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THE TRIUMPH OF WOMAN OVER PREDICAMENT IN SEAN O'CASEY'S *JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK*: A FEMINIST READING

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the predicament of women in the narrow-minded Irish society of earlier twentieth century Ireland, the researcher in this paper sheds light on the oppression of women, their sufferings, the malfunctioned society and the mistaken views about the woman. Moreover, the researcher delineates women's issues in the work environment, exploitation and other domestic pressures and concludes that women can succeed and achieve victory by being unconventional. The play that the researcher has selected for this paper is *Juno and the Paycock* by Sean O'Casey, the play that offers the best revolutionary examples of the female characters Juno and her daughter Mary. The paper uses feminist criticism for the analysis.

Keywords: *Feminism, Predicament, War, Exploitation, Abandonment*

INTRODUCTION

The discourse of the modernist drama has addressed the issues of social reforms in general and women's issues in particular, the time of composing the play coincides with the chaotic situation in Ireland, therefore, *Juno and the Paycock* (1924) deals with the ramifications of war and the plight of the individuals namely women. The women suffer the double impact of war through losing their husbands or sons besides providing a workforce in the absence of men. Unlike G.B. Shaw and Oscar Wilde, Sean O'Casey was committed to the roots of Irish society and attempts to depict the issues that the natives face. In this 'Irish' play, however, the drama of *Juno and the Paycock* stands for a universal issue due to the theme of the war's pressure on the people of Ireland as well as the vision of the society towards women. The play was published in a brief time after the First

World War so the grim realities of the war were still echoing in the mind of the audience.

The play displays the anguishes of a poverty-stricken Irish family troubled by domestic challenges and war effects. The unfavourable effects of Ireland's constant engagement in war and the atrocious irony of Irishmen targeting their people are professionally rendered in the tragic way of living of the characters in the play. The characters that are used by the dramatist are realistic, and in the character of Juno, the matriarch of the family, the dramatist recounts a woman that constantly suffers and undergoes pressures of life, yet rises and survives them as a triumphant. As far as the feminist perspective is concerned the play delineates the odds of a woman struggling with the twofold crisis of poverty and war. Thus, throughout the play Juno, the major character in the play is put into a predicament due to her role as

the breadwinner of the family as well as her children who culminate in her burdens. Meyers describes the predicament in general as follows: "Our human predicament stems not only from our vulnerability to external and internal pressures toward evil but also from the foibles and fallacies of our thinking"(Meyers, p.45, 1981). The plight of the female characters in this play lies in the way the two main characters in the play Juno and her daughter Mary handle the cruelty of men, Mary failed in such a task, yet her mother Juno survived such grim realities and achieved the triumph over the predicament that was imposed upon her. Although the play is introduced thirty years after *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, yet, it deals with the identical subject matter in its outlook towards a woman and shows how woman is kept in a liable and defenceless position in a society which continued the same way of viewing *The Second Sex* (1949). Here too, the mother-and-daughter break patriarchal norms of perfect womanhood concerning work economic and emotional independence from the man as the head of the family. The play likewise depicts the devastating influences of war and the troubles it establishes for everyday men and particularly women. Hence patriarchy is doubled on women on the external level, the colonial oppression and on the internal

level the domestic oppression. The play manifests the tragedy of humankind, however it examines the tragedy of womankind; how women have to survive the cruel views of traditional society. Women are mainly the sufferers after each war regardless of which side is winning. As they lose their loved ones in wars. The Women in the defeated side have to bear burden of rape, the indignity of being sexually harassed, and of being compelled to watch their loved ones endure pain and die. In the other hand the women in the winning side also undergo the emotional and economic turmoil of losing husbands and sons during war. The play is an examination set by O'Casey to discover the characters best way of handling the tough and problematic situations they are supposed to go through as Kosok mentions "Human integrity is put to the test in numerous different situations where several characters, confronted with the same task, succeed or fail, and where success or failure, determining moral rank."(Kosok, p.170,1987)

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Before plunging into a deep discussion of the examples of the feminist reading of *Juno and the Paycock*, a briefed definition of Feminism may enable us to understand the task that Juno performed throughout the play. Hence Feminism is:

a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome: whether it is the husband or the father or the community or whether it is a religious group or ethnic group. When women free themselves of the dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of feminism materialises. (Chanman, p.17, 1991).

From a feminist outlook, women's empowerment, and not oppression is a key element in O'Casey's drama. Certain female characters understand their predicament, and, instead of putting up a pointless struggle against the ideology, exploit themselves through commodification as a way to improve their opportunities for higher mobility; yet the others get the power from same-gender allies in a great deal to depart the oppressive social circumstances and explore much humanistic existence.

In most of O'Casey's play, however, Juno and her daughter sound rational and reasonable in their attempts to maintain recognition and social status/importance in their culture. Then, O'Casey appreciates the patriarchal system and protest against it by displaying a dichotomy of genders' behaviour in his *Juno and the Paycock*: For example,

women are stoic and powerful in the pursuits of their life as in the case of the working Juno, men on the other hand without exception are slackers and irresponsible and incompetent in their everyday existence. For instance Jack Boyle, his son and the lover of Mary. Moreover, O'Casey's women characters are grounded in pragmatism. Meanwhile, his men characters—that stand for patriarchy as the systematic community—are intentionally built as a one-dimensional, clumsy blockhead

Mothers are mostly connected to their daughters than with their boys. And for that, "... mothers experience a greater continuity with girl children... [the daughters] ... experience a sense of merging with their mothers that somehow persists into later life" (Austin, P.66:1990). Naturally, Juno and her daughter have been considered tragic characters who, at the end of the play, are compelled to escape intolerable conditions. A feminist study argues that the norm by assuming that mother-daughter relation empowers women to commit some action rather than the response in a submissive manner to patriarchy and their oppression. A radical feminist approach assesses women's escaping as a behaviour of "sisterhood", or a means of self-preservation which calls upon the urge to divorce such a suppressive patriarchal sphere.

THE PLIGHT OF MOTHERS

As mentioned before that the context of the play relies much on the war and its ramifications on the Irish, women have suffered the agonies of the British Colony as well the house patriarchy. Hence, O'Casey has highlighted the sufferings of women who sigh about their lost sons during the war, in a manner that turns out to be a plight for them to mourn and bewail their predicament. For instance, Mrs. Tancred is another female character in the play, she also goes through the pain and the misery of losing her son during the civil war in Ireland, she articulates the predicament of anguished women who sigh for her lost ones. Despite the segregation of the war and the individuals having to assume separate party lines, still, the suffering of the women about their sons is unified. Her dirge asserts that the predicament of mothers is universal and has no borders, whatsoever.

MRS. TANCRED: Me home is gone now; he was me only child,....An' I'm told he was the leader of the ambush where me nex' door neighbor, Mrs. Mannin' lost her Free State soldier son. An' now here's the two of us oul' women, standin' one on each side of a scales

o' sorra, balanced be the bodies of our two dead darlin' sons. (*Juno and the Paycock* 227)

Juno speaks for the plight of women who are agonized by the loss of their men, and she provides examples of devastated wives from different families as in the lines below:

MRS. BOYLE: ...look at the way they're afther leavin' the people in this very house. Hasn't the whole house, nearly, been massacred ? There's young Dougherty's husband with his leg off, Mrs. Travers that had her son blew up be a mine....Mrs. Mannin' that lost wan of her sons in an ambush a few weeks ago , an' now, poor Mrs. Tancred's only child gone west with his body made collanther off. (*Juno and the Paycock* 228)

Due to the restrictions on women's freedom of speech very few women hadn't the audacity to publically oppose war and jeopardize being called unpatriotic. The feminist from Germany Werner Thonnessen was totally against war for its gloomy consequences on women and children.

As mentioned earlier that the play is written in a disturbing era of war and the British Colonialism, therefore the people in Ireland and particularly women had to succumb to British colonialism besides the house oppression. As Thonnesen remarks:

The psychological burdens of the war which women, in particular, had to bear as wives, mothers and sisters of soldiers, as housewives facing difficulties of food production and as mothers of small children growing up without their fathers...were now made even worse by physical and psychological exertion at work. (P.78,1973)

Although war represents a drastic drawback in the play, it nevertheless affects Juno. Weighed down by a disabled son and a husband who is good for nothing, and a drunkard, Juno has to assume the responsibility of becoming the breadwinner of the house. Juno confronts the conventional patriarchal perspective that just because a “woman was by divine design given a different biological function she should also be assigned different social tasks.”(Lerner, p.17,1986) Juno Boyle endeavours to abandon the domestic world of family and head to the public sphere, where

she works for long hours a day. She thus crosses the boundaries of gender roles here as a woman becomes the breadwinner and the man sits at home. The other plighted female character in the play is Juno’s daughter Mary who also has to work outside, in the meantime, Juno’s handicapped son Johnny and his father Mr Boyle who hate working, sit without any work increasing Juno’s frustration. “MRS. BOYLE: If there was e’er a genuine job goin’ you’d be dh’other way about-not able to lift your arms with the pain in your legs! Your poor wife slavin’ to keep the bit in your mouth, an’ you gallivantin’ about all the day like a paycock!” (204) Capitalism had contributed to the predicament of women by dragging them to the factories since the last decades of the nineteenth century. There was a close relationship between and women’s labour got more and better as the men were engaged in the front. However, thus their duty is doubled, as women are obliged to do domestic duties at home as well as at the factory. Women's plight is thus complicated they were inducted as a low-cost power of labour, they have to execute tasks for long shifts for fewer wages. It was documented that the terrible payment conditions of women who work as

follow: “Average wage for men was fourteen shillings for a week of seventy hours, and women worked in some cases as many as ninety hours for anywhere between five and ten shillings a week.” (Rowbotham, p.55,1976:). Hartmann in an essay titled, “Capitalism Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex” intensively investigates the roots of a division of labour and concludes that “The division of labour by sex appears to have been universal throughout human history. In our society sexual division of labour is hierarchical with men on top and women on the bottom”. (Hartmann, p.74,1979) Juno who is stuck in such a cruel institution keeps "slavin" most of the day and by the end of it is hardly capable of supporting the family. The layer of the working community of women that Juno belongs to endure a lot. Sean O’Casey rationally depicts the physical predicament of women’s labour in the character of Juno. She is over forty years old lady who must be a beautiful woman in her youth she; “but her face has now assumed that look which ultimately settles down upon the women of the working- class; a look of listless monotony and harassed anxiety, blending with an expression of mechanical resistance.” (199).

It seems that Juno who is still not so old already sounds years older because of overworking. Physical weariness and exhaustion, intense with exorbitant work laid their heavy shadows on women. Rowbotham remarks that due to this ‘double duty,’ “married women who worked were exhausted by the time they were thirty”.(Rowbotham, p137,1976) Conventional societies expect a lady to be a perfect wife, a fitting mother and an excellent housekeeper regardless of their professional commitments. Juno copes with these idealistic measurements of a woman's duties through working hard in the house and outside. She also obeys the idle requirements of her passive husband.

BOYLE: Is there e'er a bottle o' stout left?

MRS. BOYLE: There’s two o’ them here still.

BOYLE: Show us in one o' them an' leave t'other there

till I get up. An' throw us in the paper that’s on the table an' the

bottle o'

Sloan's Liniment that’s in the drawer.....

(Mrs. Boyle brings in the things asked for, and comes

out again.) (*Juno and the Paycock* 233)

For a considerable part of the play, Mrs. Boyle is a patriarch's delight, in her tolerant mental outlook towards her son and husband. The outrage of being the only 'responsible' individual at home will presume the main responsibility in her daughter's disaster and is barely appreciable in the earlier part of the play, nevertheless, is obvious at the beginning itself, that Juno's mood of compliance is saturated, and she is embittered performing her duty of an ideal mother, as she loses her temper in one occasion she argues to her quarrelling children "MRS. BOYLE: Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o'yous. I don't know what any o'yous ud do without your ma." (201) However, it is as "ma" that Juno's antitypical and anti-patriarchal visions come to the front. The conditions of betrayal on Mary's account by Bentham and her illegitimate pregnancy dismiss the conformist, calm nature of Juno, and her feminist supporting revolutionary impulses are immediately invoked. Juno's determination to back Mary up in her hour of plight indicates that she has the bravery to confront the puritanical criteria of a limited-minded society. She comprehends the odds that her daughter would encounter in this

taboos-obsessed society which regards a woman's chastity as a prime social matter. Society's handling of its eligible mothers has been degrading for many years and Juno pities her daughter for the psychological torment she would have to encounter, as she informs her husband to be quite patient with Mary.

MRS. BOYLE: What you an' I'll have to go through'll be nothin' to what poor Mary'll have to go through; for you an' me is middlin' old , and most of our years is spent; but Mary'll have maybe forty years to face an' handle and every wan o' them'll be tainted with a bitter memory. (*Juno and the Paycock* 238)

Mrs. Boyle acknowledges that society's "narrow humanity" will make her daughter's life agonizing.

Certain feminists blame it on a woman's biological system as contributing to her calamity in a patriarchal society. In a way that Mary, would not have to go through misery if she had had a different biological structure. The radical feminist Firestone opines that women are abused due to their reproductive

capability, and as soon as women own the mechanics to control the manners and methods of reproduction, they will be emancipated. "It was women's reproductive biology that accounted for her original and continued oppression and not some sudden patriarchal revolution". (Firestone, p.74,1979) In the context of *Juno and the Paycock*, Mary is shunned by society just because of being a woman. Her build would immediately 'expose' her as guilty and on the other hand, her lover Bentham, intact and not free of any charges physically or morally, has already abandoned Ireland. Juno's determination to stand by her plighted daughter in this authoritative environment is without a doubt an act of bravery. She does not shake from her position even in the face of injurious responses from her husband and son; actually, her perseverance to support her daughter becomes more powerful and her call, "If Mary goes, I'll go with her" demonstrates that she is brave enough in her convictions to go against the stream. In a such example of the strong women Juno and Mary, as portrayed by O'Casey, the male characters are displayed to be passive, careless, good-for-nothing men, living off the women and dependent on them for even their

primary needs. Johnny even asks for "a dhrink o' wather" to his bed while Mr. Boyle requires his food to be brought to his place. "Jack Boyle the "universal braggart warrior". He is a mock hero who is "satisfied to see as much of himself and the world as he chooses to see"(David, p.76,1960).

Juno's motherly responsibility towards her daughter and the awaited child has an awful affection and when Mary bewails the truth that her baby would grow without a father, Juno pacifies her telling her it would be grace in disguise; for she has at last attained the full perception of the motherhood in a child's life. "**MARY:** My poor little child that'll have no father. **MRS. BOYLE:** It'll have what's far better- it'll have two mothers." (244). Hence, Juno assures her daughter and her unborn baby will not be alone and cast off in the pungent moments of life. At this moment Durbach analyzed O'Casey's brilliant combination of the Roman myth and real modern life in Juno's character. The exhausted and morbid common working woman increasingly develops a supernatural charisma.

Juno Boyle comes to incarnate those life sustaining principles subsumed by her Roman counterpart: Goddess

of childbirth who, by extension, ensures the multiplication of the race; protectress of the pregnant wife, ...the Goddess who cares for the unborn child;...and above all the Goddess of domesticity, of the family hearth (Durbach, p.114,1985).

As a human Juno Boyle performs all the duties that are mainly accredited to her mythical namesake. She bit by bit suggests a mythical calibre in the play that eventually surpasses reality without bargaining her fundamental humanity. However, the playwright wanted the readers to see Juno's practical impulses for example when Mary legitimized her march on her co-worker on the foundations of "principles", Juno concedes it as an illogical decision. As her job is more significant than hollowed out principles and worthless to abandoning.

MARY: It doesn't matter what you say, Ma-

principle's a principle.

MRS.BOYLE: Yis: an' when I go into oul' Murphy's tomorrow, an' he gets to know that, instead o' payin' all, I'm going to borry more, what'll he say when I tell him a

principle's a principle?

(**Juno and the Paycock** 564)

However, some critics like Simmons loosely judge woman's attitudes and their practical vision to tackle social issues, as the women have to guard their children under any circumstance. They are merely anxious about the broader political perspective that assigns men the superior role and women are confined to the background. Thus, Mrs. Boyle has her portion of detractors that see her practical vision as an unwomanly sin. There is acute contrast between the female and male characters in *Juno and the Paycock* in such contradictory perspectives women appear superior to men due to their wisdom, love, and altruism. The play is effective when appreciated by the audience and as a successful attempt due to the potential features that O'Casey granted to his main character allowing her to rise as an atypical woman who defies the narrow-minded norms of society to safeguard her daughter. "The dominance of Juno, in her moments of suffering, in her day to day existence of resisting and doing instead of yielding and dreaming is the play's fortitude and triumph" (Carl, P.39,1963).

THE UNCONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF MAN

The male characters in the play have played a demolishing role due to their attitude to both Juno and her daughter Mary. Juno was made exhausted by her husband and son, as well as Mary who was frustrated and let down by two of her lovers. Thus, the male characters contribute to the deteriorating situation of the women in this play. Jack's character reflects his frail features; moreover, it demonstrates Juno's positive characteristics and her invaluable existence. Juno also looks through Boyle's hollowness and no longer holds any hope for him. Juno has understood that the great hue and sigh rose about a man being the "head of the house" is ridiculous. According to his timidity, Jack Boyle goes on lending and spending money lavishly even though he acknowledged that the will is not beneficial for him. His failure as an irresponsible husband and an unfit father, which is inferred even though his son Johnny

JOHNNY (*to Boyle*): An' you let us run into debt' an' you borrowed money from everybody to fill yourself

with beer! An' now you tell us the whole thing's a washout! Oh, if it's thrue, I'm done with you, for you're worse than me sister Mary!....

MRS. BOYLE: Johnny, Johnny, Johnny, for God's sake, be quiet!

JOHNNY: I'll not be quiet, I'll not be quiet; he's a nice father isn't he? Is it any wondher Mary went astray when.....

MRS. BOYLE: Johnny, Johnny, for my sake be quiet-
(*Juno and the Paycock* 239)

It is thus obvious that as Jack Boyle criticizes Mary, Juno admonishes him and points out his uselessness and inadequacy as a father "MRS. BOYLE: You'll say nothin' to her, Jack; ever since she left school she's earned her livin', an' your fatherly care never troubled the poor girl" (238). Juno's awareness about her husband's inefficiency has perhaps been hidden in her for a long time; now, amidst the crisis of her daughter, they find a loud declaration. As in the case of the protagonist in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* she now deems the father as a completely insignificant factor in a child's life.

Juno's disdainful husband and son also condemn Mary and wanted that she "should be driven out o' the house she's brought disgrace on." (238) Mr. Boyle is more worried about his honor in that traditional society than about his daughter's well being

BOYLE: ... Isn't this a nice thing to come rollin' in on top o' me afther all your prayin' to St. Anthony an' the Little Flower! An' she's a Child o' Mary too- I wonder what'll the nuns think of her now? An' it'll be bellows'd all over th' disthricht before you could say

Jack Robinson; an' whenever I'm seen they'll whisper, 'That's the father of Mary Boyle that had the kid be' the swank she used to go with; d'ye know? (*Juno and the Paycock* 238)

Jack Boyle's attitude mirrors the awfully adverse reaction that a male-centred society manifests in the face of a woman who breaks the so called moral codes. In the play, the brother and father verbally violate Mary causing ignominy and disgrace for their family, while Bentham, the biological father of the child, is barely to blame. Bentham is the sinner in the

first place, as he used Mary who is young and vulnerable, fueled by his greed to gain wealth due to the will. However, he abandons it as soon as he knows that the will is not worthy. This universal practice in which though man has a hand and sometimes more to blame in the case of a woman becoming pregnant out of marriage, yet, the people chide the woman as immoral meanwhile the man is free of blame. For patriarchs and traditionalists "active female sexuality is not merely a breach of decorum but also a flagrant breach of the public and political order". (Loomba, p.107,1993) They worry about the hierarchical and moral structure of society would fall apart if women go without punishment for their wrongful deeds.

BOYLE: I'm goin' out now to have a few drinks with th' last few makes I have, an' tell that lassie o' yours not to be here when I come back; for if I lay my eyes on her, I'll lay me hans on her, an' if I lay me hans on her, I won't be accountable for me actions! (*Juno and the Paycock* 240)

Juno's son, Johnny Boyle is a physically and spiritually dull male

character in this modern drama. Ironically speaking O'Casey wanted to build his play around Johnny as the main character. He instigates a few "masculine" factors like nationalism, war, patriotic feelings and sacrifice; yet these ideals sound a foil to his reality as a detractor and betrayer type of character. By the end of the play, even as the audience acknowledges that he is being dragged to death, nobody feels pity for him. Even after his death, Juno is relieved and she shines on as a source of inspiration. At such point, she is entirely overwhelmed with sorrow; not just because of Johnny's death, but with her daughter's predicament and Boyle's desperation. Against all her odds, the 'woman' appeals the celestial peace and benevolence.

MRS. BOYLE: Mother o' God,
 Mother o' God, have
 pity on us all! Blessed Virgin, where
 were you when me
 darlin' son was riddled with bullets,
 when me darlin'
 son was riddled with bullets? Sacred
 Heart o' Jesus,
 take away our hearts o' stone, and
 give us hearts o'
 flesh! Take away this murdherin'
 hate, an' give us

Thine own eternal love!

(*Juno and the Paycock* 245)

Jerry Devine is another main male character in the play and forms a revolutionary promise. He is an enthusiastic fellow with a nationalistic spirit, he loves Mary, but immediately after dating him, begins to ignore him totally for the sake of Charles Bentham. Nevertheless, Mary doesn't care about such negligence and he keeps attempting to win her heart. In the end, when Mary's hidden pregnancy is disclosed, Jerry's surprising and individualistic reaction grants us hope that society has its portion of "bold" men too, ready to swim against the current.

JERRY: Mary! (*Mary does not answer*) ...Your mother has told me everything, Mary, and I have come to you...I have come to tell you, Mary, that my love for you is greater and deeper than ever....

MARY: After all that has happened.

JERRY: What does it matter what has happened? We are young enough to be able to forget all those things.
I want to forget Bentham, I want to forget that you

left me- even for a while. (*Juno and the Paycock* 241)

Consequently, this appears to be a delusional declaration as it yields that Juno had not informed Jerry of the whole story and when he knows the case, his response turns out to be as conventional as everybody else's.

MARY: Oh, Jerry, Jerry, you haven't the bitter word of scorn for me after all.

JERRY: (*passionately*). Scorn! I love you, love you, Mary!

MARY: (*rising, and looking him in the eyes*). Even though....

JERRY: Even though you threw me over for another man; even though you gave me many a bitter word!

MARY: Yes, yes, I know; but you love me, even though....even though...I'm....goin'....goin'....
(*He looks at her questioningly and fear gathers in his eyes.*)

JERRY: My God, Mary, have you fallen as low as that?

(*Juno and the Paycock* 241)

In the time of darkness, the predicament of Mary is enlarged as she is abandoned by

her nearest people, particularly men: her lover, her brother her father, and what worsens her plight is the ignorance of the man who admitted to her the eternal love Jerry. Hence, the reader can appreciate how dark and rough the conditions of the woman are, such difficult situations are caused by the male characters' behaviour in the play as they proved to be unconstructive and frustrating for the woman's spirit.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE UNCONVENTIONAL WOMAN

After being abandoned by everybody around her except her mother, Poor Mary stands alone in the crisis except for the struggling mother who took her side, isolated from the entire world. Mary was inspired by her mother to have power and confidence. At any cost, she remains the girl of her mother. She is an example of a victimized woman in a rude society that blames the woman only. She provides domestic support for her mother to run the house as well as work outside. Sean O'Casey represents her as an example of the modern young woman that dreams to enhance her economic and social status. Thomson opines that her inappropriate pregnancy has functioned as an eye opener on her aspiration for a worthier life "The possibility of Mary's escaping from the world of her parents suggested in the

initial stage directions is eliminated when this child o' Mary discovers she will become another of the play's mothers" (1986,p.564). Before her downfall, however, Mary is depicted as an enthusiastic young girl that utilized her slight knowledge of literature by reading books that are related to the treatment of women in society. The play of Henrik Ibsen had an impact on her as she reads the eminently feminist *A Doll's House* which invokes the tendency of the New Woman in her. However, the chauvinistic father behaves in a typical way to object to her reading. He represents the public patriarchal psychology which regards Ibsen's modern ideas concerning women and society as "trash" and "buks only fit for chiselurs". (209) He condemns Mary's reading and education for the collapse that she is in. BOYLE: Her an' her readin'. That's more o' th' blasted nonsense that has the house fallin' on top of us! What did th' likes of her, born in a tenement house, want with readin'. Her readin's afther bringin' her to a nice pass. (238) Jack Boyle's intolerant character is made apparent when he condemns Mary's learning. He is classified as a supporter of the patriarchal system that believes that the submission of a woman depends on her being illiterate and uneducated. Mary succeeded to give an impression of unconventionality and non-conformity to

the patriarchal society. She is really unlike the conformist and obedient women of her community. Apart from being independent monetarily and mentally, she is acquainted with women's rights in the society of working women. As it can be seen in her supportive attitude to her colleague is dismissed from her work. Although Mary wasn't a good friend of Jennie, she decides to participate in the strike.

MRS. BOYLE: I don't know why you wanted to walk out for Jennie Claffey; up to this you never had a good word for her. **MARY:** What's the use of belongin' to a Trades Union if you won't stand up for your principles? Why did they sack her? It was a clear case of victimisation. We couldn't let her walk the streets, could we? (200)

The legal and political rights of women have been expanded in England in the post-war time, particularly during World War I. Such a time is marked by women's right to vote in America as well as the unions and suffragettes. Mary is possibly acquainted with the rights of working women and thus she assumes a tough position in supporting her co-worker Jennie. Coming to the final stages of the

play, though Mary is brokenhearted by Bentham's unexpected disloyalty, her spirit remains untouched and undamaged. She is fully prepared to start all over again hand in hand with her kind mother and “work together for the sake of the baby”(244). Mary is now a member of the community of single mothers who are deserted by their husbands/lovers and let them down in their predicament. As Mary determines to work for the sake of the child and nurture him, she gives us the feeling that she is overthrowing the traditional impression that women must be confined to domestic duty and that men have to work outside. Mary, like Rachel Arbuthnot, in Oscar Wild's *A Woman of No Importance* (1893) who gave birth to her child Gerald and took care of him despite the shadows of illegitimate pregnancy, has made an example of a devotee woman wishing to endure all odds for the sake of the beloved child. In *A Taste of Honey* (1958) by Shelagh Delaney's the main character Joe refuses the “degrading” notion of marrying a man to give a name to her child and determine to move on and live for her son. The bravery of these female characters attracts the reader's attention and admiration; nevertheless, it indicates the sense of everlasting segregation against women, and since this unfair treatment in society continues, women will always be considered as less than equal to men or

inferior. But such characters like Juno and her daughter have reflected a sense of victory of the woman in such a frustrating male society.

CONCLUSION

Juno and the Paycock succeeded to disturb and shake the rough male-centered society of the time. Through the brilliant juxtaposition of the “masculine” and “feminine” images of society on professional and personal composure, the two female characters Juno and Mary represented their self-sufficiency and independence. As feminist representatives, they both proved the impressive sound of rebels in an extremely patriarchal society; through examples of making independent decisions without men's interference. Hence the mother earns the right to be tagged as triumphant of their working women society who achieved the triumph over the predicament of the male society.

The play as a modernist genre of drama calls for the freedom of women from the family's exhausted and old-fashioned restrictions. The role of the female major characters reflects the liberation from the male-oriented society. As the double burden of woman is enlarged and contributes to her inborn predicament of the biological heritage, the more certain female characters stand out for removing such plight. O'Casey thus

succeeded to pay back his mother suffering in the slums as she raised him. O'Casey is also can be classified as D.H. Lawrence a feminist writer, although Lawrence's style is bolder and based on the relationship between women and women to posit the woman character.

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