

CRITICAL ANALYSIS O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* shows that all men are cowards boasters, drunkards who ill treat their wives. Ayling writes in "Two Words for Women": In their outward vivacity and sheer enjoyment of life, the young women embody (in however restricted capacity) aesthetic values and spiritual qualities that offer, temporarily, resilience and resistance to the drabness and deadening routine of slum conditions. The sensitivity of the young women in O'Casey's plays is shown most clearly in their dress sense. (93) Mary here is like Ibsen's Nora who has also the sensitivity of the dress sense. On criticizing Mary, O'Casey wants to emphasize the view that the workers need more culture and education. Although Mary reads books, yet she neither stands up to a better chance nor chooses the right person for herself. Mary's reading is a double-edged weapon. So, when her father is told about her pregnancy, her good for nothing father states: ... Her' 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 – oh, it's madnin', madnin', madnin'! (Juno. 92) For Jack, Mary is a worker of the tenement and is half- educated. Such education is usually misleading. This that Mary has been led astray by her reading. means Mary is a reader of Ibsen, and she tries to liberate herself like Ibsen's heroines. She tries to be strong, but she can not understand the meaning of freedom properly. However, one can not put the whole blame on Mary. The appalling condition of her society makes her behaviour unbalanced in certain situations. Kosok writes in *O'Casey The Dramatist*: Mary's character shows the tension between the repressive conditions of her surroundings and her own weak attempts at intellectual and social emancipation. She tries to keep all traces of dialect out of her pronunciation and vocabulary, she reads Ibsen and learns Gaelic, but she does not succeed in liberating herself from the world of the slums. Her weaknesses, her delusion by Bentham and her continuous irritation in her relationship with her family, can be explained as arising from this conflict. (45–46) This expresses, as Smith says, O'Casey's contention that neither Ibsen nor labour movements are "for chiselurs". Captain Jack, on the other hand, is drawn from Shakespeare's Captain Jack Falstaff, lacking, as John P. Harrington writes, the girth of (Shakespeare's) Captain Jack Falstaff, but he has the same flamboyant humour and glories mendacity, the ingenious sense of self-indulgence and self-preservation" (506). His other title was given to him by Juno because she thought that he was as vain as the peacock. This shows that even the names of Juno and Jack express their striking contrast. The news of the legacy gives a flicker of hope to Juno's miserable family. Her children think that it will be a good chance to escape from the slums. Juno sees that it will be a relief from financial troubles. Moreover, Jack is overjoyed because the money of the legacy will free him from his wife's nagging. He tries to play the role of a rich man. Jack appears as a man of words in his reaction to the legacy. The promise of the money makes him reverse all his previous views concerning the church and the priests. At first, he attacks the clergy for dominating the lives of the people. However, a few days after the legacy, he praises the churchmen. Now, he forgets the crimes committed by the churchmen, and he tries to become their friend. In O'Casey's satire of the churchmen, he criticizes men as irresponsible creatures. Referring to this, Smith writes: "O'Casey's satiric portraits of inadequate men are much augmented by the ever-present fathers of the church – most of whom are also selfish, arbitrary, domineering, and essentially unaware of what their children really need" (177). In such a tapestry of

sharp contrasts, as O'Riordan writes, " o'Casey makes his drunkard a comedian and his tragic heroine something of a shrew" (44). O'Casey embodies, as O'Connor says, in this loveless, marriage what V. S. Pritchett once called 'the ambition of every Dublin husband .. never to go home, and the basic Irish male fear of women and of sex (153). Moreover, O'Connor goes on to say: But woman has the courage: Juno, exalting – the mother above the useless, segregated male, is a triumphant assertion of woman's superiority over man . What makes Juno and the Paycock cumulatively moving, in spite of its volatility of feeling and its sudden, unexpected and comic changes of pace, is the way it asserts the primacy of a mother's emotions in counterpoint to the decline of the Boyle family's hopes and aspirations. (153) Thus, one finds Juno; exerting no efforts to support and keep the unity of her family, while her irresponsible husband is not ready to shoulder the burdens of his family. He, as Smith says, " is ridiculous and cowardly—essentially a selfish entity of many disguises, each one a false face ..Atkinson says: "Juno is the plain foundation of the play – the tired, bustling, tenacious mother of a heedless family, doing her duty loyally according to her standards decency" (79). In this way, Juno, as Ko sok says in O'Casey the Dramatist, is the central character of the play. Dramatically, she is the most important link between the different lines action. She has to bear the weight of all the catastrophes that befall the family (50). At last, Juno's stature becomes clearer when she decides to begin her life with her daughter. Kosok writes: She asserts herself against her husband who has been defeated by life and lives in fruitless memories of the past, as well as against her son who rebels against a purely materialistic attitude, and she cares for her self-confident daughter who would like to dissociate herself from the family, when she expects an illegitimate child and finds that no other refuge is left to her. (Irish Writers and the Theatre.83) She leaves her husband in order to help her daughter Mary in bringing up her child. Juno's departure here reminds us of Nora's departure in A Doll's House. However, Juno leaves her husband to help her daughter, while Nora leaves to realize herself. Thus, O'Casey is influenced by Ibsen in this conclusion. Referring to this, Ayling writes in his article "Two Words for Women": At the end of Juno, in making up her mind to leave Boyle in order to help her daughter and her illegitimate child face a new if arduous life, her attitude is positive as well as clear – sighted ..With Labour Mary, humanity is above everything" (Juno. 95). However, when he knows of Mary's pregnancy, he forgets all his lofty principles, and withdraws in silence. Charles Bentham is also a man of words. He is a bad example of a schoolteacher. From the very beginning, he misinterprets the will by his ignorance and passivity. Mary has been infatuated by his superficiality. However, he is a liar who can not estimate her love properly. He seduces her and leaves for England. In this way, he escapes from his moral responsibility. Mary is an elusive character. She tries to liberate herself, but she finds some difficulties in this. Therefore, she is neither strong nor weak. She stands between these two extremes. She behaves like the strong women in some situations, and she fails to act this role throughout the whole play. Mary's desire to participate in the Trade Union is a proof that she is like the strong women. Like Nora, Dina, Lona and Mrs. Linde, she has the ability to take decisions by herself, and she insists that "a principle's a principle" (Juno.50).I killin' meself workin', an' he sthruttin' about from mornin' till night like a paycock!" (Juno and the Paycock. 51). This shows that Juno is a practical woman, while her husband is a wastrel man. Juno's practicality gives her the upper hand in her house. So, her husband always tries to avoid her. Unlike Nora who is weak

before her husband, Juno is strong before Jack. Unaware of Juno's presence, Jack and Joxer speak about the nagging nature of Juno. Jack permits his friend to make some derogatory remarks about his wife. In this way, he is a good for nothing husband who can not appreciate his wife's role in shouldering the burden of the family. This reminds us of Ibsen's Torvald who, like Jack, fails to appreciate Nora's role in sacrificing for the family. Juno enters, and confronts both Jack and Joxer, then she begins to reproach her husband. As a weak husband, Jack replies "It ud be bettther for a man to be dead, bettther for a man to be dead" (Juno.It's, arguably, a declaration of sexist superiority.(O'Casey the Dramatist.52).56).55). 65).(128)