell? : Notice how Christy's pride is punctured at the moment when it is most inflated, when he thinks he is most secure.

Did You see a young lad passing this way . . . : Old Mahon does not use the customary greeting "God save you." You can guess why not?

Streeler : rugged youth. The word is used mainly by city boys.

gob : mouth, hence the whole face.

Divil a robber : The word *divil* is used to express strong disagreement. The phrase would mean "far from being a robber."

a dirty, stuttering lout : After the romantic build-up of Christy we have his father's version of what his son was like.

mortified scalp : wounded head.

A great shame when the old and hardened torment the young? : Widow Quin is vastly amused at the sudden turn of events. And she is deliberately provoking old Mahon.

a liar of walls : one who lies on walls or sits on or leans against them.

Finches and felts : birds

it of glass we had hung on the wall : The looking glass plays an important part in building up Christy's self-esteem.

baronies : In Ireland a barony is a division of a county.

The laughing joke of every female woman : Here is the other version about Christy.

The spit of you : Your exact likeness.

Civil warrior : because he is not in the military.

You're the walking Playboy of the Western world, and that the poor man you had divided to his breeches belt : Widow Quin uses the term in its English meaning, hoaxer, fraud. The tune has changed now and she sarcastic now.

Weasel tracing a rat : weasel is a type of small thin fur animal with a pointed face which can kill other small animals. A weasel works quickly weaving from side to side to pick up the scent.

he a kind of carcass : dead sheep and cattle were not buried but pushed over cliffs into the Atlantic.

after the love-light of the star of knowledge shining from her brow : At moments Christy's language becomes incandescent.

spavindy ass : lame with spavin, disease of the hock-joint.

It's her like is fitted to be handling merchandize in to heavens above : instead of selling things at her small shop.

at the corner of my wheel : The old men come in to gossip while she is spinning.

Boreen : lane.

It'll be great game : Fun is what Christy's coming has provided to the inhabitants of the place—till such time it becomes serious in Act III.

gaffer : boss or man in charge.

Roulette man : roulette is a gambling game.

cockshot man : who allows sticks to be thrown at him, for money at fairs.

hobbled yet : *hobble* is to cause a person to limp.

he flings up two halves of that skull : The discussion of the skull and the graveyard is macabre and recalls Hamlet and Webster.

there was a graveyard . . . : Synge had heard the story in Kerry.

I doing nothing but telling stories : Here is another storyteller who wins clean beds and food for the other side of the story of the murder.

I knew a party was kicked in the head by a red mare : Note how the playwright has brought the image of the horse and clock together in the "metaphysical" fashion.

Isn't madness a fright : isn't madness frightful?

Skelping them : slapping them

mangy cue : diseased dog.

the champion Playboy of the Western World : Widow Quin had used the phrase earlier in Act II. Find out where and in what context. She now knows the reality of Christy and so uses the phrase ironically.

winkered mule : mule with blinkers on the bridle.

there isn't a ha'p'orth : ha'p'orth is a contraction of half penny worth; a small amount. There is nothing that he isn't winning.

They're pressing him now : Note the ingenuity of the stagecraft for reporting the races. What we have here is a running commentary of the last item of the mule race. The important thing is that Old Mahon is made to witness the triumphs of his son.

Who is he at all? : Old Mahon's question is really a question that vocalizes his wonder at the doings of his son.

I seen rats as big as badgers sucking the life blood from the butt of my lug : "with teeth fixed in the lobe of the ear." Perhaps the image is derived from weasels or ferrets, who usually fasten on rabbits at the base of an ear. lug is British slang of an ear.

brain pan : the case of bones in which the brain is contained.

Parlatic : paralytic.

Then I'd best be going to the union beyond : Old Mahon has been convinced by Widow Quin that he is mad.

a terrible and fearful case : again the heroic delight in reported violence.

darlint boy : darling boy.

since striking my one single blow : Christy now never forgets to mention his "heroic murder" of his father with one blow.

a land of pity for the Lord God . . . : The image is also used in from Synge's own poem "Dread":

Besides a cahpel I'd a room looked down,
Where all the women from the farms and town,
On Holy-days and Sundays used to pass
To marriages, and Christenings, and to Mass.

Then I sat lonely matching score and score,
Till I turned jealous of the Lord next door . . .
Now by the window, where there's none can see,
The Lord God 's jealous of yourself and me.

The image is said to have been taken from Douglas Hyde's

"Lone Songs of Connacht":

I had rather be beside her on a couch, ever
 kissing her.

Than be sitting in Heaven in the chair of the
 Trinity.

till we are astray in Erris, when Good Friday's by : A good Catholic does not make love in Lent.

mitred bishops : mitre is a type of tall pointed hat worn by priests of high rank.

If the mitred bishops : Christy has been truly transformed and is at his eloquent best in these lines.

Such poet's talking, and such bravery of heart : Note the two qualities that appeal to Pegeen.

Isn't there the light of seven heavens . . . : The comparison of the beloved with light is traditional.

paters : the Lord's prayer

tempted to go sailing the seas till I'd marry a Jew-man : Yeats' ballad. Colonel Martin is perhaps relevant here: "The Colonel went out sailing,/ He spoke with Turk and Jew."

And to think it's me is talking sweetly . . . : These lines bring out the transformation brought about by love.

For You'd never see the match of it for flow of drinks : Wakes were occasions for heavy drinking.

throw him on the crupper . . . : the opportunity for drinks at a wake is not to be missed. *Crupper* is a leather belt passing under a horse's tail and tied to the saddle to prevent it from slipping forward.

gilded desperation : dispensation is the Roman Catholic permission to disobey a general rule. cf. p.177.

no savagery or fine words at all : Shawn doesn't have the acquisitions that Christy has. Cf. p.218.

Picking up a dirty tramp up from the highways of the world : Note the rhythm and cadence.

And have You no mind : Shawn's speech is largely materialistic and is in sharp contrast to the sheer poetry of Christy's eloquence.

Drift of heifers : Contrast this with the reference to the 'drift of chosen females' made by Christy, which created a storm in the Abbey Theatre when the play was first presented in 1907.

the plains of Meath : the more fertile lands of the midlands and south-east are proverbial in the west for their wealth.

the rising tide will wash all traces : Perhaps this line recalls the image of washing in *Macbeth*.

Liefer : rather.

Then I'll make you face the gallows : Christy tries to 'reenact his murder' of his father.

I'll not renege : break my promise. In a few moments she will forget all about her promise.

win an easy or a cruel end : Yeats's 'Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore' is relevant here. "A bloody and a sudden end,/ Gunshot or a noose.

that all should rear up lengthy families : Genesis viii, 17 is relevant here ["Bring out with you every living thing . . . so that they may abound on earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.]

He's not my father : In his desperation Christy even denies his father.

You're fooling, Pegeen : note how the crowd turns against Christy.

And to think of the coaxing glory we had given him : Pegeen is the first to turn against Christy and she is the severest.

Munster liar : Christy who belongs to Munster.

Rule the roost in Mayo : be the leader in Mayo.

state him now : attack him now.

the old hen : influenza

cholera morbus : the peasantry love to pick up bits of medical knowledge.

scorch my understanding at her flaming brow : an Elizabethanism that seems over-rhetorical in the context.

If them two set fighting: The scene now turns into a fight between the father and the son with the crowd enjoying it. The only person distressed is Pegeen.

if you're after making a mighty man of me by the power of a lie : probably the heart of the play.

run from the idiot! : The crowd that had cheered Christy now turns abusive.

a drift of chosen females standing in their shifts itself : These lines were considered a slur on the Irish nation, particularly Irish womanhood.

There're going to hang him now: There is some sympathy among girls for Christy.

hanging is an easy and a speedy end : Contrast this with Pegeen's description of hanging to scare Christy on p. 199.

gallows story: gallous is from gallows.

there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed : Christy's story of his 'heroic murder' of his father is approved so long as it is a mere story. The reversal comes when he tries to turn the story into reality.

scorch his leg : "I had defended the burning of Christy Mahon's leg on the ground that an artist need not make his characters self-consistent, and yet, that too was observation, for although these people are kindly towards each other and their children, they have no sympathy for the suffering of animals, and little sympathy for pain when the person who feels it is not in danger" (Yeats, *Essays and Introduction*, p. 326).

With ladies in their silks and satins snivelling in their lacy kerchief : as in many popular "hanging" ballads of the eighteenth century.

Picking cockles : According to T.R. Henn, the coldest, wettest and most ill-paid of work.

I'm master of all fights from now : There is a new Christy now.

Ten thousand blessings upon all that's here . . . : There is no bitterness in Christy towards the people of Mayo, those who first lionized him and then turned hostile towards him.

Romping lifetime : lively years of life

Oh, my grief, I've lost him surely : The only person who has suffered a loss apart from Christy is Pegeen herself.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

Reading this play can be a bewildering experience for some readers. Parts of it are sheer fun. But there are several other elements in it—wild imagination, picturesque language, love, violence, plenty of role-playing and the element of the grotesque and much else. Also, the play does not have a happy ending usual in comedies.

2.6 GLOSSARY

farce : A light humorous play the objective of which is to provoke uproarious laughter. For its effect a farce depends on exaggerated physical action, absurd situations and improbable events. The plot of a farce generally moves with surprising rapidity.

grotesque : The dictionary defines it as strange and unnatural so as to cause fear or laughter. In a literary context the word is used to denote ridiculous.

bizarre, extravagant. The grotesque element is used by writers for comic and satirical purposes.

Picturesque : charming and interesting, (of language) unusually clear, strong and descriptive.

2.7 QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions:

- (i) Which character in the play uses the word *playboy* first?
- (ii) Which other characters use the same word?
- (iii) Where is the action of the play located? In which part of Ireland?
- (iv) How much time does the action of the play take?
- (v) Which place does Christy belong to?
- (vi) The word *shebeen* means a small country pub or public house selling liquor. There are several other words that end with the suffix *-een* which is used to form diminutive nouns. Make a list of such words and find their meanings with the help of a dictionary, if necessary.

2. Identify the speakers of the following lines and the situation in which these lines are spoken.

- (i) "Well it's a clean bed and soft with it, and it's great luck and company I've won me in the end of time—two fine women fighting for the likes of me—till I'm thinking this night wasn't I a foolish fellow not to kill my father in the years gone by?"
- (ii) I know well it's the man; "I'm after putting him down in the sports below for racing, leaping, pitching, and the Lord knows what."
- (iii) "Take him on from this, or I'll set the young lads to destroy him here."
- (iv) "It's Pegeen I'm seeking only, and what'd I care if you brought me a drift of chosen females, standing in their shifts itself, maybe, from this place to the eastern world?"
- (v) "Well, you're the walking Playboy of the Western World, and that's the poor man you had divided to his breeches belt."
- (vi) "Oh, my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only Playboy of the Western World."
- (vii) "I'll say, a strange man is a marvel, with his mighty talk; but what's a squabble in your background, and the blow of a loy, have taught me that there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed."

3. Write an essay giving your personal impression of the play.

2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Corrigan, Robert W. Ed. "Farce, Satire and Tragicomedy," *Comedy: Meaning and Form*. 2nd ed. New York : Harper & Row, 1981. Pp. 191-227.

Cuddon, J.A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 3rd ed. Penguin Books; 1992. [Read particularly the entries on *comedy*, *farce* and *grotesque*.]