

**The Hiberno-English Morpho-Syntactic System in Synge's
The Playboy of the Western World**

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En Irlanda, los efectos del intenso contacto entre la lengua irlandesa y la lengua inglesa han sido acumulativos y, en consecuencia, han determinado una nueva reorganización de los paradigmas lingüísticos. Hiberno-Inglés (Hiberno-English, HE) es la denominación por la que se conoce al dialecto inglés hablado en Irlanda. Muchas de las características hiberno-inglesas que difieren radicalmente del inglés estándar (Standard English, St.E.) proceden de dialectos ingleses llevados a Irlanda, y otras, aquellas que más lo caracterizan, proceden exclusivamente del irlandés. El presente artículo pretende examinar los rasgos morfosintácticos hiberno-ingleses en la obra *The Playboy of the Western World* del dramaturgo irlandés John Millington Synge.

Synge's use of HE has been attacked and defended: 'The language of Synge's plays is *not* the language of the peasants, inasmuch that no peasant talks consistently as Synge's characters talk; it is the language of the peasants, in that it contains no word or phrase a peasant did not actually use' (STRONG, 1941: 81-2). However Synge never attempted to defend that the language in *The Playboy* was realistic, furthermore he wrote in the *Preface* to the play on 21 January 1907: 'In writing *The Playboy of the Western World*, as in my other plays, I have used one or two words, that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland'.

It is not the purpose of this paper to censure the realism of Synge's language. In this study we shall concentrate on those HE structures that have been accurately imitated in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*.

MORPHO-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

Several features of the morphology and syntax of the Irish language explain some of the non-standard expressions in *The Playboy*. Some other HE features have their origin in Elizabethan English. However, in most cases HE morpho-syntactic system owes at least as much to Old English as to interference from Irish.

1. Irish basic word order is Verb-Subject-Object (*cheannaigh mé chóta* 'I bought a coat', literally 'bought I a coat'), however when some constituent of the sentence is to be emphasised it is placed first, with the copula "is" before it, and the rest of the sentence occurs as a relative clause. Although, unlike Irish, HE basic word order is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), the use of the Irish copula is reproduced in HE clefting. Introductory expressions such as 'It is', 'It's', 'Is it', and so on, translate the Irish copula into HE, and as in Irish, any element which needs to be emphasised may be fronted. This is a recurring feature in Synge's *The Playboy*.

It's above at the crossroads he is meeting Philly Cullen... (76)
and I'm thinking it's a queer daughter you are... (78)

Another type of clefting construction in HE speech is the so-called *there*-clefts. As in St. E, they may be divided into 'stressed focus clefts' and 'informative-presupposition clefts' (FILPPULA, 1986). *There*-clefts in HE may be interchanged by *it*-clefts in many contexts, nonetheless usually 'stressed focus clefts' follow the standard function of 'existential presentation' (FILPPULA, *ibid.*: 255). These examples illustrate my point,

and there is Shaneen has long speeches for to tell you now. (103)
for there's Shaneen thinks she wouldn't suit you ...(104)
Watch him taking the gate. There's riding. (116)

2. Synge's use of the dialect is quite homogeneous in dealing with HE indirect questions. Following the Irish model, HE indirect questions may retain question inversion and unlike the standard pattern, the St.E. conjunctions *if* and *whether* are frequently omitted.

I stood a while outside wondering would I have a right to pass on or to walk in and see you,.. (75)

And you never went near to see was he hurted or what ailed him at all? (77)

... and none to ask were you a murderer or what at all. (110)

3. HE speakers are likely to use rhetorical devices. Sometimes they correspond to what has been defined by Oratory as 'High style' but in most cases HE rhetoric utterances correspond to 'Plain style'. As the examples below illustrate, rhetorical questions do not expect an answer and here there's a sort of implied agreement between the speaker and the listener.

There's her boots now, nice and decent for her evening use, and isn't it grand brushes she has? (94)

Didn't I know rightly..? (94)

Oh, isn't he a holy terror, and isn't it true for Father Reilly, that ..?
(130)

4. Another characteristic of HE is the optional omission, not just of object relatives, but of subject relatives. As a result we find the existence of co-ordinate constructions where a subordinate relative clause could have been used. Alison Henry (1995) argues that sentences with the subject omitted 'are not true relative clauses'. According to her, this type of sentences contributes to the strongly topical nature of HE. The contexts in which the relative pronoun is omitted in *The Playboy* are the following,

1. Within sentences with existential *there*.

there wasn't a person in Ireland knew the kind I was, ...(88)

2. Within 'it-clefts' sentences.

And asking your pardon, is it you's the man killed his father?(95)

It was my own son hit me, ... (107)

3. Followed by clauses whose verbs introduce individuals into the discourse.

I'm telling you, and he a man never gave peace to any, ... (89)

I'd be afeard to be jealous of a man did slay his da? (122)

5. As a derivation of the Irish language, we find a variety of phrasal constructions corresponding to St.E. single *wh*-forms, such as,

1. HE *what* / *what way* for St.E. 'why'.

And what way weren' you hanged, mis ter? (84)

What ails you, or what is it you're wanting at this hour of the night? (90)

2. HE *what way* for St.E. 'how'.

when I'm asking only what way I'll pass these twelve hours of dark, ... (77)

And what way are you feeling, mister? (114)

3. HE “what kind” for St.E. ‘how’.

What kind was he? (106)

4. HE the while for St.E. ‘when’.

and he a man’d be ranging all times, the while he was waking,
...(89)

6. The form of the imperative is one of the most significant differences between HE and St. E.. HE speakers distinguish typically two forms within the imperative mood, i.e. the form with *let*, followed by simple or continuous verbal forms, and the continuous form.

In St.E. imperatives, the first and third person pronouns may occur with *let* in ‘jussive’ or ‘optative’ sentences. The second person pronoun is only implicit. However, in HE imperatives with *let*, we usually find an explicit form of the second person pronoun.

One of the many controversies that has occupied scholars of HE (VAN HAMEL, 1912; BLISS, 1972) is that of the origin of HE imperative with *let*. Bliss (*ibid.*) after analysing some possible retentionist explanations based on the confusion between *let*, *leave* and its Old E. distinctive form *leve*, states that the solution to the problem should be found in the Irish idioms. Studying Irish idioms such as *bíodh deoch agat!*, literally ‘let there be a drink at you!’, he establishes the HE usage. When Irish speakers want to adapt this idiom to English, they render the Irish third person imperative as *let*, and the second person explicitly expressed by Irish *agat* as *you*. Thus, *let you have a drink*. The contexts in which *let you* is used as imperative in *The Playboy* are the following,

1. Followed by a positive infinitive.

Let you stretch now by the fire, young fellow. (86)

and let you go off till you’d find a radiant lady... (123)

let you give us your blessing and hear her swear her faith to me, ...
(124)

2. Followed by a negated infinitive.

let you not forget the sports and racing ... (99)

Let you not take it badly, mister honey... (104)

3. Followed by a continuous form in negative.

Let you not be tempting me, and we near married itself... (79)

Let you not be putting him in mind of him, ... (114)

In addition to the aforementioned imperative constructions, HE speakers are likely to use continuous forms preceded by *don't* in negative imperatives. The continuous form in the positive imperative, which was rather common in Elizabethan English, is still used by HE speakers, however the expanded form in negative imperatives is by far the most common in the dialect, 'including among those who aspire to be accepted as users of Standard English' (DOLAN, 1984: 54). It comes from the Irish structure *Ná bí ag* in sentences such as *Ná bí ag insisnt dom*, translated into HE *Don't be telling me*. The two examples cited below are some of the many continuous imperative constructions in Synge's play.

Don't be talking, and we fooled today... (95)

Don't be letting on to be shy, ... (97)

7. The HE construction 'for to + infinitive' seems to be a literal translation of the Irish 'chun + verbal noun'. Contrary to this view many scholars, such as Bertz (1987) and Harris (1993) argue that this HE construction is a retention of the older English usage 'for to + non-finite complement'. Generally speaking, *for to* in such a construction corresponds to St.E. 'to'. Alison Henry (*op.cit.*) offers two different translations for this construction, i.e. 'in order', 'in order to' and 'to' infinitive marker. In the following examples from *The Playboy*, *for to* is used in the sense of 'in order to'.

the way she'd have a sup of goat's milk for to colour my tea. (95)

I'm abroad on the hillside for to seek Pegeen. (105)

You're blowing for to torture me. (129)

8. The Irish language has two structural forms of the present tense. These are the simple present whereby synthetic verbal forms express person and number, and the compound present whereby the verb remains uninflected within the formula 'tá + noun / pronoun + ag (St.E. 'at') + verbal noun'. *Tá sé ag scríobhadh* (St.E. 'he is writing') is an example of the second analytic type.

The aspectual distribution of the Irish present forms equals the St.E. distribution between iterative or simple present and continuous or progressive present. However, the Irish periphrastic form is more frequent and subject to less restrictions than its St.E. counterpart. Irish progressive is used 'to state what is actually taking place' (VAN HAMEL, *op.cit.*: 275); the iterative present, on the other hand, is used to indicate habitual action.

As a result of the Irish influence, HE speakers show much greater preference for the periphrastic form than St.E. speakers. In most cases, HE progressive forms are used where St.E. would have used simple ones.

Isn't it long the nights are now, Shawn Keogh, to be leaving a poor girl with her own self ... (76)

It's a queer thing you wouldn't care to be hearing it ... (100)

Well, it's a story I'm not understanding at all ... (102)

9. Unlike St.E., Irish does not mark the distinction between then-time and indefinite anterior by grammatical means, it uses a simple past form in both cases. In the Irish language, tense is indicated either by suffixation or stem change. However, the simple past tense is not marked by suffixes, but by lenition of the initial consonant preceded by the clitic *do*.

In HE there is a tendency to retain the old English usage, employing many of the old English strong past forms and usually, by a process of analogy, creating new solecistic ones. As Harris (*op.cit*: 151-3) describes, there have been two consecutive processes before the establishment of present-day St.E. distinction between strong and weak verbs. In the Old E. period the strong verb system was characterised as a complex and extensive system. However from that time to the eighteenth-century, there was a tendency to shift into the weak category. The second movement was a reversal one, and the result is that modern St.E. has a more complex strong verb system than non-standard dialects, including HE. However, sometimes in the dialect it is not completely clear whether we are dealing with solecistic forms or with different functions of standard forms. There are many examples of preterite forms with participial function, and vice versa, participial forms with preterite function, e.g.,

Well, I never seen to this day a man with a looking-glass held to his back. (96)

I'm thinking I seen him. (108)

Did you never hear tell of the skulls they have in the city of Dublin, ...? (112)

Well, I never seen to this day a man with a looking-glass held to his back (96) may be considered as a non-standard form or a present form functioning as a preterite one. According to the first interpretation "see"

for instance *tá se* (St.E. 'he is'), *bidheann sé* (St.E. 'he usually is'). The function of the consuetudinal form is to express iterative or durative aspect.

The Irish consuetudinal present tense is rendered in HE by the use of *be* and *do be*, inflected for tense and person: *be* and *do be* for the plural, first and second person, and *bees* and *does be* for the third person singular.

Is it often the polis do be coming into this place, master of the house? (81)

There's harvest hundreds do be passing these days for the Sligo boat. (106)

they'd be the like of the holy prophets, I'm thinking, do be straining the bars of Paradise. (119)

In the aforementioned examples, the consuetudinal present and past is used in progressive constructions. Again, we find this type of constructions in Irish, e.g. *bíon sé ag obair*, which translates HE *he does be working*.

The origin of HE *be(es)* has been explained by Bliss (*op.cit.* 1972: 78) on the basis of the Irish consuetudinal form *bi(dh)*. This form is identical in pronunciation to St.E. 'be'. Early HE speakers just added the English third-person singular-ending '-s' when they needed to express iterative or durative actions, giving place to the HE consuetudinal form as we know it today.

However, many different explanations have been suggested to the origin of the consuetudinal *do be* (and its variants). Among the many reasons given, I shall discuss Sullivan's, Bliss's and Kallen's.

Following O'Donovan (1845: 151), Sullivan (1976: 119) affirms that *be* and *do be* as consuetudinal markers were introduced in HE due to the need of Irish speakers to express the Irish distinction in English. Although he considers them to be translations of the Irish consuetudinal, he does not explain the origin of the HE forms.

Bliss (*op.cit.* 1972: 75) disregards the Irish consuetudinal usage as the source of HE *do be*. He bases his explanation in the fact that Irish verbs, other than the substantive 'be', lack a distinctive consuetudinal present. In Bliss's account (*op.cit.* 1979: 293), the usage of *do* as a consuetudinal auxiliary comes from an association between this verb in English negative and interrogative sentences, and the Irish present ending '*-(e)ann*' employed in equivalent contexts. When the use of '*-(e)ann*'

could be a 'survival from old English' (JOYCE, 1991) and according to my second interpretation, it could be seen as an example of Kallen's 'extended present-perfect' (1994: 182).

10. As Greene (1966: 48) notes the Irish language has no specific lexical entries for the St.E. verb *to have* and therefore, there is no perfect tense corresponding to the St.E. one. Nevertheless, the St.E. perfects may be rendered in Irish by means of two periphrastic constructions, i.e. '*tá + ag*' and '*tá + taréis*'. Both constructions refer to the completion of the action. However the '*tá + taréis*' construction adds the meaning of recency.

- PI: The '*tá + taréis*' construction

- (i) *Tá sé tréis leitir a scríobh.* (literally 'He's after writing a letter')

This construction follows the formula: '*tá + subject + taréis + (object +) verbal noun*'. A natural constraint on PI, as its corresponding construction in St.E., is that it cannot be used in negations. The Irish periphrastic form corresponds to St.E. 'subject + *have* + just + past participle (+ object)', thus (i) above may be translated into St.E. as 'he has just written a letter'.

There is complete agreement in relation to the origin of the HE '*after perfect*'. For most scholars (BLISS, 1979: 302-3) this construction is no doubt derived from the Irish idiom '*tá + taréis*'.

'*After perfects*' have been termed with different labels. Thus, for instance, Harris uses the label 'hot news PI' (HARRIS, 1984: 308) on the basis of Green's PI '*tá + taréis*', and Kallen refers to them under the title 'perfects with after' (KALLEN, *op.cit.*: 182). HE '*after perfects*' refer to actions recently accomplished, equivalent in St.E. to the present perfect with *just*. Among the many characteristics of HE that have been commented on, the use of '*after perfect*' constructions is one of the most favoured to illustrate the influence of the substratum in the dialect. From *The Playboy* I have selected the following:

Aren't we after making a good bargain, ... (76)

and I'm after feeling a kind of fellow above in the furzy ditch, ...

(77)

Didn't a lad see them and he after coming from harvesting in the Liverpool boat? (112)

11. In Irish the substantive verb *be* distinguishes between the punctual present tense *tá* and the consuetudinal present tense *bí(dh)*. Thus,

was applied to affirmative sentences, the auxiliary *do* started to be used also in affirmative sentences.

Kallen (1985: 107-9) bases the model *do be* on earlier English. At this time *do* started to be used as a marker denoting habitual or generic actions and it often co-occurred with adverbs indicating regular frequency, such as *usually, regularly*. Nonetheless, he suggests that the Irish language 'may have provided the conceptual basis on which bilingual speakers looked for an habitual marker in English' (KALLEN, *ibid.*: 107).

Like many issues relating to the origin of HE distinctive features, it is sometimes difficult to know whether they may be explained on an Irish-substratum basis, or on an English-retentionist basis. Both sources can be considered to explain the origin of HE consuetudinal *do be*. However, what is significant here is that unlike St.E., present-day HE retains this form. Hence again, another argument pointing to the conservative nature of HE.

12. In HE a plural subject noun phrase may occur with a verb containing the *-s* third person singular ending. Again the Irish language should be analysed to explain this phenomenon. Irish co-ordinate nouns appear with third person singular verbs when the nouns are nominative. The only cases in which the verb agrees with its nominative are when both the verb and the nominative are third person singular, and when a plural noun or a third person plural pronoun occur with a verb in third plural (JOYCE, *op.cit.*: 111). Therefore the use of singular verbs with plural subjects in Irish is much less restricted than in St.E..

In Henry's account (*op.cit.* 1995: 23), the occurrence of the *-s* singular ending is ungrammatical in the dialect when the pronominal subject is nominative. Nonetheless there are some utterances in Synge's play which contradict Henry's restrictions. Thus, for instance,

and the men is coming above;... (77)

the peelers in this place is decent, ...(85)

Are you thinking them's his boots? (94)

What in glory has you here at this hour of day? (96)

From the Principles and Parameters framework, *-s* verb ending is the unmarked form of the verbal paradigm showing only tense inflection, and therefore likely to be attached to any present verbal form. However, from a substratumist point of view, the HE use of singular verbs with

plural subjects should be explained in connection with the verb *to be* in Irish, i.e. *tá*, since as I have already pointed out Ir. *tá* may be translated in St.E. as singular *is* or plural *are*.

13. HE *amn 't* corresponds to St.E. contracted form 'am not'. It is also reproduced in the dialect as *amment* (TANIGUCHI, 1972: 111).

and amn 't I a great wonder to think...? (106)

Amn 't I after seeing the love-light ...? (109)

Alternatively, expletives and some idioms reflect the HE speaker's tendency to express himself negatively. Among the many HE expletives expressing negation, *devil* (pronounced in HE as *divil*) is the most common. *Devil* is generally followed by the definite or indefinite article and the resulting construction may be situated 'before any part of the speech' (HENRY, 1960-61). The idiom with *devil* is found in 'England as early as 1508' (OED), however in HE it reflects the Irish idiom in expressions such as *diabhal duine*, translated in the dialect as *devil a one* (St.E. 'no-one'). Odlin (1995) argues that HE idioms with *devil* have Celtic origin on the grounds that 'devil negation' is not as productive in English dialects as in Celtic areas, and that idioms with '*devil*' followed by an article are scarcely used in areas other than the Celtic lands.

-Was it bailiffs? -The divil a one. -Agents? -The divil a one. (82)

and he the divil a robber.. (106)

-Not working at all? -The divil a work..(107)

14. In the realm of deixis, another difference with St.E. is the common usage of *them* for St.E. *these*, and in some cases for St.E. 'those' (HARRIS, op.cit. 1993: 145-6). This may be due to the confusion between *this* and *that* by HE speakers, e.g.,

Are you thinking them's his boots? (94)

I'd like herself to see me in them tweeds and hat. (104)

for them lads caught a maniac one time and pelted the poor creature till he ran out, ... (117)

15. The use of prepositions in HE is a vast issue. HE prepositions and prepositional phrases express meanings that in St.E. are communicated by other prepositional forms. The main root of this phenomenon lies again in the Irish language.

1. HE *with* for St.E. 'by'.

Van Hamel (*op.cit.*: 283-4) shows that this usage denotes 'the agent or cause, with passive verbs' and that it comes from Irish, unlike Henry (*op.cit.*) who observes that it is a retention of the Shakespearean use.

and not to take my death with the fear. (77)

and my own teeth rattling with the fear. (78)

2. HE *of* for St.E. 'from'.

And you went asking money of him, ... (97)

3. HE *on* for St.E. 'of'.

In Irish the preposition *ar* (St.E. 'on') is always used to express disadvantage, 'both bodily and mental' (CHRISTIAN BROTHERS, 1960). Following the Irish model, the use of the preposition *on* as a 'dative of disadvantage' (BLISS, 1984: 149) is a commonplace in HE. In the majority of cases HE *on* is followed by a pronoun which literally translates the Irish prepositional pronouns: *orm*, *ort*, etc. The contexts in the peasants in *The Playboy* make use of *on* in contrast to the standard are the following,

1. Equivalent to St.E. expression 'to the disadvantage of'.

and what would the polis want spying on me, ... (81)

for you should have a thin stomach on you, ... (96)

2. In relation to the preceding use, *on* is often used in curses and benedictions.

I'll get the curse of the priests on you, ... (79)

Oh, St Joseph and St. Patrick and St Brigit and St James, have mercy on me. (79)

3. Equivalent to St.E. notion of possession.

I'll have a soft lovely skin on me ... (94)

with a limping leg on her... (97)

16. Conjunctions are not as varied in Irish as in St.E.. The verbal noun undertakes a great deal of their functions. There are a few simple conjunctions in Irish (STENSON, 1981: 32): *agus* ('and'), *ach* ('but'), *nó* ('nor'), and *aná* ('nor') and the subordinating conjunctions *nuair* ('when'), *sul* ('before') and *cé* ('although'). HE makes a large use of *and* and many others HE conjunctions differ in meaning from the standard pattern.

1. HE *AND*.

Agus is heard far more frequently than the others in both co-ordinate and subordinate constructions. Irish adverbial subordinate clauses with *agus* consist of '*agus* + the subject of the dependency clause + *ag* + ver-

bal noun' (HARRIS, *op.cit.* 1984: 305). The Irish model has become an intrinsic part of both rural and urban HE (FILPPULA, 1991: 57).

Apart from connecting simultaneous events, like in St.E., the conjunction *and* in HE can be applied to join a finite clause with a non-finite clause or verbless clause, and it is pronounced 'as a single breath group with a unified intonation pattern' (HARRIS, *op.cit.* 1993: 149), e.g.,

It's time surely, and I a seemly fellow with great strength in me ...
(89)

She wouldn't suit you, and she with the divil's own temper ... (104)

Bearing in mind that there are no clear boundaries in the distribution of the functions of *and*, I shall classify the subordinate clauses in which *and* occurs in the play under consideration here as follows,

1.1. Temporal clauses: for St.E. 'when', 'while'.

I stood a while outside wondering would I have a right to pass on or to walk in and see you, and I could hear the cows breathing and sighing in the stillness of the air.. (75)

1.2. Cause clause: for St.E. 'because'.

for I'll not have him tormented, and he destroyed travelling since Tuesday was a week (91)

1.3. Concessive clause: for St.E. 'although', 'however'.

Never a one of them, and I walking forward facing hog, dog, or divil on the highway of the road ... (84)

It's a queer thing you wouldn't care to be hearing it and them girls after walking four miles to be listening to me now. (100)

1.4. Conditional clause: for St.E. 'if'.

he'll be having my life, and I going home lonesome in the darkness of the night. (80)

How would you see him and it dark night this half-hour gone by?
(75)

1.5. Relative clause: for St.E. 'which', 'who', 'that'.

Don't tell your father and the men is coming above; ... (77)

1.6. And is also frequently prefixed to questions. Here it may be considered as a clincher.

And isn't it a great shame when the old and hardened do torment the young? (107)

Glory be to God? And who hit you at all? (113)

2. HE *for* for St.E. 'because'.

what name will we call you, for we'd like to know? (85)

but it's his own they are, surely, for I never seen the like of them for whitey mud, ... (95)

For I'm thinking he would liefest wreak his pains on me. (129)

3. HE *till* for St.E. 'so'.

Sometimes a subordinating conjunction carries the meaning it has in Irish into HE. A good example of this feature is *till*, representing Irish *go* for St.E. 'so', as in,

he was taken with contortions till I had to send him in the ass-cart to the females' nurse. (108)

Let me out, the lot of you, till I have my vengeance on his head today! (116)

17. Apart from the reflexive use of *itself*, there are another typical HE meaning of the pronoun, i.e. 'so' and 'even' (VAN HAMEL, *op.cit.*: 287). The use of *itself* as St.E. 'even' also derives from Irish. This is a very common feature of the dialect in Synge.

Let you not be tempting me, and we near married itself. (79)

I'll give you the whole of them, and my blessing, and the blessing of Father Reilly itself ... (103)

If you are a wonder itself, you'd best be hasty, ... (117)

18. The diminutive suffix *-een* from the Irish diminutive suffix *-ín* 'no doubt comes from Irish' (HOGAN, 1934: 100). This diminutive suffix expresses affection or contempt, and HE speakers had to incorporate it into their dialect since the standard language does not own an equivalent form.

Where now will you meet the like of Daneen Sullivan ... (76)

'It isn't fitting', says the priesteen, ... (90)

and let you drink a supeen with your arms linked ... (98)

and I with my little houseen above where there'd be myself to tend you ... (110)

and I'll slip down the boreen, and not to see them so. (117)

19. In the English of Ireland there also exists the possibility of locative adverbs to be used as prepositions. This use is shared by Irish and HE with regard to the cardinal points. *North, South, East, and West*

are frequently heard among HE speakers to express locative relations. Hogan (*op.cit.*: 100) who relates these locative adverbs to Shakespearean English contradicts Van Hamel (*op.cit.*: 288-9) who gives them an Irish origin. In HE we find the following pairs of synonyms: *above* and *northwards*, *below* and *southwards*, *over* and *eastwards*, and *back* and *westwards*. In Irish one word is used for each member of the pair, hence for example, Ir. *siar* (St.E. 'westward') opposed to Ir. *thiar* (St.E. 'west' - location-), and Ir. *suas* (St.E. 'up', 'upward') opposed to Ir. *thuas* (St.E. 'up' -location-). As St.E. lacks this formal distinction, HE speakers use the same word to convey both meanings.

He gave me a drive with the scythe, and I gave a lep to the east. Then I turned around with my back to the north, and I hit a blow on the ridge of his skull, ... (98)

I was passing below, and I seen your mountany sheep eating cabbages in Jimmy's field. (103)

Take the loy is on your western side. (123)

20. Another typical HE feature is the redundant use of clinchers, in both initial and final positions. Some of them have an assertive and emphatic function as in the case of *all*, *at all*, *sure*, but others such as *like* are unstressed and besides idioms such as *y'know* keep the conversation going. *The Playboy* also contains *at all* used as a clincher.

to see was he hurted or what ailed him at all? (77)

if it's the truth you're seeking one at all. (84)

Who is he at all? (115)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse some of the typical features of Hiberno-English reproduced in *The Playboy of the Western World* by Synge. As we have seen, the differences between Standard English and Hiberno-English are historically deep-rooted, and there is no reason to consider the HE morpho-syntactic system as substandard or arbitrary. HE has its own grammar, even if this grammar sometimes differs from the English standardised grammar.

As regards the allegations against the speech of Synge's characters, although many expressions are literal translations from the Irish spoken

in the Aran Islands and many others are far from being actually used by HE speakers, we may conclude that his work encouraged Irish writers to include the Anglo-Irish tradition and the HE language in their works.

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