

# **Investigating Gender in Irish Literature through Corpus Linguistics**

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### **Abstract**

Scholars on Irish Studies have been paying more attention recently to the portrayal of Irish identity and gender in literature. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, playwrights portray several models of masculinity, namely J. M. Synge and Seán O’Casey. In my discussion of a selection of their plays I address discourses on masculinity and how it manifests itself in rural or urban Ireland, by exploring behaviour, language and identity standards of the countrymen. By studying Synge’s and O’Casey’s representation of opposite scenarios of Ireland I discuss to what extent it may be gendered, and whether the perceptible models of masculinity are part of a bigger hegemonic pattern. Through close textual research, the use of a corpus analysis toolkit (AntConc) and a wide critical framework on Irish identities, gender and language, I distinguish between two opposing poles on the masculinity spectrum: one the traditional patriarchal male archetype and the other, the “young lad” who submits to the strongest figure but fights for his freedom.

### **Keywords**

Irish Revival, Corpus Linguistics, Masculinity, Synge, O’Casey

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## 1. Introduction

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a historically unique opportunity for Irishmen to fashion their own biographies (Johnston and Morrison 663), to create their own masculinity, not based on what they saw throughout the patriarchal and hegemonic ruling of the British Empire, but a new one. One that would break with the stereotypical image of the Celt, always subdued to a stronger Saxon figure. In order to do this, Ireland had been preparing for a revolution with several unsuccessful attempts beforehand. However, this would not bring down the Irish self-confidence. Through a powerful networking of literary texts, a group of authors would rise at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to promote and boost the Irish morale towards a free land.

In this dissertation I wish to explain and analyse a selection of male characters in six plays from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by John Millington Synge (1871-1909) and Seán O'Casey (1880-1964). I aim to study these characters both through their speech and behaviour in order to discern whether the authors gave them new identities or a new model of masculinity different to the ones there were before. Moreover, I use two different techniques to approach this topic: both Gender Studies and Corpus Linguistics applied to the language and behaviour of the characters in drama.

Theatre in this period has been selected because during this time the Irish Literary Revival and the Revivalists used the stage as a means of spreading both literature and nationalist political propaganda. Some of the authors from the period created a literary society which would develop in the Abbey Theatre. It is in this theatre in which the plays I study were performed with different levels of success and failure. There have been a number of multiple and alternative masculinities permeating the Irish stage throughout the centuries (O'Brien 287), thus, why this period and not another?

Firstly, because of the state of the Irish nation as a colonised country: the image of the Irish on stage was delimited by what's called the "stage Irishman", a clown and drunkard image of the Irish, as a mockery to the country. It is this anti-colonial cultural project that tries to reinvent the "stage Irishman", stripping him from his melodramatic buffoonery and comic sentimentality, and re-clothing him in Celtic allegory which in turn, re-mythologised him once more (Singleton 294). Thus, the authors not only changed the image of the Irish on stage but also created the new belief that there was an

actual common tradition in all Ireland of a shared and collective identity (Hidalgo Tenorio 75). Secondly, the new models of masculinity appearing throughout this period would also modify other aspects of the Irish representation on and out of stage. The Irish Literary Revival as a movement would include attempts to rectify the presentation of Irish speech in literature (Connell 158) and the way men address each other in order to convey different meanings. Hence, there are two significant new ways of approaching figures on stage because they were altered from their previous imaginings.

A lot has been said on masculinity and language (Johnson and Meinhof's *Language and Masculinity* collection; Lakoff; Kiesling), but what is said in relation to the Irish man is very limited. Amongst those few who studied Irish masculinities there have been some that have identified what's called the "lad culture" (Lapointe; Ní Laoire; Johnston and Morrison). This term refers to a new identity created for and by Irish men as a new stage where men can interact with each other in their new selves. However, before this new term, masculinity had a binary and traditional view on gender in which romantics and nationalists had to fight to defend their country and their honour for a much feminised Ireland. Changing masculinity in Ireland is not something new though, from the moment the Irish took a stance against the coloniser they were already identifying themselves as something opposite and different from them. Yet, it is only through the Revivalists that the image of the heroic and mythological Irishman is settled and accepted as an identity men strive to achieve, whether it is another hegemonic identity or not will be dealt with later on.

What the characters in the plays say, what they actually do and what it is expected of them is studied through their discourse in the corpus analysis in order to see whether there is a pattern in their speech and interaction with each other or not. Some of the authors that recommend the study of literature through corpus as an added insight to its study can be found in *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics* edited by McCarthy and O'Keeffe with authors like Amador-Moreno, Evison, McIntyre and Walker who provide new ways to analyse corpus and literature. Some other authors provided understanding to the exploration of corpora like Biber, Conrad and Reppen, McEnery and Hardie, or Sinclair.

Hence, in my study of Irish models of masculinity (in section two "Analysed Data"), first I aim to present the historical framework for the creation of the Abbey

Theatre and discuss the two authors before-mentioned, who made an impression on the audience: J. M. Synge and Seán O'Casey. Then, in the third section named "Methodology" and in its subsequent sections I will introduce the study of corpus linguistics and gender through the fictionalisation of the Irishman. I will present the size of my corpus and the data that will be analysed in the following sections of the dissertation (keywords, collocations and concordances) and also the different approaches to Irish identity and thus, masculinity.

Section 4, (Analysis and Results) discusses the findings of the corpus examination in the six plays selected, three by J.M. Synge and three by Seán O'Casey. This section will look at the speech of the male characters more in depth and will analyse their patterns of speech and how their behaviour differentiates them in various categories or models of masculinity (heroes, anti-heroes, patriarchal figures, weaklings...). I will analyse a selection of words that are key to the interaction amongst men and the times they appear in the text could tell us whether they are important or not in men's discourse. Furthermore, this study will also focus on the concept of "power" in both authors in order to provide some more insights into the way power forces flow between the characters.

This dissertation closes with section number 5, "Conclusions" in which I sum up the results and whether they fulfilled my expectations and my objectives when first analysing the data or not. Finally, future lines of investigation on Irish masculinities will be pointed out.

## 2. Analysed Data

### 2.1. The Irish Revival and the Abbey Theatre

When the Irish Literary Revival started to take roots among the Irish writers during the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a nationalistic movement that would cross borders, not only by the widespread nationalistic theories across Europe but also as a way to erase the stigma surrounding the Irish language and the Irish themselves, as, according to MacCarthy, they had become the mark of poverty and illiteracy in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (32). In the early 1760s, the first translation of the poems of Ossian, the Gaelic poet, was done by James MacPherson and it had a vast influence which drew attention to the rich Irish Literature tradition until then, only known locally (Chaudhuri 35).

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), one of the most famous writers in this movement, wanted to create a literature that belonged to people. The poets and artists of the time believed they could change their country's situation through their writing because politicians and revolutionaries would feel patriotic when they read them (MacCarthy 31). This Revival, or Golden Dawn, was also the product of a sophisticated media environment which would help the cause of de-colonisation through a varied amount of newspapers and other media devoted to spread nationalism across the country. Gregory Castle describes all the media involved thus:

“pamphlets, theatres, theatre groups, literary and political societies with their own publishing outlets, schools and universities tactically redeployed rhetorical tropes and figures in ways that did not revive the past so much as mediate it anew, offering new ways of thinking about Ireland, Irish identity and Irish time” (207).

In this same line, Hidalgo Tenorio points out how the defence in favour of the Irish language and culture was used by politicians to expand nationalism, but how the authors of the Irish Literary Revival used nationalism as the expansion tool for literature (90). It was a two-way exchange of ideas, concepts and identities.

Therefore, in this context, writers like W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge founded in 1904 (after the creation of the Irish National Theatre Society in 1903), the Abbey Theatre. In their manifesto W. B. Yeats wanted to “bring upon the stage the



deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland” (Owens and Radner 2). Despite wanting to bring literature to the people, it is undeniable that under the cultural education they wanted to provide for the country, the theatre and its founders also actively contributed to the political undercurrents of the movement, both nationalistic and literary. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the previous plays that were performed in Ireland had tried to become global with an industrial mode of production (Morash 326). The Abbey Theatre on the other hand, was a local theatre produced in a nearly artisanal manner in which the ancient idealism of the country or the “Tír-na-nÓg” (the country of eternal youth) was brought back to life.

The curtains went up in 1904 in the Abbey Theatre’s opening night with three one-act plays: W. B. Yeats’ *On Baile’s Strand* and *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, and Lady Gregory’s *Spreading the News*. J.M. Synge’s *In the Shadow of the Glen* replaced the second play by Yeats the following night. Yeats started out in the conviction that texts by Synge, Lady Gregory and himself would provide the foundation for “the idea of a nation” (Kiberd 127) as they had been for a long time under English rule, they would need to create a new state for the country, once they were free. The theatre was conceived as the fittest medium for professing the ideals of this literary nationalism (Chaudhuri 62).

The early years of the theatre brought great success to it. Big crowds would gather and watch many productions. J. M. Synge was considered to be one of the prominent English-language playwrights. What the first Irish writers in English were doing was something that had never been done before: they were using the oppressor’s language and making it their own (MacCarthy 15), but the movement had power on its own as it was partially founded on folk song and folk stories the audience were familiar with. Edward Hirsh states that the most important writers of the period were Anglo-Irish descendants, however, the rural country people (“the folk”) were all Catholics (1122), which would work in the rewriting of the Irish characters in plays, especially the rural ones. In a semi-colonial Ireland the relationship between “settler” and “native” was more blurred than in other colonies both because of centuries of colonisation and the close proximity between colonist and colonised. This created “Anglo-Irish identities” (McDonald 74), something that was difficult to differentiate from Irish identity. Synge was one of these Anglo-Irish descendants along with W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory or Douglas Hyde.

Synge, who despite having been born in a comfortable family, spent several summers in a little cottage in the Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland, by Yeats' suggestion, in order to write, learn the folklore and improve his knowledge of the Irish language. He would then reproduce a standardised version of what he would hear among the lives of the countryside people in his works. He received a lot of criticism because he did not follow the "English literary formula" (Kiberd 174). However, we have to take into consideration how Irish writers whose native language is English manage to be both outside and inside a defining boundary, to be stamped with an identity that is both familiar and foreign (Mahaffey 21-22). That is, Synge acknowledges the culture of the occupying English, assimilating it effortlessly, only to immerse himself in the native culture (Kiberd 186). Synge creates his own theatrical world inside what Christopher Collins calls "cottage kitchen realism" (13) designed to break every stereotype set upon the Irish peasant.

This reconfiguration of the natural landscape was not only portrayed by Synge and the Revivalists. A few years later, when the Abbey theatre was going through some financial problems, a new writer would present his plays and the landscape he would redefine was not that of the rural areas in Ireland, but the city. Seán O'Casey maybe not consciously, turned his characters into urban versions of Synge's storytelling peasants (Connell 187). O'Casey turned the audience's attention from the countryside into the city especially in the trilogy that it is going to be studied: the Dublin Trilogy. Synge and O'Casey experimented with their portrayal of Irish people in different and opposite ways and both witnessed in the Abbey Theatre several riots in the performance of some of their plays. However, O'Casey was the one to cut ties with the theatre in 1928 when the board rejected his anti-war drama *The Silver Tassie* (Cannon Harris 177), which eventually made him stop writing realist plays.

The Abbey Theatre on the other hand, underwent several periods when not even one of its most famous and richest benefactors, Annie Horniman, could help. In 1951 there was a fire that damaged the building during the run of O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* so it was relocated first to the Queen's Theatre on Pearse Street and then to its current home (Lower Abbey Street) in 1966 ("History - Abbey Theatre.").

## 2.2. Analysed works by J.M. Synge and Seán O'Casey

One of Synge's first works was *The Aran Islands* published in 1907 in which there is a layer beneath the surface where Synge could perceive certain pagan beliefs, these obviously hidden behind a Catholic façade. This theme can also be seen in one of the plays I will be discussing: *Riders to the Sea*. In this play, Maurya, seems to have the Sight. Synge uses his afore-mentioned "cottage kitchen realism" to introduce supernatural elements he must have witnessed during his time in the West of Ireland and especially, in the islands. This previous play and *In the Shadow of the Glen*, both written in 1902, were performed in the Abbey Theatre, one in December 1904 and the other in February 1905. The plays depicted stories that Synge had heard in the Islands. *Riders to the Sea* portrays life in a small coastal village where women have to stay at home and men go to sea. The second one, *In the Shadow of the Glen* it is the story of a man who pretends to be dead in order to find out whether his young wife was being unfaithful or not. Both plays were controversial for the topics they dealt with. Synge was criticised for being an antinationalist: his way of describing women was considered unfair and he was not idealising his characters in the manner others Irish Revival writers were doing.

At the time there were two types of schools of writing: one devoted to the heroic Cúchulainn, his legend and ancient heroes, and the other to a vision of the western side of the country peasant as a secular saint and nearly a Gaelic mystic (Kiberd 171). Synge offers a bit of both, however trunked they are. For once, he presents the peasants with a mystical air, like Maurya in *Riders to the Sea* who might have the Sight, or the Tramp in *In the Shadow of the Glen* who represents the "Natural Man", (maybe even the Green Man, a mythical creature). These two types of peasantry representation takes us back to the medieval "seer" or the bard in Irish Literature who were connected to nature and had the ability to "read" the natural landscape correctly (Frawley 18) and move freely. However, it is with *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) that Synge offers the maximum representation of the national hero among peasants: Christy Mahon, a young man who killed his father and becomes a hero in a County Mayo village, again in western Ireland.

The first two plays created some sort of stir amongst the nationalists for their untrue representation of the rural peasant, but the *The Playboy of the Western World*, first

performed in 1907 in the Abbey Theatre, caused riots among a significant part of the audience as they were upset by the numerous instances of “unmanly” behaviour by Christy Mahon, the main character (Lapointe 68). Nevertheless, this would not be the last play causing riots in the Abbey Theatre. In 1926, the third part of the Dublin Trilogy by Seán O’Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, was performed in the same theatre provoking riots again as it was set in the Easter Rising week and did not represent the heroic face of the uprising, but the life in a tenement house, just like the other two plays (*The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923) and *Juno and the Paycock* (1924)) with the added plundering and looting by some characters.

The Easter Rising was an armed conflict during the Easter Week of 1916 in which Irish Republicans tried to fight off the British hegemony by establishing an independent republic. It was one of the most noteworthy rebellions since the one in 1798 in which there was a lot of street fighting, barricades and the usage of the Post Office as headquarters for the Irish rebels, which nowadays tourists can still visit and see the holes made by bullets (Maley and Lusk). The British suppressed the Rising with greater number of weapons and after the surrendering the rebels were imprisoned and executed (Hawkins 143). According to the Glasnevin Trust, part of the most famous and biggest cemetery in Dublin, there were at least 485 men, women, and children killed during the 1916 rebellion in which the majority, 54% were civilians caught up in the fighting, followed by a 26% from the British Army and 16% from the rebel forces (“1916 Necrology 485”; McGreevy; Smyth).

In her study of Seán O’Casey, Hidalgo Tenorio compares how the different plays in the Abbey Theatre have different impact on both the audience and society:

“If Yeats’ *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* represents a world of patriotism and Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* shows the linguistic lushness and the peasant bleakness, [...] O’Casey portrays the nationalistic suffering in the urban world in which language is a differentiated fingerprint on each character”<sup>1</sup>.

It is not only Synge who tries to imitate the peasant language, O’Casey too, heavily relies on language to convey the nature of his characters, and he alters orthography to do

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<sup>1</sup> My own translation from “Seán O’Casey: El Canto del Hijo Pródigo en el *Exilio* a Dublín”. Blanco Pérez, José Ignacio et al.,. Pp. 215-228

so to show the vernacular English of Dublin at the time (Hickey 178). O'Casey opposes comedy and tragedy to represent the other side of nationalism in a country where patriotism was the highest exposure of the self. What's more, he shifts away from the often idealistic work of the Abbey Theatre founders towards more realistic portrayals of Irish life (Connell 178).

O'Casey himself was part of the Irish Citizen Army for a time, but he became disillusioned with the Irish nationalist movement because he cared more about the nameless civilian casualties (Kiberd 224) than the nobility, the heroism, and naïveté of the nationalist movement. *The Shadow of a Gunman*, the first part of the Dublin Trilogy was performed when the last fires of the Civil War (1922-1923) could still be heard in 1923 and he tried to represent the unheroic elements of the war as he focused his first two plays in the Dublin slums, a couple of years after the war. His way of picturing the pangs of the poor (Kiberd 218) instead of describing the heroic deeds of the army was also a way of rejecting the patriotic swagger of men caught up in the struggle for Irish independence (Seán O'Casey | Irish Dramatist) based on useless sacrifices. His literary efforts insisted on opening up the definition of Irishness to incorporate groups not included by the Revivalists (Connell 188). Irish identity from this point of view was not something to look for in the past that the Revivalists so hard tried to bring back, but in the future.

*Juno and the Paycock* (1924) would be one of his most successful plays in the period and it is known how O'Casey will save with this play the Abbey Theatre from closing down. The audiences who first flocked to *Juno and the Paycock* were excited to taste the raw reality of life in Dublin's slums (Cannon Harris 179-180), in which the disappointment of life is expressed by several characters that portray stock identities in everyday Dublin life. It is with his third part of the trilogy *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), set during the Easter Rising week, that the depiction of sex, politics, patriotism and even the contraposition of a prostitute in a pub to a man delivering a patriotic speech, may have caused the riots in the theatre, although later accounts state that it was not the prostitute what cause the rioting but the "lack of respect for the tricolour" ("Riot At The Plough And The Stars"). However, it is interesting to remark that if O'Casey

really wanted to engage in a serious dispute on political and revolutionary thoughts, he curiously failed to include a single solemn political thinker in his trilogy<sup>2</sup>.

The presentation of the characters and their portrayal will be discussed later on in order to study their identities as men, both Synge's peasants and O'Casey's working-class men. In order to do this, it is interesting to see how O'Casey's poetic speech is an heir to Synge's, who had found in the peasantry a rich idiomatic language (Kiberd 219), and as such, a way of implicitly commenting on a run-down world that still believed in heroism and sacrifices for the war. Still, it is worth remembering how no countryman ever talked consistently in the way Synge or O'Casey described their characters. They would hear the speech of the people around them and use it in order to create a constant discourse for their characters: Synge, through eloquent and poetic tramps and O'Casey through great talkers who are strikingly ineffective when it comes to pragmatic matters (McDonald 80-81). However, this does not mean that it is not truly representative or that the speech of an average Synge character is that of an average Irish country-man<sup>3</sup>. Both authors would transcribe the language they hear and apply it to their characters to give them meaningful personalities. The use of direct speech not only adds effectiveness to the tale but it also represents the author's portrayal of the language of those characters (Amador-Moreno 532).

Despite using different types of slang and accents in their plays, the effect is still the same, it situates us in the period where the events are happening and it also sheds some light on the phenomenon of gendered speech and the gendered division built around it. I will return to this point in the section below, which deals with corpus linguistics, and gender and language in the hopes to find through this analysis, patterns of speech that provide some clues as to whether the selected characters modify their speech not only when talking to women but also when talking to men.

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<sup>2</sup> From McDonald, Ronan. "Seán O'Casey's Dublin Trilogy: disillusionment to delusion". Richards, pp. 136-149.

<sup>3</sup> From Kiberd's *J. M. Synge: "A Faker of Peasant Speech"?* pp. 59

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Selection of Corpus

For this dissertation a corpus with a selection of texts by the two authors, J. M. Synge and Seán O'Casey, was created. The first three plays that will be analysed here are Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (hereafter *Riders*), *In the Shadow of the Glen* (The Glen) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (The Playboy). In the last two plays there are clear instances of men who behave in a certain way to impress other men or women and to feel confident (Christy Mahon in *The Playboy*) or those ones who behave as they are, some brutish, some true to themselves (like the image of the "Natural Man" of the Tramp in *The Glen*). However, it is interesting to oppose *Riders* with the other two plays because the former one stars women in a purely men's environment, as it could be life at sea and how those fishing's villages depended on men to survive. I intend to analyse not only the representation of masculinity in Irish society but also the absence of men (as in the case of *Riders*), through what is said about them.

O'Casey's plays belong to the Dublin Trilogy: *The Shadow of a Gunman* (hereafter *Shadow*), *Juno and the Paycock* (*Juno*), and *The Plough and the Stars* (The Plough). These three plays do not only provide a sharp contrast among rural and country life in Ireland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but they will also demonstrate that there is a richness worthy of theatrical representation in the cities (Connell 193), even in the slums where it seems that the characters are dealing with the aftermath of the idealism put into the national movement (Cannon Harris 176).

I lay out three main questions for the analysis: (1) Can these works be a representation of masculinity in Ireland at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? (2) Do these works follow the same patterns of masculinity and patriarchal hegemonic rule in Ireland despite going through a revolution? And (3) do they contrast life in the city (Dublin) and life in the countryside (mostly western Ireland) creating different but valid models of masculinity?

In order to answer these questions, I will aim to find the connection between language and masculinity in some of the characters, as they may represent several models of masculinity. Thus, the selection of the study of linguistics and gender will use a corpus-based approach. That is, a study first of the text through close reading and then

the research of the specific data that helps consolidate one's hypothesis<sup>4</sup>. The corpus-based approach is usually opposed to the corpus-driven one of a literary text. As Tognini-Bonelli points out, it seems that the claim of being based on a text appears to be vague (65) in the sense that the corpus is only used as a tool instead of making it the main provider of results and data of the text. However, the corpus-based approach can be a valuable source of quantitative evidence that will help the researcher shape and modify the model of investigation (ibid. 66). Hence, a combination of corpus linguistic analysis is needed as well as some exploration on the reader's part (Koester 66; Nelson 54) because interpreters could come across some errors in the tagging process or they could fall into making strong conclusions when working on limited data (Sripicharn 382).

Let us start with the definition of corpus. The word *corpus* has been used for a long time to refer to a selection of written works of a similar nature with some attesting of this use already in the eighteenth century (McCarthy and O'Keeffe 5). The electronic analysis available nowadays enables researchers to find amongst other things, concepts in a corpus (O'Halloran 214). Thus, Corpus Linguistics provides a means through which to study and analyse language with a set of machine-readable appropriate texts on which to study a specific set of research questions (McEnery and Hardie 1). Technology has enabled the growth of corpus linguistics so that big corpora can now be stored in small places, and looking for a specific characteristic is easier to find nowadays.

There are several big corpora that have been collected throughout years of working like the British National Corpus (BNC) with a 10 million word collection from samples of British English both written and spoken, however, little has been done on Irish literature using this approach. Some of the few corpora that deal with Irish-English are the Corpus of Irish English (CIE) gathered by Raymond Hickey with seventy texts from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Parsed Old and Middle Irish Corpus (POMIC) with texts from the 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century, and the Limerick Corpus of Irish-English (L-CIE) mainly focusing on conversational data.

For this study, a corpus of six plays with a total of 56,922 words was compiled in order to research the speech patterns of a selection of male characters, with the belief

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<sup>4</sup> From O'Halloran, Kieran. "Critical Discourse Analysis and the Corpus-informed Interpretation of Metaphor at the Register Level". *Applied Linguistics* 28/1 (2007): 3.



that a smaller corpus can be very useful for exploring specific linguistic features (Reppen 32) and compare the texts more closely in order to confirm or refute my hypothesis that men do change their patterns of speech amongst themselves to create some sort of fraternity, to dominate or to subdue one another. Although some authors consider small corpora to be limited in their results (Evison 123; Sinclair 189), they also allow a much closer link between the corpus and the contexts in which the texts in the corpus were produced (Koester 67).

The texts of the six plays compiled for the corpus were of public domain through different platforms like the Oxford Text Archive, The Project Gutenberg and the Corpus of Irish English by Raymond Hickey. All of the texts were in plain text format (.txt) and these plays were checked with printed versions of the works by Synge and O'Casey. The texts were then stored and analysed using specialised computer software. Given its user-friendly interface and straightforward processing, Antconc was used instead of Wordsmith Tool for instance, because of what seemed an unclear display of information for beginners using corpus data analysis for the first time. Section 3.2 below discusses Antconc in more detail and explains the techniques employed for the current study, including the analysis of key words in gender, concordance hits, and collocations.

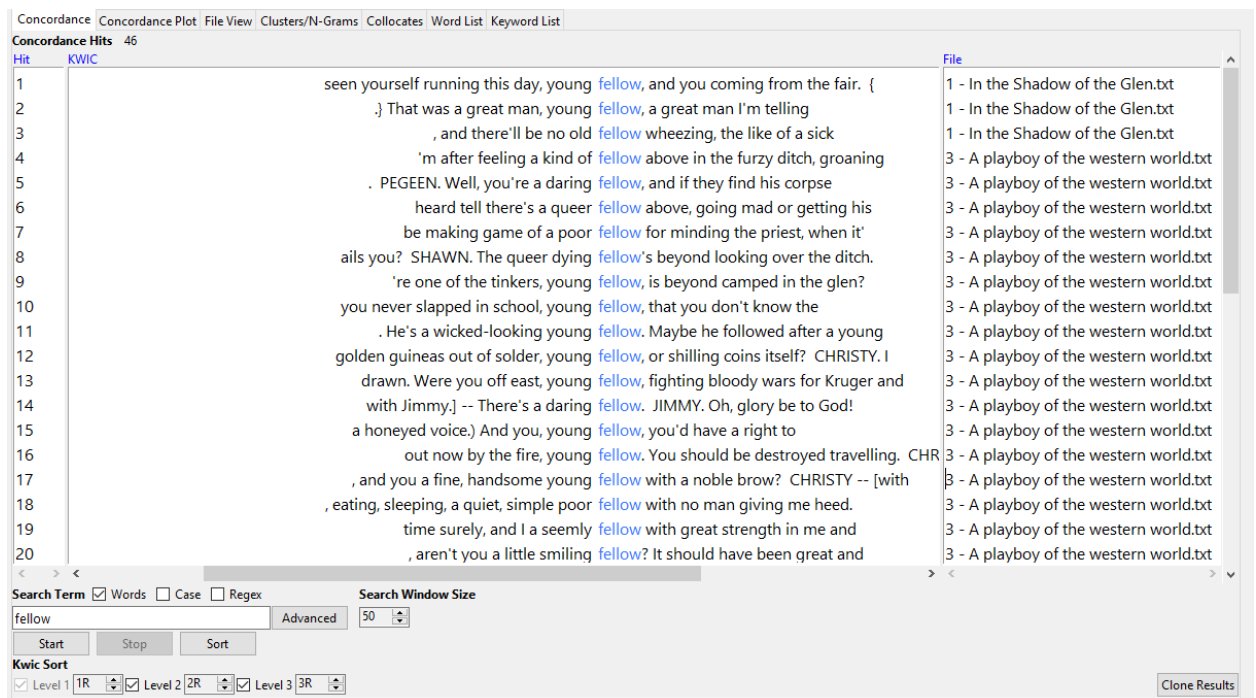
### 3.2. AntConc and corpus basics

As Evison argues, in themselves, corpora cannot tell us much because they are a collection of texts; hence, they are liable to computerised analysis using corpus software (122), that is, texts can be searched quickly providing us with clues that can strengthen the researcher's hypothesis and also give more information because with corpus data, we can take new approaches to a number of areas of interest (McEnery and Hardie 27). As stated above, for the analysis of the texts I have used AntConc, a freeware corpus analysis toolkit with which to study and breakdown the features needed to investigate the patterns of speech of several male characters. In order to do this, and amongst all the characteristics available for scrutiny I have paid attention to *keywords*, *concordances*, and *collocations* of selected words in the texts.

Evison explains how *keyness* and *keywords* are not necessarily the most frequent words in a corpus, but those that are identified by statistical comparison of a target corpus with another, larger corpus, which is referred to as the “reference” corpus (127). Keywords are established through the statistical measure, log likelihood, however, keyword analysis is not purely quantitative (O’Halloran 215), there needs to be a qualitative research to understand their usage in the selected corpus. Hence, for this study, keywords related to gender and social relationships amongst men and women were selected and analysed both in context and in number of concordance hits.

Concordance analysis is also known as KWIC (key word in context), and it is a valuable analytical technique because it allows a great amount of instances of a certain word to be brought together in one place, in their original context (Evison 129). This is useful for hypothesis testing because concordances are displayed in the centre of the page and patterns can be observed from a small number of lines. AntConc, as some other concordance programmes, display the item in lines, all of them centred by the searched item (that can be a single word or a string of words, see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Display sample of concordances hits for *fellow* in Synge’s plays.



The lines are displayed and can be sorted easily, too, but in particular, concordance analysis can provide evidence of the most recurrent meanings (typicality), or the most frequent collocates (Evison 130). Collocates and collocation are co-occurring items,

statements of the habitual or customary places of that word (McEnery 4), for example when I look for instances of “man” in concordances there are several cases of behaving “like a man” or other epithets both ennobled and pejorative (see fig. 2 below).

Figure 2. Selection of collocates *like a*.

Concordance Hits 75		File
Hit	KWIC	
1	laugh as much as you like at me when both of	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 1
2	'clock to come rushin' in like a mad bull to say	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 2
3	I paid me rifle levy like a man, an' when the	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 3
4	't be discussing the situation like a pair of primitive troglodytes	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 4
16	' about from mornin' till night like a paycock! [The steps of	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 4
20	gallivantin' about all the day like a paycock! BOYLE It ud	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 8
21	ladder, but you can skip like a goat into a snug!	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 9
22	life--sure he's not like a Christian at all! JOXER	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 10
23	for your pains; grasp it like a lad of mettle, an'	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 11
24	to blasphemey. I don't like any one to talk disrespectful	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 12
25	be folleyin' you," says he, " like a Guardian Angel from this	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 13
26	ldly several times in succession, like a bird pecking at a	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 14
27	MRS MADIGAN There's nothin' like a ball o' malt occasional	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 15
28	hen Maisie Madigan could sing like a nightingale at matin' time.	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 16
29	, an' we'll bury him like a king. MRS TANCRED An'	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 17
30	' I'll go on livin' like a pauper. Ah, what's	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 18
31	's fate. JOXER Let me like a soldier fall--me breast	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 19
32	lately; an' he goin' about like a masterpiece of the Free	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 20
33	bed when he stole in like a thief in the night,	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 21
34	the chair an' was off like a redshank! JOXER An' what,	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 22
35	goin' to be swankin' it like a paycock with Maisie Madigan'	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 23
43	with a well-mannered motion, like a door of a select	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 6
44	speak proud things, an' lookin' like a mighty one in th'	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 7
45	was, she flew at me like a tiger, an' thried to	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 8
46	pause] NORA It's lookin' like as if it was you	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 9
47	th' time away sittin' here like a pair o' cranky mummies,	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 10
48	immediately ; erects his body like a young cock, and with	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 11
49	face of th' corpse, gleamin' like a white wather-lily floatin'	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 12
50	Plough an' th' Stars fallin' like a shot as th' roof	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 13
51	fingers, an' then you run like a hare to get out	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 14
52	as him. He took it like a man. His last whisper	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 15
53	their noses out, you plunged like a good one through hummin'	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 16
54	f them coughing, and choking, like an old man, with the	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 1
55	bogs till it's more like a pack of old goats	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 2
56	hair sticking out round you like an old bush where sheep	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 3
57	, and you're talking again like a herd that would be	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 4
58	, and they find her stretched like a dead sheep with the	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 5
59	he furzy ditch, groaning wicked like a maddening dog, the way	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 1
68	speaking hard words to me, like an old woman with a	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 10
69	. WIDOW QUIN. I am your like, and it's for that	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 11
70	he blackened with his beatings like a tinker's ass. It'	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 12
71	swearing, raging, kicking at him like a mangy cur. [A great	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 13
72	no place of his own, like an old braying jackass strayed	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 14
73	is it, or run off like a vagabond straying through the	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 15
74	in the splendour of her like, and she a girl any	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 16

Likewise, I identified two types of variability to show representation in my specialised corpus: *situational* and *linguistic* (Biber 243). The former represents the range of registers in the target texts, that is, country speech of rural Ireland in Synge's

works in opposition to city speech belonging to the Dubliner characters in O'Casey's plays. The latter concept encompasses the range of linguistic distributions found in the population at the time of writing such as the different vocabulary used by peasants, soldiers, rebels, and women. The study through corpora of literary texts has been used more commonly in recent years and it is known by the term Corpus Stylistics, which I am going to describe in the section below.

### 3.2.1. Corpus Stylistics

As it has been mentioned before, the study of literature through corpora belongs to the recent concept of corpus stylistics. Authors like Michaela Mahlberg, Dan McIntyre or Brian Walker differentiate the term from corpus linguistics as a new branch of this one. Furthermore, corpus stylistics is seen as complementing other approaches such as literary criticism (Mahlberg 77). It is not a method on its own but a complementary one to study literary texts since corpus analysis is par excellence a means of revealing textual features in precise detail (Widdowson 293). This approach is helpful in order to distinguish certain characteristic features of any character to be studied. Culpeper points out how any information from a character's discourse could potentially be relevant to the construction of the same character (23), but at the same time, the results of the corpus analysis are not a replacement for reading the literary text.

McIntyre points out how stylistics has been concerned with the reader's role in the creation of textual meaning and how they put together a meaning from a text (7). Readers rely on their own knowledge of people in the real world (Mahlberg 92) and as such, corpus studies can reveal patterns and highlight places in the literary text that appear to be relevant for providing clues about language and ultimately characters (ibid. 92). However, we cannot assume that all readers are aware of the stylistic features the author, conscious or unconsciously, has described in the text. Hence, the twofold approach of a text through corpus and stylistics. Despite stylisticians occupying a fairly peripheral position in the display of linguistic description and theorising, the combination of corpus-based techniques and more intuition-based approaches provide new lines with which to study literary texts (Semino and Short 8), and also, characters and their discourse.

With this blend of both linguistic and literary methodology, I intend to find whether there is a pattern in male speech both amongst the country men and the city men as well as to discover whether these gender roles are key topics in the speech the characters developed. As there may be some limitations in using corpus linguistics qualitatively such as infrequent uses of idiomatic expressions, metaphoric language or even the spelling of words (Amador-Moreno 541), in the section 3.3 below, I will introduce the other approach to this dissertation: gender studies and Irish masculinities.

### 3.3. Fictionalizations of the Irish Male

The issue of Irish male discourse was investigated using gender studies approaches to the language of the plays. Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003) provided the framework from the theory of gender studies that was then applied to the representation of Irish masculinities in the corpus.

Let us start with the notion that gender is considered a social category and researchers conceive social identity and gender identity especially, as a social construct rather than a “given” social category to which people are assigned (Holmes and Meyerhoff 11), thus expanding the range of all the different approaches of understanding how and to what extent gender is relevant (or not) in negotiating interaction and constructing complex sociocultural identities (ibid. 15).

Men’s Studies as an academic discipline and critical paradigm appeared in the 1970s and a lot has been said on how men are supposed to behave in and out of society as if it were a measurable trait and some have more of it depending on how they choose to behave in a certain social situation. For instance, proper masculinity and men’s sexuality requires that the object of public interest be not just female, but minimally attractive (Cameron 53), which could be proven and acknowledged by other men so that what women think as “attractiveness” is a concept created for and by men to fulfil some standards. Hence, although gender is a relational term, it seems that the minimal requirement for “being a man” is not only “not being a woman” (ibid. 60) but the fulfilment of the other conditions to which men are also subjected to and are under pressure to accomplish.

According to Baker and Balirrano, men are allowed less flexibility in gender role modelling than women, for instance boys learn not to cry when they are hurt and are often pushed into “male” activities regardless of their preferences, talents and abilities (Bake and Balirrano 3). This pressure to become a man (or a woman) is not something that men accomplish once and for all at an early stage of life. Gender has to be constantly reaffirmed and displayed publicly by performing particular acts in accordance with the cultural norms that define “masculinity” or “femininity” (Cameron 49).

This cultural norm is created by the hegemonic masculinity, the most valuable type of masculinity and the one most men strive to emulate. It doesn’t specify what hegemony to follow but it is the most honoured in a particular context (Kiesling 657). However, despite acknowledging that there are several types of masculinities, it recognises that there is one that is the dominant one, full of unattainable ideals and performances. And one of those cultural accepted performances (and the most common one) is speech.

Robin Lakoff, first in *Language and Woman’s Place* (1973) and in later publications like *Talking Power: The Politics of Language* (1992) was one of the first authors to identify gender speech and its difference between men and women. She asserts that previous to any interaction between men and women, people have already different expectations about what the speakers should do to conduct themselves linguistically. For instance, men are believed to be direct, and women indirect (McHugh and Hambaugh 381), and there still exists the widespread belief among non-linguists that women talk more than men, when research findings from a diverse range of conversational settings have consistently indicated otherwise for several decades now (Connell 107).

In case any of these roles are different to what they are supposed to be by society, speakers can be called *effeminate* (in the case of men who do not take the initiative) or *shrew* (in the case of women being direct)<sup>5</sup>. Lakoff’s method was a version of the “dominance approach” to language and gender, in which the emphasis is placed on

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<sup>5</sup> From Lakoff, Robin. “Language, Gender, and Politics: Putting “Women” and “Power” in the Same Sentence”. Johnson and Meinhof, pp. 161-178.

gender inequality. In this approach men are seen as invisible and dominant all at once: they are dominant because they are the default human category in language and society (Kiesling 655). For example, the connection between authority and masculinity is a social group norm: there is always one leader, however, the connection between low pitch and authority is a social action norm (ibid. 510).

Lakoff was criticised for her lack of empirical data and subsequent research has provided very limited support for Lakoff's hypothesis (McHugh and Hambaugh 382). Since then, there have been some authors that confirmed some of Lakoff's theories about women's language but that it is not characteristic of every woman, or that it is limited to women (McHugh and Hambaugh 382; O'Barr and Atkins 56-71). Significant research has been made on gender discourse and gender interaction in conversation by Deborah Tannen, Deborah Cameron and Janet Holmes in the early 1990s in which they tried to explain to a certain extent women's linguistic behaviour by contrasting it to men's, also in a way, discrediting Lakoff's initial views on gender and language.

In my keyword analysis and their concordances I will try to discern the different patterns of speech in a selected group of male characters. Other authors, apart from Lakoff, that have approached these apparent differences between the speech of men and women are for instance McHugh and Hambaugh. In their chapter on language, gender and power, they reassess some of Lakoff's theories on how women are more concerned with creativity and maintaining community whereas men on the other hand, are concerned with agency and maintaining their own status in a competitive, hierarchical world (McHugh and Hambaugh 386). Men are taught to be competitive and to want to be dominant when very few men actually feel powerful at all.

This lack of men feeling authoritative comes from a disconnection in men's power that creates group norms that all men need to perform, instead of the experiences of individuals (Kiesling 660). In these group performances there is both an affirmation of the normative boundaries of masculinity and a stigmatization of what is not masculine (Ní Laoire 350). "Being a man" in this context of hegemonic masculinity implies values of hard work, tenacity, duty and responsibility. By not conforming to this ideal-type, masculinity is challenged (ibid. 348) and at the same time it is this similar responsibility that men try to fulfil the one that renders them with a certain degree of helplessness. All in all, masculinity then is no less of a social construct than femininity

(Romaine 112), a cultural property of the author and a morphological property of the text (Livia 142) in terms of literature.

The six plays analysed for the present study are both written by male Irish authors, and as such, in their characters they would express some concerns regarding identity, not only as Irishmen in a colonised land, but as men in a country where new concepts of identity were being created. As Cormac O'Brien argues:

“Irish playwriting and theatre production has a notoriously male-dominated history. Because of this masculinist and often misogynistic slant to Irish theatre writing [...] any piece of erudite theatre scholarship can make critical inroads into the deconstruction of Irish masculinity in performance” (286).

Hence, in order to maintain and achieve dignity in hostile environments, Irishmen needed to cultivate political and cultural nationalism (McCaffrey 530) and for this, they could go back to a created identity before the British hegemony or create their own. However, they were conditioned to give power to the ultimate legitimate person in the social order, the white upper-middle-class male, who is unemotional, rational, focused on business and endowed with objective knowledge (Eckert 382).

In this hunt for an identity that would belong to them we also find that gender identity is not only a social but also a verbal category (Weatherall and Gallois 505) that can be invoked in order to adapt one's speech to different contexts and this can be seen in the selected plays when the characters shape their speech and register depending on who they are talking to. Synge and O'Casey use their characters as active producers of gender behaviour and this awareness would be used to produce a variety of effects: engage in acts of transgression, subversion, and resistance (Cameron 50).

It is in part to this resistance to the coloniser that Irishmen were struggling to define their own identity, so in order to redefine themselves as men, conscious or unconsciously they shifted to the notion of nationalist Irish identity and “Irishness” (Lapointe 17). Irishmen were “imposed” an identity by the British; the Saxon embodied the prototypically masculine qualities of pragmatism, reliability, and rationality while the “Celt” manifested the necessary counterpoint; emotional, undisciplined and unstable (McDonald 73). This previously mentioned concept of “Irishness” was portrayed by the “manly” patriot, a model of masculinity that was both Pagan and Christian, warrior and scholar, and a model that boys would love to imitate (Lapointe 97). In this combination



of the national movement and search for identity the Irish Revival came about as a result of Irish people searching for their Irish culture and identity, completely opposite to what the English were imposing on them (SeyedehZahra, Bahman, et al. 1692).

Irishmen were not creating their identities only by rejecting the invaders, but also by contrasting themselves with other versions of the same gender. In order to create a masculine identity along the lines of dominant cultural discourse of masculinity, a man must create a sense of “fellowship” with his male-companions<sup>6</sup>, however, not all men are able to fit into a collective and this shatters any alignment of sexuality, identity and gender (Johnston 87).

This searching for an identity could be rendered ambiguous at the heart of Irish men’s understanding of masculinity. Early stages of presentation of masculinity come about as showing firstly that they are sufficiently masculine and secondly, that they were their own man (Johnston and Morrison 668). The ideological discourse that emerges in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Revival Movement and other nationalists ignites their writers and they embark on constructing another version of the Irishmen, as has been mentioned before: one, the noble and manly warrior and the other, the noble and masculine peasant (Lapointe 63).

In a way, the Gaelic culture survived as a dynamic identity and messianic influence in the lives of the peasantry (McCaffrey 527), nevertheless, to the English public, this Irish peasant incarnated the barbarism and savagery of Irish rural life, the “other”, as it were, and the first task for the Irish Literary Revival was to dismantle this contorted image of the peasant, that was so widespread that people mistakenly considered them historically accurate (Hirsch 1119). The desire of the founders to present their version of Irishness to a wider audience is evident in their many early tours of England, Scotland, Wales and the US (Connell 174). There was a great change in the way the Irish were observed for a long time as a hyper-feminine figure of the gentle, vulnerable “Hibernia” into the savage male: the bloodthirsty Fenian (McDonald 73).

Despite being the theatre one of the main means of spreading this new image of the Irish male, we cannot forget about the change growing inside the country, which is

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<sup>6</sup> From Kiesling, Scott F., “Homosocial Desire in Men’s Talk: Balancing and re-creating cultural discourse of masculinity”. *Language in society*. 34 (2005): 720

part of the land and its culture. The landownership and control of the family resources of rural Ireland was in the hands of the male head of the household, that is, the “male breadwinner”. There is also a close relationship between farm work and masculine identity (Ní Laoire 347) and all the idealised connotations that these notions have created for farming masculinities: family life, morality, landownership and farm work, as there is masculine pride in providing for their families without external aid (ibid. 336).

There’s a slight shift in masculinity performance in the plays and especially in some of the characters that were selected for the present study. In Synge’s plays I make a distinction between the powerful man and the young subordinated one, not only for the way they behave but also because of the way they shape their speech. Some will use the same patterns of powerful speech throughout the play like Dan Burke in *The Glen*, but others will adapt their speech and shift from being subdued to dominate like Christy Mahon in *The Playboy*, who is rewarded with power with his new construction of masculinity after having presumably killed his father.

There is an undoubted idealisation of the peasant in the countryside of Ireland that it is not shown in Synge’s plays. Audiences expected the representation of Irishmen in plays as a comical figure, stereotypically known as what has been mentioned before: the “Stage Irishman” who was characterised as loyal, brave and patriotic (SeyedehZahra, Bahman, et al. 1691), without dismissing the ridicule of the same. Hence, the riots in the Abbey Theatre with *The Playboy*, when rural Ireland was not idealised, but satirised with Synge’s criticism of rural Irish people’s morals. Unlike Yeats, Synge did not believe that drama was conceived to represent Ireland with mysticism and ancient legends (ibid. 1694), he would show a different perspective on the Irish peasant life through the contemporary agrarian unrest and how its society would crumble when met head-on by the violence of the state (Lapointe 68). This is visible not only in the countryside described by Synge but also in the plays by O’Casey who will depict the least manly behaviour in a city ruled by rebellion, looting and greediness instead of the glory and freedom depicted and sold by nationalists.

The few Nationalists shown in O’Casey’s plays aim to call to arms the image of the hyper-masculine Irishman recalling images of ancient heroes like Cúchulainn, a Celtic superman (Lapointe 58). In order to do this, they would address the sense of

protection men should have towards shielding defenceless women, in this case, embodied by Mother Ireland. The writers' country is no longer a passive girl but an aggressive mother summoning her sons to fight and die for her, testing thus, Irishmen's manhood. They might be treating too, the relationship with the coloniser country as that of a gender relationship instead of power, the coloniser (man) subduing colony (woman). Thus, there are certain problems with "manhood" as a category because it is a concept that men experience at any moment; however, the boundary separating the masculine from the non-masculine is constantly under siege (Mahaffey 23). Once the country is free it would also be redeemed from its pre-colonial status through a pure language and land (ibid. 47). However, despite it being a woman beckoning her children to fight for her, it was the male body the one to represent the notion of rebellion and hence, freedom.

O'Casey breaks the rules when he refuses to glorify war and rebellion by giving voice to the slums in Dublin. The manly warrior in his plays is usually an aloof character like Tommy Owens or Minnie Powell, too immersed in their own idealistic and romantic notions of nationalism for them to notice the bloodshed and violent ways which the city was undergoing. If masculinity in the rural areas of Ireland was considered to be fulfilled with the image of the male breadwinner, taking care of their lands and family, that same image in the city was corrupted; there was no time for taking care of one's family but to fall into vices and licentiousness. In *Juno* we can clearly see how the "paycock" is no other than Juno's husband, Captain Jack, only interested in drinking and going out with his "butty" Joxer. Or in *The Plough*, with Peter and Fluther who instead of fighting in the barricades during the Easter Rising, went to the pub. For a short time these last two characters feel full of bravery after hearing a powerful speech by a nationalist leader, the representation of hegemonic masculinity by Irish standards which has been constructed to be idealised, meanwhile, few, if any men, actually come to achieve these standards. And those who do are risking sacrificing themselves and what they could be freed from the heteronormative behaviour.

## 4. Analysis and Results

### 4.1. Normalisation of the data

Because comparing two corpora with a different number of words can be confusing when exposing the outcome of a research I am going to normalise the results in order to explore the raw frequencies of the words and extrapolate them into a common factor. This will be done following a formula of dividing the raw frequency of a word by the total number of the sub-corpus (31,447 words for Synge and 25,475 words for O'Casey) and multiplying it by 1,000 (McEnery and Hardie 49; Biber, Conrad and Reppen 263-264; Evison 126). This way, the results will be normalised and a common frequency percentage will be set in order to compare the results of both authors successfully.

For completion purposes I will study the keywords and their concordance hits of the three plays altogether, first with Synge's and then with O'Casey's, and I will analyse the results to see whether their male characters portray instances of models of masculinity, as I have mentioned before. Firstly, I will show the concordance hits in a table that deals with character description and the usage of *man*, *woman*, *boy* etc., and secondly I will highlight words that seem important in the plays, like the act of *seeing* in *Riders*, as it can be a sign of the "Sight". Finally, in section 4.4 I will display the instances of power in both authors and how they are uttered by men or women and its consequences.

### 4.2. Synge's data analysis.

Synge, as Hidalgo Tenorio points out, creates a theatrical world in which the peasantry stop being a stereotype (168), and become real, tangible people, which debunked the mythological image of the noble peasant portrayed until then by other Revivalists. Peasants' daughters do not have to accept marriage arrangements by their families anymore and sons can compel their parents to obey them. The common factor is language (ibid. 168). As is going to be shown below, it seems that the bodies of Synge's male characters are paired with an overshadowed version of each other: ones decrepit, old and sometimes diseased against the new generation: young and healthy

(Cannon Harris 112), who will strive to surpass and control their opposites successfully or not try at all and stay in their safe sphere of followers.

Table 1. Keywords about people in Synge's three selected plays.

Keyword	Concordance tokens	Number of Occurrences per 1000 words
Comrade	1	0.03
Boy	14	0.45
Afear'd (Afraid)	20	0.64
Woman	33	1
Lad	38	1.2
Fellow	50	1.5
Old	72	2.3
Young	76	2.4
Man	130	4

With this list of terms it is interesting to see not only the amount of times the words appear but also in which collocations. *Man* appears usually on its own when the characters are appealing to each other, especially in *The Playboy*. In *The Riders* and in *The Glen* it is most usually in women's voices to describe and talk about men, however, there's little talk about women, with only 33 cases throughout the three plays. In *The Glen* there is little description of Nora, but she depicts vividly her presumed dead husband (who is in fact faking his death to see if she's unfaithful). Nora calls her husband: *old*, *odd*, and *cold* (Synge 4). However, she calls Michael Dara (her lover), *young man* (ibid. 9).

As I mentioned above, throughout the plays there are several ways of calling men but not so much women. If women are old, they are called *old woman* (10 hits/ 0.3 occurrences per 1000 words), and if they are young, *young girl* (7 hits/ 0.22 occurrences per 1000 words), with all the implications and connotations both descriptions carry: one of uselessness and the other of ignorance. There is only one instance of *young woman* and that is in *The Playboy*: "He's a wicked-looking young fellow. Maybe he followed after a **young woman** on a lonesome night" (my bold, Synge 119). Jimmy is accusing

Christy Mahon, The Playboy's main character of having bad intentions with women, so in order to make it clearer, Jimmy uses *young woman* to differentiate it from a girl, who would imply an unthinkable insult, or an old woman, which is nonsensical to follow and be punished by it.

On the other hand, being a man has its different levels in between. It is not black and white, for men there are several steps between being a *young lad* or an *old man* (8 and 9 hits/ 0.25 and 0.28 occurrences per 1000 words, respectively). What there is in between is a whole language of comradeship among men, when funnily enough, *comrade* only appears one time in The Playboy and ironically used by a widow: “[a widow woman] is a wiser comrade for a young lad than a girl” (Synge 129). Here we see how Widow Quin calls men *young lads* because she is older. Women work differently because they can use language to insult men when they want to belittle them, but men develop this “manly” language of calling each other, *fellow* (50 hits/1.5 occurrences per 1000 words), *lad* (38 hits/ 1.2 occurrences per 1000 words), or *boy* (14 hits/ 0.45 occurrences per 1000 words) depending on what they want to imply. Christy Mahon calls himself *lad* when he wants to be included in the men's speech: “I was all times a decent lad” (Synge 119), but he suffers a transition from *lad* to *fellow* once he tells the men the story of how he killed his own father. Let us see the transition from one to the other, below:

- (1) “Pegeen: [...] You did nothing at all. A **soft lad** the like of you wouldn't slit the windpipe of a screeching sow.” (my bold, Synge 121)

And then later on:

- (2) “Pegeen: Wasn't I telling you, and you a fine, handsome **young fellow** with a noble brow?

Christy: [with a flash of delighted surprise.] Is it me?” (my bold, Synge 124)

Christy does not believe the opportunity before him. He is able to move into a new space that has not been defined by his own father. Because of his rebellion against the strong figure in his life, he is able to become an entity on his own. His description by Pegeen and later on by the rest of the men and women of the village as a *young fellow* will provide him with this new area for growing up into a strong patriarchal figure himself.

*Young fellow* (25 hits/ 0.79 occurrences per 1000 words), would seem to be this in-between term to sign comradeship and settle any argument between men in Synge's plays (see Fig. 3 below). They do not feel insulted or diminished by it when it is used by other men, whereas on O'Casey's plays it is not a "young" person anymore but simply *fella*, to point at the common man, the everyday one to which everybody should look up to (see Fig. 4 below).

Figure 3. Concordance examples of "young fellow".

Concordance Hits 25		
Hit	KWIC	File
1	seen yourself running this day, <i>young fellow</i> , and you coming from	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 1
2	.) That was a great man, <i>young fellow</i> , a great man I'	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 3 2
3	're one of the tinkers, <i>young fellow</i> , is beyond camped in	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 1
4	you never slapped in school, <i>young fellow</i> , that you don't	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 2
5	. He's a wicked-looking <i>young fellow</i> . Maybe he followed after	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 3
6	golden guineas out of solder, <i>young fellow</i> , or shilling coins itself?	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 4
7	drawn. Were you off east, <i>young fellow</i> , fighting bloody wars for	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 5
8	a honeyed voice.) And you, <i>young fellow</i> , you'd have a	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 6
9	out now by the fire, <i>young fellow</i> . You should be destroyed	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 7
10	, and you a fine, handsome <i>young fellow</i> with a noble brow?	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 8
11	find we're great company, <i>young fellow</i> , when it's of	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 9
12	we'd best be going, <i>young fellow</i> ; so rise up and	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 10
13	a right to come on, <i>young fellow</i> , till you see my	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 11
14	.] -- Do you hear her now, <i>young fellow</i> ? Do you hear the	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 12
15	shaking him.] -- Are you dumb, <i>young fellow</i> ? CHRISTY -- [timidly, to Widow	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 13
16	Christy.) God bless you now, <i>young fellow</i> , and let you be	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 14
17	.) Are you fasting or fed, <i>young fellow</i> ? CHRISTY. Fasting, if you	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 15
18	day, Pegeen Mike, and, you <i>young fellow</i> , let you not forget	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 16
19	should be a fearful end, <i>young fellow</i> , and it worst of	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 17
20	them clothes on you anyhow, <i>young fellow</i> , and he'd maybe	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 18
21	] -- Well, you're mighty spruce, <i>young fellow</i> . Sit down now while	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 19
22	holy angels on your head, <i>young fellow</i> . I hear tell you'	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 20
23	city.] -- Take yourself from this, <i>young fellow</i> , or I'll maybe	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 21
24	pull him now. Come on, <i>young fellow</i> . CHRISTY -- [suddenly starting up.]	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 22
25	a bellows.] Leave go now, <i>young fellow</i> , or I'll scorch	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 5 23

Figure 4. Concordance examples of “fella” in O’Casey’s plays.

Concordance Hits 24		
Hit	KWIC	File
1	. MRS BOYLE Bring in that fella a dhrink o' wather, for	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 1
2	're goin' to meet another fella; you've clicked with someo	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 2
3	you'll have the oul' fella out on top of us!	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 3
4	be so hard on a fella, Mary, don't be so	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 4
5	the window] It's a fella in a thrench coat. JOHNN	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 5
6	's unnatural. BOYLE His oul' fella was just the same --a	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 6
7	the press] I knew that fella ud stop till she was	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 7
8	wrong shipped. An' th' other fella--Jerry's as bad. The	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 8
9	LE Desthructive of music--that fella ud give you a pain	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 9
10	trained. BOYLE That's another fella ud give you a pain	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 10
11	of people like that Joxer fella an' that oul' Madigan wan-	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 11
12	' I notice that that Bentham fella doesn't be comin' here	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 12
13	any longer for t'oul' fella - sorry, Miss, but we have	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 13
14	e? MRS MADIGAN Some poor fella's been found, an' they	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 14
15	heartbreakin' to see a young fella thinkin' of anything, or ad	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 1
16	COVEY You're a big fella, you are. FLUTHER (tappin	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 2
17	an' see th' fun. A fella might as well chance it,	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 3
18	) Fluther's a jolly good fella!... Fluther's a jolly good	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 4
19	!... Fluther's a jolly good fella! Up th' rebels!... That nobo	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 5
20	Fluther's a jolly good fella, Fluther's a jolly good	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 6
21	, Fluther's a jolly good fella, Fluther's a jolly good	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 7
22	, Fluther's a jolly good fella... Up th' rebels! That nobo	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 8
23	? How th' hell does a fella know there'll be any	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 9
24	thought of venom against his fella-man! THE COVEY Oh, shu	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 10

In both *The Glen* and *The Playboy* we find two stock characters that become the image of men in countryside Ireland. As was mentioned above, in rural Ireland it was common to idealise Irish Nationalism by taking discourses of respectability and normative gender roles and ideals which in turn would be part of their definition of Irishness (Lapointe 42), and these notions at the same time were drawn upon normative models of masculinity, for instance, the idealised peasant.

Among these stock characters we find the strong patriarchal man (Dan Burke in *The Glen* and Old Mahon in *The Playboy*) and the young hopeful man, who wishes to separate himself from that strong figure, but who is finally incapable (Michael Dara in *The Glen* and Christy Mahon in *The Playboy*). This opposition of characters portray the two extremes of rural Irish identities, although secondary characters move among them flowing in the spectrum depending on the situation and the play. For instance, the Tramp in *The Glen*, is closer to Dan Burke's beliefs that women are not worthy of fine whiskey and tobacco when he talks to Burke (“no one to taste them [whiskey and tobacco] but a woman only” (Synge 5)), but showers his wife with compliments when



he thinks Dan is dead. Or Shawn in *The Playboy*, described as “timid and shy” (Synge 114-115) when at first follows and preaches Christian words to protect Pegeen’s virtue, but later, out of spite he works with the widow Quin for his own sake. These last two examples are not liked or accepted in society, one is a wandering man and the other is clearly despised, constantly being kicked out of the tavern by Pegeen and later, Christy; they don’t belong to any standard group of men and they hover around them, emphasising the other men’s masculinity. Once again, manliness is not compared to that of the other sex, but to the same one.

Dan Burke and Old Mahon are clear representatives of the structured power, the patriarchy and the coloniser. Both of them are old and violent, moreover, they are not afraid to use violence (Dan hitting Nora with a stick, Old Mahon ready to fight his son). Both of them, as they portray one extreme of the scale in gender norms are alone in their hyper-masculinity. Nora complains of how lonesome she is feeling all the time (7 hits out of 11). Once Nora is kicked out of the house as punishment for her infidelity, Dan stands as the strong unmovable corrupted city man who believes the countryside is meant for beggars and women. Still, the fact that Dan remains alone and isolated from the centre of masculinity, that is the city, could mean how oblivious he is to believe that he doesn’t need anything, or how he is now too, an outcast because he has been betrayed and made fun of by a woman. In terms of speech patterns he usually depends on commands to order around the house, not only Nora but also the Tramp and Michael Dara: “give me that whisky”, “bring me a black stick”, “don’t let on you know anything” (Synge 8).

Old Mahon is similar to Dan Burke in that he is ready to punish his son for trying to kill him several times, but he rises triumphantly every time only to keep haunting his son and bring him back into the proper norms of society under his strong hand. Christy has created a heroic image about himself to show off in a small town in Mayo how brave he was for committing patricide. It is worth noticing in this case how Old Mahon in all his brutality (we learn that he would abuse his son and wanted to make him marry an old widow), bends his will to his son, Christy, when the latter asserts his power. Christy was scared in the beginning of the play (Synge 118-119) and we learn through Old Mahon how Christy was “odd and weak” (ibid. 144) but once Christy’s story is out he transmutes his personality and becomes a man full of vanity, as

it can be shown in the scene where he's admiring himself in a mirror (Synge 133), one who becomes unrecognisable by his own father once Old Mahon finds him:

(3) "Mahon [...]: That's a right view again the edge of the sea. They're coming now from the point. He's leading. Who is he at all?"

Widow Quin: He's the champion of the world, I tell you [...]" (Synge 151)

Christy does not only become for a time *the champion of the world* or the playboy the play based its name on. He does embody by the end of the play the strong figure and in act III, after fighting with his father again, Christy leads his father out "like a gallant captain with his heathen slave" (Synge 166), which constitutes a revolutionary vision of a rural community as Kiberd points out, because it is not the young taking their cue from the old as it has always been traditionally, but the other way round (175). In this last scene, Old Mahon does not lose his masculinity but shapes it to follow the new order of having someone more assertive and stronger than him in power. In the end, the gender game is one of survival too, and Old Mahon has survived, barely. His masculinity remains intact because he has proven his worth by still wanting to fight his son even after he had tried to murder him several times. It is when men recognise stronger forces that they are allowed to be sensible and not to be led by violence.

I already discussed how Christy Mahon is an assertive masculine figure at the end of *The Playboy*, but he is not like that in the beginning. Neither is Michael Dara. Both of them are called *young* by a number of people who feel that they can talk down to them because of their age or their looks. What's more, Michael recognises Nora's will to control men and how he has heard talk among other men, but he was not included in the circle. He's on the outside because he is young and soft, and acknowledges the world of men as being lonesome to live in: "I'm thinking it's a power of men you're after knowing if it's in a lonesome place you live itself" (Synge 10).

Michael is in the background most of the play while Nora describes the ways of living alone. Nora is putting herself into the public sphere, talking freely now that there is no patriarchal man to control her. Michael does not fall into this category because he stays quietly at the back of the room counting money, arranging himself in the private sphere. Furthermore, when Dan stops faking his death, and the patriarchal figure is back, Michael quickly leaves Nora's side and acknowledges the strongest person in the

room: Dan. They drink alone once Nora and the Tramp are out because in this patriarchal society ruled by hegemonic heteronormativeness one can only dominate or submit.

Christy Mahon has always submitted thus to his father and when he gets to the Mayo village he justifies his murdering him by saying his dad was a “dirty man [...] and he getting old and crusty” (Synge 121), similar to what Nora says about her old husband, as if the killing of the oppressor would make the crime any better. Christy also liked being in the fields alone, as his father later on describes, he was a delicate soul who liked being in nature. His father’s way of portraying him is closer to those of a daughter as is the action of wanting to marry him with an old widow. Furthermore, when Christy comes to the village and has all the girls running after him he becomes the sex-object, a role this time played by a male.

Christy seems to act in an erratic way at the beginning, too. He needs the approval of the people around him to reassure his actions. Pegeen cheers him up like a mother would and she transitions her own language from “young lad” (Synge 121) to “young man” (ibid. 155). The other men in the pub praise his actions and suddenly Christy becomes a celebrity in the village once he has the support he needs; his masculinity is heightened so much that there will be nothing left of the soft-hearted lad that we hear about from Old Mahon. Christy now wins the races and he brings honour to the village: “great achievements for all Mayo men!” (Synge 154). However, Christy will still have to face his resurrected dad who will bring a dose of reality right to his face, quite literally when he punches his son.

It is no surprise then that Christy goes mad when his secrets are discovered, and thus, his masculinity is questioned. Old Mahon coming back to avenge his own murder could be a hint of how patriarchy will always control and find you when you’ve done wrong. Reality fights against fiction and the heroic picture of Christy. He has been nullified by his father and this offers an empty space for the Mayo villagers into whom they can read from a safe distance their fondest dream (Kiberd 180), especially Pegeen and her fantasy of strong and boastful men. Nevertheless, as I mentioned before with Old Mahon, Christy’s façade is such, that even his father is impressed and decides to follow him instead of making him submit. Hyper-masculinity wins again, despite it not belonging to the character we thought it would. Christy himself is liberated from the

feminised image because his own performance of manliness has freed him (McDonald 82).

During his life Synge was accused of betraying virile nationalism (Kiberd 184) but in this way his critics were becoming hardened and positioned themselves into hyper-masculinity which was forced in part by the upcoming uprising. Thus, these two first plays may corroborate how Synge divided maybe not consciously his male characters into patterns of masculinity. However, the results analysed in *Riders* show how in this play it is not so much the acting of male characters what it is interesting, but the absence of them. There is a frequency of 12.55 per 1000 words of *he* in *Riders*, but only 7.9 for *she*. Women in this play are the protagonist and even then, they talk about men, especially the ones they have lost. In a world without men it seems that they are still what women would talk about. They might be relatively invisible but when they are discussed they are generally treated as a homogeneous group (Kiesling 653); that is, nature will treat all men equally when they go out to sea, and this is a social heteronormative standard for the listeners to assume the man as a white middle-class man, unless specified, especially in Ireland (ibid 653).

The only significant male character is Bartley who ignores his mother Maurya. She acts in this play as one of Synge's example of paganism in the western part of Ireland. Just like the play is about the *sea* (18 hits) and how it swallows Maurya's sons, she also *sees* (24 hits) things. But as the voice of nature no one believes her and thus, her family is doomed. Irish folklore maintains that certain people were able to hear what the fairies were saying by paying close attention to the sea's cadences and rhythms (Collins 21). The fact that Bartley, one of Maurya's sons, as well as the rest of her sons, ignore her visions depicts how men willingly ignore the wise voice of nature and fight against their odds of surviving in a hostile environment. And despite their stubbornness, it is still nature who wins, and women who lose.

#### 4.3. O'Casey's data analysis

Survival in O'Casey's plays is key to the characters. Their first concern is to stay alive and have a good disposition shutting sadness and depression out (Reynolds 34). They are not fighting against nature and the weak odds they have but against life in the tenements in Dublin, the Easter week rebellion and the civil war period in the Dublin Trilogy. O'Casey would write in opposition to Synge about the city strives, the Dublin streets where the hero is never who we thought it would be. It seems that strong figures portraying Cúchulainn disappear in O'Casey's nationalism for a sense of searching for one's identity, which can be marred by the daily struggles our characters face. In O'Casey's plays the portrayal of patriarchal embodiment in the characters does not apply, this is a city under civil war and the centre of the British hegemonic rule. Thus, I will speak in terms of identities: the national hero (which could be an image young men could aspire to) and the anti-hero (a character who has lost their identity to the struggles of life and as such, they do not define themselves by the Irish identity).

O'Casey would have been familiar with the power movement in Dublin both among the army and also in the slums. The fittest survive and usually this would mean the most powerful, however, as O'Casey shows in *The Plough*, the looters are also taking advantage of this situation. It is usually the anti-hero the one to survive because they are not willing to sacrifice themselves. Even when they do something right is usually done for the wrong reasons. As Hidalgo Tenorio mentions:

“[O'Casey creates] a micro-universe populated by cowards, deceitful men and women desperate of an Ireland that would not take her loved ones away from them by dying defending an ideal led by dreamers”<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> My own translation from “Seán O'Casey: El Canto del Hijo Pródigo en el *Exilio* a Dublín”. Blanco Pérez, José Ignacio et al.,. Pp. 217.

Table 2. Keywords in O'Casey's plays

<b>Keyword</b>	<b>Concordance Tokens</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences per 1,000 words</b>
Wife	16	0.63
Husband	19	0.75
Comrade	19	0.75
Country	25	0.98
Butty/fella/chap	33	1.3
Fear	33	1.3
Home	35	1.37
Afraid	46	1.8
Woman	76	2.9
Man	274	10.75

The first instance that catches our attention from the table is the fact that *man* has surpassed the *woman* hits greatly (10.75 vs. 2.9 occurrences per 1000 words). In these plays, despite having several female characters, the fighting, looting and showing off done in them belongs to men. These stories do not have so many instances of the manly language I discussed first in Synge; *butty/fella/chap* and other epithets with insignificant hits are not that popular, they are men in a manly place and they address each other like that. *Comrade* is more common in O'Casey's plays because of the period it is set (0.03 in Synge but 0.75 in O'Casey). Among those 19 tokens, *comrade* doesn't appear in the *Gunman* at all, 5 times in *Juno* and 14 in *The Plough*. This last play is one of O'Casey's most political ones, which caused rioting in its first performance. O'Casey faced a similar challenge that the one Yeats had to confront: how to represent onstage a revolution in all its nobility, its baseness and its unprecedented turbulence (Kiberd 223). The way O'Casey performed this challenge differs from Yeats in that the former didn't want to idealise war but to show people that there is nothing ideal about it.

The characters that perform the role of national hero, similar to Cúchulainn, the exponent of Irish nationalism and braveness in O'Casey's plays seem to show a different side to what people expected. They are not pure heroic figures to be looked up

to because they are flawed like any human being which shocks the audience waiting for a characteristic hero to appear. These imperfect heroes are Seamus Shield, Captain Jack Boyle and Jack Clitheroe (*Gunman*, *Juno and The Plough*, respectively).

Seamus, to start with, considers himself a man only because he worked for the IRB and he only talks about the Irish People and their freedom. He is presented in the *Gunman* in contrast to his flatmate, Donal Davoren, a poet and writer. Seamus is a strong man involved in the underground forces to free Ireland and he considers that “it doesn’t pay a working-man to write poetry” (O’Casey 35), in times of war there’s no space for writers when in truth, it was writers and journalists the ones to start it.

Seamus surprises the audience when he admits to have been a teacher and knowing some literature by quoting Shakespeare (“Shakespeare, Richard the III, Act Five, Scene III. It was Ratcliff said that to Richard just before the battle of Bosworth...” (O’Casey 38)), his knowledge of the *Illiad* by comparing Minnie to Helen of Troy (ibid. 37), Shelley (ibid. 6) and Morpheus (ibid 5). He represents the national identity and he could be the embodiment of the soldier who had abandoned teaching Irish six nights a week to fight for the cause. At the same time, he acknowledges that “there’s nothing but guns in the country” (ibid. 39) and he hides behind Mrs Grigson during a raid because “it’ll be better to have a woman in the room” (ibid. 57). As much as his masculinity seems to be the stronger one in the tenement house, he is still a man afraid of the police.

“Captain” Boyle is a strong man with no power at all in the private sphere of his house. He got his nickname because of all the exaggerated stories he told about his short career as a merchant sailor. He boasts about his triumphs but refuses to work because of acute pain in his legs every time someone mentions a job for him. He is also the *paycock* (peacock) from the title of the play; he struts around without doing anything of use. He might not look at first like a hero and that’s because he likes to speak knowledgably when the audience knows it is not like that.

However, we can consider Captain Boyle a kind of retired hero, who lives to tell his stories (“If the English have taken everything else from us, [...], they left us our memory” (O’Casey 87)) and who still has some power in decision-making. This can be seen in two instances: firstly when they think they are going to receive some money and he decides to buy new furniture and spend money they still do not have, and secondly, when he finds out that his daughter is pregnant and has been abandoned by Charles

Bentham, the one who told them in the beginning they were going to receive some inheritance.

Captain Boyle does not want his daughter once she's pregnant, unmarried and unwanted. He becomes the image of the patriarch and punishes her, blaming it on all her reading of books, because educating women, according to Boyle, will make them devious. Captain Boyle throws out his daughter because she has been tarnished, re-establishing his role as a strong figure, asserting his masculinity when he is powerless most of the time.

Jack Clitheroe in *The Plough* is our last character who performs his role as a national hero. He was a former member of the Irish Citizen Army and he looks strong, authoritative, and powerful. He is married to Nora and she is taken with him. They have been married for a short time and Jack seems to be tired of her already. Canonically, if there were a previous play, their love story would have been one of those with the happy ending, and *The Plough* would be the continuation in which things are not as simple as they are being sold.

Dublin is going through the Easter Rising and Jack, as a former member of the rebel army will fight against the English. Nora in her frenzy will go to the barricades to try and find her husband. When Jack comes back to his house he allows himself a small moment of weakness with Nora, expressing his feelings (O'Casey 219), but when he sees that his comrades are despising him for showing affection he becomes the serious captain again, see below:

(4) "Clitheroe: (kissing her, and speaking brokenly) My Nora; my little, beautiful Nora, I wish to God I'd never left you.

Nora: It doesn't matter--not now, not now, Jack. It will make us dearer than ever to each other... Kiss me, kiss me again.

Clitheroe: Now, for God's sake, Nora, don't make a scene." (O'Casey 219-220)

And then, later on in example (5), when Clitheroe fears he is going to be taken as a renegade who does not want to go back to fight:



- (5) “Clitheroe (in fear her action would give him future shame): What possessed you to make a show of yourself, like that?... What way d'ye think I'll feel when I'm told my wife was bawlin' for me at th' barricades? What are you more than any other woman?” (O'Casey 221).

He then finds out that Nora had burnt a letter promoting him in the Army because she wanted to keep him safe. Jack, in all his violence, seems to be fulfilling his duty not as a man, but as an Irish citizen. However, feeling shame also plays a part. He does not want his image as a belligerent man to be questioned and he has to subdue his wife to keep his upper-hand position in their marriage. Hence, Clitheroe has to sacrifice his relationship with Nora for the country and their freedom. It is already exemplified in *Juno* how sacrifices were common but never enough, just like Johnny Boyle, Juno's son, lost an arm and took a bullet to his hip during the Easter Rising: “Haven't I done enough for Ireland?” (O'Casey 98). However, his comrades answer that there are people that have died and dying is the ultimate sacrifice for their freedom, anything else is not going to be enough and Jack Clitheroe knows this when he finally dies for his country.

This concept of home and country seems to be much related in Irish characters. Not only that, the “house” in 20<sup>th</sup> century Irish theatre has come to represent all manner of anxiety and desire in an unstable economic, political and social climate (Singleton 293). Irish people wish for their “home” to equal “nation/country” and as they long for it they will also sacrifice and suffer to recover both the concept and the actual physical space. These two terms (house and country) have a similar number of tokens (25 and 35 hits) mostly because the characters are fighting in O'Casey's plays not only for their country's freedom but for their homes. Dublin in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would have had a great number of people living in tenement houses and they would usually face eviction or raids constantly. It is in this moment of harshness when our other type of character, defining masculinity in times of war, will bloom. The ones considered anti-heroes might not fight for their country in any brotherhood, but they will try and defend their own homes come the time.

These anti-heroes are Tommy Owens in *Gunman*, Joxer and Johnny Boyle in *Juno*, and The Covey and Fluther in *The Plough*. These characters stay out of the national conflict somehow; some unwillingly like Tommy Owens, others, because they

cannot be bothered like the rest. Thus, they lack heroic qualities like courage and morality.

Tommy has the right attitude to become one, but he is more of a hero worshipper than one himself. He's outside the window looking in, never to become part of the movement. He's brave as he is not afraid to say how he's willing to die for Ireland. He is called "little fellow" (O'Casey 15) by Minnie, in a way she diminishes his masculinity for not doing much but talk and talk about his fierce passion for his country without taking anything in hand, as she will, later on. Tommy reflects his masculine wishes on Donal Davoren, who is neither a hero nor anti-hero. Furthermore, Tommy is the one to set Davoren up in his fake image of "national hero" which will develop into a raid in the tenements. He has grown up surrounded by the Celtic heroic ideas which make him idealise sacrifice, and the nation, but when the time comes, he is not the hero but a young man who has only read about Cúchulainn and has no real experience. Masculinity for Tommy is something he has read and admired, not something to attain for himself.

In Juno, nonetheless, Joxer and Johnny Boyle are not hero-worshippers. Joxer is Captain Boyle's "butty" and a drunkard, and Johnny is Boyle's son who lost one arm to the rebellion. Joxer is the epitome of the anti-hero and he is not ashamed of it: "it is better to be a coward than a corpse" (O'Casey 89). What's more, he is scared of Juno every time she comes into the room. He tries to escape and tries to tempt Captain Boyle to keep drinking and not find a job. Joxer's masculinity is not an anxious one like Johnny, who's always scared of the IRA coming for him after becoming an informant, but an accepting one. Joxer acknowledges his fears and his "right" to behave as he does because he is not scared of society or what they think of him (despite being afraid of Juno for being a strong woman).

Johnny, described as delicate young man, with a drawn face, on the other hand, is not happy or content with his sacrifice for Ireland and he is scared all the time. O'Casey depicts him as having a "tremulous look of indefinite fear in his eyes" (71) because he has gone through a "rough time". People shouting, doors slamming and loud noises in general make him anxious and he sees life in a very tragic way. He never enjoys banal things as having a cup of tea: "Tay, tay, tay! You're always thinkin' o' tay. If a man was dyin', you'd thry to make him swally a cup o' tay!" (ibid. 71), because in a

way, he is still at war, mentally and physically with the loss of his arm as a reminder of it. As his comrades admit, giving an arm or taking a bullet is not enough for the nation, sacrifices need to be made, and the most honourable one is death, one which Johnny is not willing to make. Joxer and Johnny are both cowards, the only difference is that one accepts it and his place in a patriarchal society and the other fears for his life instead of affronting it.

In *The Plough* it seems to be fear that defines the anti-heroes. Both *The Covey* and *Fluther* do not fight in the Easter Rising, the former because “there’s no thing as an Irishman [...] we’re all human bein’s” (O’Casey 160) and the latter because he is too afraid to go out and be shot, so he stays drinking in the pub. Nora states it repeatedly, how everyone, every man is “afraid, afraid, afraid”: only in *The Plough* it has 2 occurrences every 1,000 words. However in times of war manhood is not a priority, but freedom is. During the second act, it is stated how men are not important; however they feel full of bravery, only for a second in the pub when they hear an encouraging speech calling men to war:

(6) “Fluter: [...] the blood was BOILIN’ in me veins! [...]

Peter: I was burnin’ to dhraw me sword, an’ wave an’ wave it over me.”  
(O’Casey 184).

The looting starts soon after, and even with a woman in the pub, *Fluther* and the *Covey* only care about their own well-being, what’s more, they keep bantering about their strength and keep ordering drinks from the barman in an escalating macho impromptu instead of going out to fight. There is one instance in which both their masculinities are questioned and that is when they encounter the prostitute, *Rosie*, in the pub. The *Covey* insults both *Fluther* and *Rosie* after being rejected by her, so *Rosie* defends *Fluther* and says to the *Covey*: “you are no man” (O’Casey 197). *Fluther* on the other hand, doesn’t want *Rosie* to fight for him: “leave this to *Fluther* – this is a man’s job” (ibid. 198). But it is not clear which is that man’s job, whether to defend one’s honour, or not allowing a prostitute to do so. Their anti-heroism and lack of masculinity by early 20<sup>th</sup> century standards is clear, and maybe a pinch of reality by O’Casey on how men react differently to war, and how it is more common than people of that time thought.

Nevertheless it is interesting to see Fluther's character development throughout the play. He starts off as being the personification of the anti-hero to become something in between. That is, in act III he goes out of the tenement house in order to find Nora who has gone to the barricades. He doesn't become a hero for a single spurt of heroic intention towards a damsel in distress, but a character that has a bit more moral fibre than he intended to show at first. Fluther is not ashamed of being a coward and when he saves Nora it could also show how some men do not fit in the models of masculinity displayed for them socially and culturally and that there are more than the only two opposite sides of the spectrum.

This in-between locus is also governed by other characters: Donal Davoren and Charles Bentham. Davoren in *Gunman* is a poet who's tired with the Irish cause: "we've had enough of poems about '98 and of Ireland", and "a man should always be drunk when he talks about politics" (O'Casey 16; 15), however, when he faces Minnie -a brave girl who believes it is time to give up the writing and take up the guns-, Davoren doesn't deny the suspicion others put on him about being a secret agent for the Irish Army. He is an in-between character because he fakes being an agent only to impress Minnie (similar to Christy Mahon in *The Playboy*). But when the raid comes to the tenement, it is Minnie who saves him by confessing to having a bomb in the apartment.

Minnie, despite being tricked and belittled by Davoren sacrifices herself for the cause like a man by society standards, also in a way taking Davoren's masculinity away from him. He calls her ignorant, pretty, charming, good, or little girl in several occasions: "you are a very charming little girl indeed" (O'Casey 17) or "very pretty, but very ignorant" (ibid. 32), and only one time she is a "brave little girl and lovely as well" (ibid. 20). He both diminishes her abilities and involvement in the cause by using childish terms with her, maybe to reinforce his lack of participation with the rebel cause. If he is not contributing then, what the rest are doing is not that much. He is not "brave" enough to be a proper coward and face his lack of involvement in the war, so he hides in his bedroom during a raid behind Mrs Grigson's skirts with Seamus, because as Kiberd puts it: "while writers were frustrated revolutionaries, the rebels were frustrated poets" (226) maybe through the association between femininity and education, and masculinity closely linked with physical work (Ní Laoire 341). Despite the rebels being in a great amount writers and journalists, they were mainly fighting, and their writing was a means of propaganda for the independence of Ireland.

Charles Bentham is a schoolteacher in *Juno*, and from the first moment he is introduced in the play as Mary's, Juno's daughter, love interest. He is known to belong to a different social class; he is dressed with a deep blue tie and gloves and a walking stick. He has no Irish accent and he presents the perfect escape for Mary who is taken by his worldliness and charm. He offers the idea of being the perfect hero, right out of one of Mary's novels to rescue her and take her away; what's more, he was the bearer of good news when he thought the Boyles would receive some inheritance. Bentham manages to convince everyone that he is the hero of the story and he doesn't even belong to a model of masculinity that was familiar to the rest of the family. They know about the national hero, the boastful strong man, and maybe even about "the natural man", but not about the intellectual, successful working man. However, once she is pregnant, Bentham is out of the picture. He abandons Mary and only Juno sticks with her while the rest of the men in the family wouldn't help her. Mary laments how the baby will not have a father, and Juno states: "It'll have what's far better – it'll have two mothers" (O'Casey 146).

O'Casey's depiction of models of masculinity seems to present a new place for those characters that do not belong to the hegemonic spectrum of hyper-masculinity or unmasculinity. He brings forward the realism of his days in Dublin shocking the audience by portraying figures, possibly known to all, that do not adjust to the extremes of masculinity, but that exist nonetheless.

#### 4.4. Female figures in Synge and O'Casey's plays.

I have already discussed Minnie and her willingness to sacrifice herself for the cause, Nora and her struggle to understand why her husband would ever want to fight and finally Juno and her strength to turn away from the men in her life and start anew with her daughter. O'Casey creates tragedy out of violence and women are sometimes braver than men, not because they become androgynous figures and behave like men, but because they know how to assume their role in society and adapt to it to survive. Men in O'Casey's plays have a harder time fitting into their roles. Real heroism and as such, identity, often emerges wherever and whenever it is least expected (Kiberd 222), for instance, the case of Fluther rescuing Nora in *The Plough*. Nevertheless, the

working-class mother figure established in several other plays was popularised by Juno, in which the woman prioritises the interests of their children above all else, is once again a gendered division of the man fighting in the streets or factory floors, and the woman fighting for their home (Cannon Harris 144). Juno, in a similar way, wants the best for her children as Maurya in *Riders*, however, Maurya gives up the excruciating anxiety born of her realisation that the work of keeping her family alive is in vain and this ends up destroying her (ibid. 154). She might still have two living daughters but she gives up being a mother and what it entails, unlike Juno who will defend her children and deal with being kicked out of their house.

In the concordance tokens table below there are two elements that are usually voiced through women's speech: being lonesome and afraid (or *afeard* in Synge's). Women are not judged by being any of these things, however, the few instances where men are accused of being any of them, they all put up a wall of hyper-masculinity they do not feel. Women on the other hand use it to their favour, maybe to appeal to the audience and make them aware of their situation or maybe as a way of calling out the nonsensical purpose of war. Nora in *The Glen* and Nora in *The Plough* accuse men of having left them alone and afraid of their chances in life, but still, some will prevail like Nora in *The Glen* by leaving with the Tramp and others will succumb to despair in war time, like Nora in *The Plough*.

Table 3. Concordance hits for *lonesome* and *afraid*.

<b>Keyword</b>	<b>Concordance Tokens</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences per 1,000 words</b>
Lonesome	34	0.6
Afraid/afeard	67	1.2

Some women, like Nora from *The Glen*, adapt easily because of the eternal comparison of women and nature. Ireland has always been a woman summoning “her children to her flag” (Kiberd 224), but then, during *The Plough*, the rebels declare how “Ireland is greater than a mother or a wife” (O’Casey 200-201). Just like usually a monarch is wedded to the land (ibid. 18), the emblem of the country is a beautiful woman and her moods: happiness would bring fertile and righteous ruling, however if she was sorrowful then the ruling would be unfitted. This way of both dismissing and

appraising the feminine figure, that is the country, could reflect the confusing identity of men as patriotic soldiers or as fathers/sons. Also, this relationship between Ireland and England is one of gender, between a colony (the feminine part) and the metropolis (the masculine one). Colonization is a power struggle, a struggle for predominance in a hierarchy. Consequently, literature from a minor culture has to deal with this challenge (MacCarthy 66).

#### 4.5. Power in Synge and O'Casey

There is mention of power in Synge and O'Casey: 13 tokens in Synge's plays, which accounts for a 0.45 occurrences per 1000 words, and 13 tokens in O'Casey's, accounting for 0.51 occurrences per 1000 words. Despite Synge having more hits, it is just a bit more common to talk about power in O'Casey's plays. However, there are certain differences: in Synge there are four out of the fourteen instances talking about the *power of men* (hits number one, two, seven and twelve). Men in the countryside are still in charge of the power, and even then, they ask for more: "more power to the young lad!" in *Playboy* (hit number twelve). Maybe it is the isolation or maybe the fact that there are more ways to prove oneself in the countryside than only fighting wars in the city, so that men seem to be more at ease with their role in society. They are flawed as well but they do not need to be heroes because "unhappy is the land that is in need of heroes" (Brecht 107-108).

Figure 5. Collocations of "power" in Synge's plays.

Concordance Hits 14		File
Hit	KWIC	
1	I'm thinking it's a <b>power</b> of men you're after knowing	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 0 1
2	day, and if it's a <b>power</b> of men I'm after knowing	1 - In the Shadow of the Glen.txt 0 2
3	to his hand, and by the <b>power</b> of sympathy woven them, with little	2 - Riders to the Sea.txt 1 1
4	." The secret of the play's <b>power</b> is its capacity for standing afar	2 - Riders to the Sea.txt 1 2
5	ry character, wherein the latent <b>power</b> of suggestion is almost unlimited. "In	2 - Riders to the Sea.txt 1 3
7	ace? MAURYA There does be a <b>power</b> of young men floating round in	2 - Riders to the Sea.txt 1 5
8	you'd find on the great <b>powers</b> and potentates of France and Spain.	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 1
9	nearer to her.] -- You've a <b>power</b> of rings, God bless you, and	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 2
10	a broken one. Two plates. A <b>power</b> of glasses. Bottles, a school-master'	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 3
11	don't put yourself in the <b>power</b> of the law, for it'd	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 4
12	ing. JIMMY -- [cheering.] More <b>power</b> to the young lad! MAHON. He'	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 5
13	? PHILLY. I heard him telling a <b>power</b> ; and I'm thinking we'll	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 6
14	of me this day by the <b>power</b> of a lie, you're setting	3 - A playboy of the western world.txt 2 7

Power in relation to men in O’Casey’s is only mentioned one time as *his power* (hit number five), after that there’s also *the power o’ women* (hit number thirteen) and “the clergy always had too much power” (hit number eight). O’Casey seems to criticise the causes for war whilst Synge is describing what he saw during his years in the isles and in western Ireland. There’s also the notion that white men consider themselves to be entitled to a patriarchal position (Brindle 272), and having two countries both believing they should have power, creates conflict not only in terms of war, but also in identity.

It is especially in O’Casey’s plays that identity seems to not be as well defined as that one of the country people. In Synge’s plays people refuse to become English so they might as well resolve to be Irish (Kiberd 142), but it is not so easy in the city because there are clashes among cultures, colony and coloniser, different ways of seeking freedom and there were mainly two options for Irish once they were free, so as Kiberd puts it: “to return to a past, pre-colonial Gaelic identity, still yearning for expression if long-denied, or the reconstruction of a national identity, beginning from first principles all over again” (286).

Figure 6. Collocations of “power” in O’Casey’s plays.

Concordance Hits 13		
Hit	KWIC	File
1	and pain lose all their <b>powers</b> , For each is dead, and	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 1
2	pioneer in thought. The the <b>powers</b> that shall grasp this sorry	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 2
3	clasped together will all the <b>power</b> outbrave of the heartless English	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 3
4	! TOMMY It's the most <b>powerfullest</b> letter I ever heard read.	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 4
5	to greatness depends upon his <b>power</b> to put passion in the	1 - shadow of a gunman.txt 0 5
6	associates, who know less, a <b>power</b> , and too little to broaden	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 1
7	too little to broaden that <b>power</b> for the benefit of all.	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 2
8	clergy always had too much <b>power</b> over the people in this	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 3
9	mental exercises we would have <b>powers</b> denied to others--for instance,	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 4
10	now-- An' we felt the <b>power</b> that fashion'd All the	2 - juno and the paycock.txt 1 5
11	desire for authority, without the <b>power</b> to attain ; it] CLITHEROE (excitedly)	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 1
12	her jabbin' remarks be a <b>powerful</b> silence that'll keep her	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 2
13	; afther all, there's a <b>power</b> o' women that's handed	3 - the plough and the stars.txt 2 3

The concept of power in the city is less dispersed as it is the centre of the conflict. It seems that it is not only the power of men or the one belonging to women the important one but a combination of both that would expel the English from the country. Far away now is the idealistic concept of Mother Ireland calling her children to war and fighting the invaders not with bloodshed and violence, but with art and romance (SeyedehZahra, Bahman, et al. 1698). During the Easter Rising and the period in which O’Casey writes, the Irish wanted to have their country for their own. This, would not only bring a more



violent way of pursuing their goals, also, Irishmen would have to deal with the problem of returning to the first notion of a Gaelic identity. However, after being colonised for so long the Irish identity was tarnished, as it were, by “Englishness”, so could they actually come back to an identity they were only familiar with through heroic texts? Hence, the confusion in Irish identity, especially those characters in the city by O’Casey, who try to make themselves Irish. They would nearly become a new species without a given identity but who will still be protected by the patriarchal shell which would guard and nurture their anxious identification of manliness (Kiberd 391).

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1. Contributions and limitations of this study

The research delimited in this dissertation contributes to the study of new models of masculinity in Irish theatre in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in two ways. Firstly by analysing the speech of several characters in the plays selected by J. M. Synge (*Riders to the Sea*, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, and *The Playboy of the Western World*), and Seán O’Casey’s Dublin Trilogy (*The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*) and secondly, by briefly comparing the gender theories on masculinity to the same characters. The analysis through the tools of corpus linguistics have allowed me to show the patterns of speech amongst men and how they interact with each other with terminology that levels them into well-built orders in their micro-societies by using expressions like *lad*, *fella*, *chap*, *fellow* or *comrade*. Furthermore, I divided the men into categories depending on how they portray their masculinity. From the authoritative figures like Dan Burke in *Glen*, Old Mahon at the beginning of *The Playboy*, Captain Boyle in *Juno*, and Jack Clitheroe in *The Plough*, who represent the hegemonic masculinity in society, to the “anti-hero” or young man still trying to find his place. This image of a young man does not fit with the notion of manly man for now and it is accepted as a quasi-feminised figure like Michael Dara and Christy Mahon in Synge’s plays and Tommy Owens, Johnny Boyle, The Covey and Fluther in O’Casey’s ones. This would answer the first question I posed at the beginning of my study on whether these works could be a representation of masculinity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or not. Both authors would portray what they saw and heard during their years in the isles as Synge or in the city like O’Casey. It is true they are portraying situations that had not been represented before but they were still happening nonetheless around them. There is also this in-between place for some characters like Charles Bentham and Donal Davoren in which their masculinity flows from one opposite of the spectrum to the other showing how there is more to masculinity than being in the extremes of that same spectrum and that men are compelled to settle into one side by hegemonic standards. Both Synge and O’Casey managed to show how not every character fits into one side but they are movable.

In order to study and analyse these characters’ masculinity I chose a number of words that were essential in the interaction among men and normalised the frequency of

the same. Through the results and the implementation and comparison to what it is considered to be a man in Ireland during this period, I answer the second question of my hypotheses: do these works follow the same patterns of masculine and patriarchal hegemony? And I reached the conclusion that these men are being both men of their times, following the hegemonic patterns that a patriarchal society of the period imposes on them, and also a break with the heteronormative rules of society when the line between hero and anti-hero becomes blurry, especially in O'Casey's plays. Some characters easily cross the lines of man and anti-man depending on who they are interacting with, or in case they want to show a different self to the others, especially to women, like Christy Mahon showing off his crime to the girls at the tavern. With this I agree that there is not only one model of masculinity but several in a wide spectrum of manliness. The hegemonic masculinity is not the most accomplished one, but the most honoured one by other members of society in search of their own identity.

This methodological blend of using both Corpus Linguistics and Gender Studies applied to literature can provide more insight to the study of the character self as I have argued above. Characters in drama are not only portrayed by actors and actresses following the commands of a director and author, they are also being observed by an audience who will respond to their characterisation. Hence, the fact that these six plays caused a more or less degree of reaction from the public could also indicate both how the writers were exact when describing personas and also how the audience wants a heightened image of reality, which is in turn, not faithful to real life.

In this century, with the Irish Literary Revival, audiences were expecting plays that would satisfy their nationalist feeling of becoming one with their re-created Irish identity completely opposite to the British one. Thus, once they were faced with other realities than the mythological heroic Celt, there was a suspension of myth (in opposition to the suspension of disbelief) to which they were not accustomed to. And with this last part I answer my third question in which I ask whether there is a contrast between the city and the country and their portrayal of masculinities. Because the audience was expecting something different to what both Synge and O'Casey showed, it must have been a contrast to both what the audience was expecting and to the reality of both scenarios, the city and the country. The models of masculinity vary mainly because there are no wars to fight in the country except for the moral one amongst each other, as can be seen in *The Playboy*. We will have both strong and patriarchal men in cities and

villages, but the way they dealt with fights, grief, loneliness and identity is quite different. With Synge, villagers will rule or subdue, whereas with O'Casey the lines of masculinity are blurred because of war. Men are allowed to be cowards and people around them wouldn't even look at them twice.

The limitations that a small corpus presents are also undeniable and thus, must be acknowledged. First, without a reference corpus to compare my own corpus with and the little studies performed on Irish masculinity there is not enough data to accomplish a broader and wider research. One of the possibilities at the beginning of this research was to compare my own corpus to that of Raymond Hickey, however, his collection of texts date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards and the purpose of doing a more thorough and pinpointed study would be lost in the greater span of centuries. Secondly, due to the limited time a dissertation is meant to run, it prevented a more complex and complete exploration of the data, so that I could only study a small number of corpus characteristics like collocations and concordances amongst other things that could be researched further as keywords, frequency or word lists.

## 5.2. Future research

The fact that this study was made only researching male figures and not the combination of both men and women's interaction could open new possibilities in further studies on both corpus and gender studies. On the one hand, linguistic scholars would surely be interested in the way characters refer to each other whether it is in friendly terms, to appease, to provoke or to worship. With the use of Corpus Linguistics and keywords search in the text there could be some remarkable results when comparing them with a reference corpus from the same time period. From a contemporary point of view we could also study these interactions and the characters' discourse in order to see the development of language through the years and whether this has become more standardised in terms of men/women interaction both amongst the same gender group and opposite.

On the other hand, Gender Studies' scholars would be interested in digging deeply in the rooted traditions surrounding masculinity and femininity (the man as a mythical

hero, the woman as a representation of Ireland), and the evolution of identity through the years of British rule first and then, independence. All these future lines of research do not only have to be focused on contemporary literature but we could also study 19<sup>th</sup> century literature from either perspective (Corpus Linguistics or Gender Studies), and it might show interesting results in terms of variances in speech amongst characters because of the differences not only between men and women but also in ancestry (English/Irish), religion (Protestant/Catholic), social class and environment (rural/urban).

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