PREFACE

There has been a revival of interest in J.M. Synge as a dramatist in the recent years and he has been safely established as a major dramatist whose contribution to the Irish Dramatic Movement as well as to the growth of world drama is estimated to be quite considerable.

The present thesis attempts to make a detailed analysis of J.M. Synge's plays individually and then evaluate their major themes and art. It also draws attention to Synge's language experiment, which has on one side 'purified the dialect of the tribe,' and on the other, enriched the poetic quality of his work. The thesis also sets out to study the plays as a projection of a hetero-cosmic vision, combining realism and fantasy as well as a presentation of life in a double-focus. The chief characters of Synge attain an agonizing but redemptive self-knowledge while the readers or the audience achieve an existential awareness through laughter. This bi-focal vision makes his comedies tragi-comic. The genius of Synge lies in his ability to combine a profound observation of the Aran folk's life in all its complexity with the power of presenting these people in their amusing aspects, short of the point where they turn to
tragedy. Whereas his comedies thus border on the tragi-comic, his tragedies blend stoic bitterness and lyric tenderness.

Finally Synge's uniqueness and his pioneering efforts in the matter of both theme and technique are discussed so as to place him in the proper perspective. This has entailed a comparison of Synge with the major Irish dramatists on one side and O'Neill on the other and also in assessing his legacy to the work of the more recent dramatists.

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V. Rangan