

Tribhuvan University

**Quest for Self Identity in J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of
the Western World* and Sean O'Casey's
*Juno and the Paycock***

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Sumnima Suvedi

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The thesis entitled "Quest for Self Identity in J.M Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and Sean O' Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Sumnima Suvedi, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Supervisor

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:- _____

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Abstract

The present dissertation titled “Quest for Self Identity in J. M. Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* and Sean O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock*” focus on the playwrights’ deep concern to the falsity and meanness that lies in the embodiment of the myths designed by patriarchy for the males and females. By setting their plays in the Irish background and by dramatizing the minute nuances of human characters, they have challenged the then theatrical trend of considering drama “an organ for the expression of national consciousness” and staging only the legendary and heroic stories. Thus, they have repudiated such myths and have mocked the social convention, history and religious orthodox beliefs that wilt women’s identity to the role of sweet blushing colleens, tolerant wives and sacrificing mothers. By presenting the men’s and women’s lives as failure in the parody, they have voiced for the destruction and elimination of the myths.

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Chapter-1

Introduction

Issues and Features of the Irish Theatre from 1903 to 1924

If we try to outline the way the drama developed, we notice that the new currents in the theatre were only ripples on the surface until 1903. Plays were advertised in newspapers under the heading “Amusement” and they were written primarily for entertainment. Farce, light comedies, society “problem” play were in fashion. In other words, it was the heyday of musical comedy. Even in England, the swashbuckling costume plays, the romantic drama of cape and sword was enjoying its final blaze of glory.

In 1904, the repertory experiment started at the court theatre which gave impetus to other Little Theatre Movement in various parts of the country and this influenced the development of modern drama in England and America, as well. In Ireland, the most prominent movement is the Irish Theatre Movement which was headed by W. B. Yeats and a group of noted Irish writers. In 1892, they had founded a National Literary Society, with the aim of bringing culture to Ireland and making the arts a national expression of life, which permits every common man to understand good art and high thinking. In this inspiring scheme, the drama was to have the foremost place. In 1903, it developed into Irish National Theatre Society. It finally provided the society with a theatre, Abbey Theatre, with the aim of producing Celtic and Irish plays expressing deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland. Yeats himself had decided the function of drama. He believed that the theatre must be reformed in its plays, its speaking, its acting and its scenery. However, the stage he had designed had no place for realism. As such, his idea of drama was something akin to the

medieval religious mystery plays. He at the same time considered drama “an organ for the expression of national consciousness”. The theatre of that time was fostering a Gaelic revival. The materials for the new drama was the myths and legends of Ireland as rich as mine for the poetic dramatist. Yeats’ own contribution was a number of poetic dramatizations on these legends marking a return to primitive emotions and the music of words. His plays were richly colored with beautiful ideas and lyrical poetry, but lacked the power to create human character.

J. M. Synge and Sean O’Casey in Theatre

One of the merits of the Little Theatre Movement was that it gave the playwrights an opportunity to try their wings. The result was the discovery of some genius. First, it was John Millington Synge whom Yeats brought to the Abbey theatre. He attended the first meeting of Irish League, but he couldn’t trust the revolutionary and semi-military aspect of the movement. He did not carry on with the legendary and heroic stories. Though a co-worker of Yeats in the Irish Renaissance, he strove to create a new school of native comedy, dealing with Irish folklore and depicting Irish peasant life and character. He traveled to Aran and this visit brought all his interest together which worked as the most essential materials used in his plays. He studied the life there; the eternal life of men spent under sun and rain, scarcely changed since the beginning. He felt the tragedy of the grim, fatalistic battle with the cold, hungry sea, and understood the little sordid comedies of circumscribed, monotonous existences. The simplicity and dignity of the place contrasted sharply with those aspects of the bourgeois conventional Christian society that he most disliked. The dancing and singing of the islanders echoed his love for music. The poverty and the independent nature of the peasant matched exactly with the intellectual intransigence. He saw first hand human nature at its best and at its worst;

its spirituality and its animal savagery. Not only that, their jostling with the past, the awareness of social pressure and their realization to the fact that they are race beyond the polite confines of society all create an atmosphere to Synge's play. In order to reinforce such atmosphere he creates characters who are wanderers, homeless people, and this is the core content of his play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, as well.

Synge perfected his speech in the Aran Island. He imbibed the apt, short worded, picturesque idiom of the native speech. Among the rural idiom of the Aran fisher folks and the peasantry of county Wicklow, Synge realized the soundness of Yeats' belief that the strength of poetic language is in the common idiom. In this context he has said, "Poetry is usually the flower of evil or good; but it is the timber of poetry that wears most surely, and there is no timber that has not strong roots among the clay and worms" (*The Twentieth Century Drama* 42). He did not write in verse like Yeats, but he created an individual rhythm and harmony of language entirely new. He had a sure dramatic instinct and a keen insight into the motive forces of human characters. Moreover, he was gifted with the ability of transmuting pathos and ugliness into poetry and beauty. Referring to his play, Heidi J. Holder and Anne Saddlemyer opine that *The Playboy* explores all the constructive power of imagination and observes in the drama "the power of the myth to create reality out of the dream or illusion itself" (*Between Fiction and Reality: Synge's Playboy and Its Audience* 630).

In the preface of his major plays he boasts of strict fidelity to the real experience and spoken language of the peasantry. Furthermore, Synge was obsessed about the accuracy of his portrayal of Irish customs in his production. In this respect, Mc Donald has quite aptly said, "to be sure, Synge's plays are energized by the particular- by the sounds, tastes, smell and texture of rural Ireland" (*Tragedy and*

Irish Literature: Synge, O'Casey and Beckett 46). He picks up a simple character from among the country folks and makes him seek adventure. He shapes his play with absurdity and riotous laughter with the catastrophic dimension to Irish history, the litany of poverty, war and its humiliation at its background. As such, exceeding the boundary of the then trend of heroism, Synge brings his character to a state where his heroism turns out to be absurd, giving the play a tragic note. He shared the fondness for low comedy and melodrama, the application of which is evident in *The Playboy of the Western World*. In it the protagonist, Christy Mahon, claims to have committed patricide and had run away from his village. He appears as Baucault's 'rogue-hero' and, his appearance in the village of Mayo give rise to lots of comic situations. However, when his reality is revealed and he is discovered as simpleton, his heroism is considered a treachery.

Sean O'Casey, on the other hand, lived at a time when Ireland was embroiled into a series of wars. After his father's death, the whole family was reduced to the poverty and hardships of tenement life. As such, life in tenement became a crucial experience for him. In the late 19th century, Dublin slum was a frightful place for infections, disease, malnutrition, and high rate of infant death. This pain and isolation of the early age left a deep scare in his body and mind. These tragic years were in large measure a part of the tragedy of Irish history. This bitter experience acts as a background to his play *Juno and the Paycock*. Infact, the characters are created out in simple tenement house of Dublin slums. Right from the beginning we sense them lacking money and the need for every family members to work. This has given a realistic touch to the play. There was great political and economic unrest. So much so that there was internal feuds and betrayal exercised by "Irishmen to Irishmen". The people who had the rein of rule in hand and the Catholic Church still at the head

had been misleading the people in the name of national honor and Catholicism. The 'Easter Rising' rebel, the Irish Civil War did not bear any good fruit for Ireland. In each case, it was the people under the poverty line who were sandwiched and grounded. This Irish history and its political inconsistency form the atmosphere of his play *Juno and the Paycock* and his other plays, too.

Synge had begun the revolution in the theatre with his wild tragi-comedies twenty years before O'Casey. Like O'Casey, he had also chosen the basic ingredients of low comedy and melodrama to project his vision of life. O'Casey carried on with this revolutionary spirit in his play *Juno and the Paycock* in 1924 and he was on the way to create his own revolution in the theatre. The same year O'Casey wrote his *Juno*, Eliot had also voiced that it was high time for the theatre to undergo revolution in principle. However, his revolution was launched against prosaic realism and he attempted to return to verse drama. O'Casey's revolution was also directed to prosaic realism, but unlike Eliot, he was dissatisfied with its limited principle of 'make them laugh and make them weep'. He made them think deeply and feel passionately. His play had the tone of indictment, but it was an organic part of entertainment and, like Synge he also picked up the principle of robust entertainment from the experience of the tumultuous life that that he lived in Dublin slums. Just like Synge, O'Casey also strongly believed that a play has to tell exciting story of the people which should be colorful as well as meaningful. It should exhibit all the pros and cons of their lives, it should amuse and amaze the audience, and it should exercise all the elements of theatrical fun and excitement which should be extremely funny and pointedly satirical, as well. At the same time it should be melodramatic in order to heighten the tragic tension. In this Eric Bentley's opinion as quoted by David Krause is quite relevant in regards to O'Casey's play, "[. . .] while naturalistic art imitates the surface,

melodramatic art imitates what is beneath the surface” (*Sean O’Casey: Man and his Work* 83). O’Casey strongly presents the striking picture of man in broad dimension of character and language drawn from the real life and moulds them with melodramatic actions and low comedy, because of which they appear more than a surface photograph of the Dublin slum. The melodrama in his play functions as a factor to rouse conflict and tension. It also creates fearful atmosphere and suspense. This intense excitement acts as a background to the emergence of deeper issue from the conflict. This is what he has experimented with in *Juno and the Paycock*. It is full of comic situation where we find the husband, Jack, running away from his wife acting like a clown. He is very close to ‘rogue-hero’- very rowdy and brash buffoon. Here, Jack also exhibits Baucicault’s roguish spirit of “careless Irish humour” which relies upon the original turn of phrase, projecting a comic image, a play on words and displaying a general feeling of verbal extravagance. This style is mainly used to magnify the concept of character and language in such a way that the characters enjoy and expose their folly. While Juno, the female figure in this play, is always after her husband commenting about his “strutting peacock” like attributes and acting irresponsibly. In the climax of the play, he leaves Juno in the whirlpool of tragic intensity, out of which she emerges as a woman with dynamic personality. Through the roguish spirit of Jack, O’Casey brings into manifest the fakeness of “heroism” that was considered a male quality for male identification.

No different from Synge, O’Casey came up with his tragi- comic muse when Irish idealism was only given a warm welcome. There were zealous Irishmen who were very serious about their nationalistic character and they were in no mood to laugh at their own image in the dramatists’ satiric mirror. Moreover, the Irish dramatic movement had also begun as a part of National Movement. Rejecting the

canonized theatrical trend, O'Casey consistently viewed the national character with irony instead of idealism. Like Synge, he also believed that poetry of drama does not necessarily depend on versification. They- Synge and O'Casey- based their theory of poetic on the synthesis of "rich joy" of a spoken idiom and the "superb reality" of an indigenous life. O'Casey moved still a step ahead farther than Synge and made an effort to assert the theory of poetic should not be limited to the language and life of peasants. He found the language of rich joy and superb reality among the protestant Dubliners. He used the idiom and milieu of the tenements to achieve the poetic collaboration of richness and reality. In this context, Krause has quiet aptly said,

O'Casey actually went on step farther- he not only used both styles, the exalted and the colloquial, he created the poetry of exaltation out of the colloquial. He exalted the ordinary- the living language and the common life- and the art he made was rich and joyous, superb and wild. (294)

For O'Casey, the slums of Dublin city, all the people who fought to stay alive amidst the dangers of its tenement, streets and pubs, and its war of independence itself became the poem. In order to protest to one another, to the authority or to the world at large, most of O'Casey's characters find rich and copious words to express their spirit. He made a free of play Gaelic expression which had been carried over to the highly flavoured Dublin English.

To be precise, these playwrights portrayed the common people, their daily lives and their common idioms in their plays. However, moving a little ahead, they attempt to mock at the false belief, the narrow social conventions, the hollow customs, and reveal the reality behind the veil rather than accepting everything as it is, no wonder exercising all the dramatic elements.

Self Identity in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* and O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*

A general survey of the Irish literary theatre reflect that the two towering figures-Synge and O'Casey- have lots of things in common. Considering their plays, *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Juno and the Paycock*, we can trace out similar features and issues like the tragi-comic muse, rogue- hero, Irish dialect, common idioms, poetic language, common people and the conflicts in their lives as quintessential Irish element which has already been discussed above. However, the striking point of these playwrights, which has escaped the eyes of most of the critics, is the picture of woman and man. There is the parody of myths about them, and the playwrights have mocked the flaws in it. Some of them pay slight hint to the dramatization of the domestication of women in their play. Yet, they are the writers overlooked by feminists. The fact is, Synge and O'Casey are among the few men of the then Irish theatre who have presented women, of course, sympathetically, but perspective. Synge and O'Casey not only repudiated the illusive stories of rebel patriots who went off to sacrifice themselves for a greater love of country kissing their beloved colleens, stories that had been celebrated for centuries, but they traced out how women had been projected to consent to their male's wishes. They reflected their dissatisfaction to the idealized picture of women; the sweet blushing colleens, the tolerant wives and sacrificing mothers. Instead, the women in their plays are earthly, shrewd, laughing, suffering, brawling and independent in nature. Their autobiographies expose their vigorous distrust of conventional attitudes, independence of outlook and adoration for their mothers, which they have animated and endowed in the female figures of their plays.

Juno of Juno and the Peacock and Pegeen of The Playboy of the Western World

Juno and Pegeen are trapped in the family and society physically and emotionally. Juno is from an urban land. She lives with her family in the tenement house of Dublin. The grim world of Dublin is pictured and dismantled and lost in the mist of wars. Jack Boyle, her husband, is a strutting peacock. Her son, Johnny, is badly wounded in war. Mary, her daughter, also shows her active participation in the trade union strikes claiming that a “principle is a principle”. Juno alone is the working member in the house and that is not enough to sustain the family. So, the house croaks like frog in the puddle of scarcity and poverty that there is sore need of money. Within the frame of this story, O’Casey recreates the history of Ireland; the war and its impact, the youth heading towards the war under the illusion that their sacrifices and participation is a must. While, the females stay at home and look forward to their men for everything.

The poverty and crises are the realities which have in one way or the other dehumanized each character. It does not spare even Juno who holds the rein of the family, makes effort to bring the family unity, maintain social status and give right direction to the children. In the play, she epitomizes history. However, in the end she undergoes a great change. In spite of her hard and long time effort to save the family from the havoc, she meets failure at every step. Her daughter, Mary, is courted by a gentleman, Mr. Bentham, and as a mother she has all reasons why she shouldn’t be happy. Juno is relieved that her daughter would find a good husband who would give her protection. Her expectation is badly shaken when that gentleman proves to be an imposter. He leaves Mary in great humiliation and in disgrace. The light and hope that had appeared in the form of Bentham turns out to be a dream that would never come true. In that situation, she finds no support in her husband. He defines his relation with his wife on the basis of the male code of paternity and severs his bond

with his female community of love and loyalty. These calamities drown her into the ocean of sorrows and tragedies. However, the calamities of life itself become the cause which brings her to state of realization and from which she springs up as a different figure. She makes herself out of her husband's betrayal. She exceeds the man made limitation of "what woman ought to be". She identifies herself and her life. She identifies the flaws and weaknesses in her. She also realizes the fakeness of her dream of family life with husband. She understands that the political instability going on in the country will devour their life and happiness. Their hope that the war will restore their rights and steady their life is nothing but castle built up in the air, and will leave them to a state of nowhere. Yet, she gathers herself and dares to get through these mazes, which the other characters couldn't do. Finally, the responsible wife and a mother alter into an individual. It isn't that she rejects her duty of a mother and wife, but from then on, she values her thoughts and wishes. She endeavors to start a life afresh with her daughter.

On the other hand, Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* appears very different from that of Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* at a first glance. The first thing about *The Playboy of the Western World* is that it centers completely on the life of peasants and on the imaginative story of a boy named, Christy Mahon. However, a deep concentration lays bare the character Pegeen's quest for self identity just as Juno's in *Juno and the Paycock*. Pegeen Mike of Mayo village develops a sort of fascination towards a boy named Christy Mahon who appears at her inn and relates about the patricide that he has committed. She dislikes Shawn Keogh, her fiancé, whom she considers a coward and weak. Pegeen lives a plain and monotonous life in a remote village very different from that of Juno. However, like her Pegeen also works in her own tavern and supports the family while her father idles around with

friends drinking wine and forgetting his responsibilities. The monotony and incoherence in the life of the character is projected quite vividly.

The case of Christy Mahon is also similar to that of Jack Boyle. Both the males live in the illusion. They boast about their fake power and heroism. However, when they break away from the illusion, they descend from the height to the hard ground of reality. When it is discovered that Christy had not killed his father but only hurt him, he turns from a hero to a treacherous liar. Jack, on the other hand, turns once again to a strutting peacock and an alcoholic when it is revealed that there is no money coming. Even at such moment they are not ready to accept their mistakes and cling on to their conception that they are the worthy human beings. They expect their women to assist them even after the revelation of their deception.

The female figures, Juno and Pegeen, then undergo great change in similar way. At one time, they also appear to lose themselves in the mist of illusion that their males create around them. They seem to accept the world as defined from the point of view of their males and accept their position as “substandard”. Clinging to the ethos, Juno shelters her hope in Jack and she hands over the rein of the family to him. When the poverty is rampant in the family her husband keeps on gallivanting around like a vain peacock and he acts almost like a sycophant in her presence. No sooner has he come across a windfall, then his vanity and male ego gets the upper hand of Juno. The unexpected financial gain makes him oblivious of the family hardship, especially Juno carrying the cross in their lean days. He suddenly imposes his authority on her as if he were the master and Juno his possession. Like wise, Pegeen sees her dreams coming true when she meets Christy and hears his story. She shelters him in his house, takes care of his requirements and believes him blindly as if the males are superior and they never deceive. Though not his wife, her attributes towards him and

her quarrels with other girls exposes her devotion to him. The playwrights have portrayed the long followed tradition of the females, seeking their identity in the males. In spite of their own potentiality, they prefer the males to support them and be by their side. The playwrights make them break away from the realm of “conformity to the set of sex role” termed as “Feminine Mystique” by Betty Friedan. Synge and O’Casey were dissatisfied with the subordination and the slow progress of women toward equality. They mainly condemned the pretentious picture of the society that “acted as the window open for women, but keeping them in their place”. Through the dramatization of even the minute nuances, they directed their attention to the misery and torture of loveless union. Then they make their female figures cast aside all the romantic purity and life long devotion of loyalty in order to make them quest for the self identity. The females in the plays give up their male partners and endeavor to live their own lives. In both the plays, the heroines are in loss. Yet, in that loss there is the realization of the fact, acceptance of their own flaws, recognition of their own potentiality and a quest for self identity.

The essential thing that the playwrights have included and practiced in their plays is the presentation of the women in the variety and authenticity that should be allowed to all subjects. They haven’t *idealized* women. They have also attempted the assertion of the fact that everything in the world exist in opposition- if there is a thesis, there should be an antithesis, which will ultimately results in synthesis. Therefore, though their plays end tragically, they are not pessimistic. The thesis which has been set up in these plays is the social culture of confining women in a limited *space*. They are driven into a position in which they subject themselves to continued hardship and physical and mental suffering. They are overburdened and not given more scope or opportunity for determining their own preferences and

prerogatives. This state of affair is most convenient one for the society. So, they advocate the ideology of women's obedience to men as divine order. The representation of this thesis is done by the males in the plays (Jack and Joxer in *Juno and the Paycock*, Christy and Michael in *The Playboy of the Western World*). The antithesis to it is the possibility for women to take matters into their own hands and play their power game with those who wield the power- the men. The women rebel against the whirlpool of traditional social life and advocate for their rights to let them see with their own eyes, feel with their own heart; let no authority govern them except the authority of their own reason. The two females, Juno and Pegeen, in their respective plays finally take the decisions themselves and they become audacious enough to break the fetters of patriarchal social norms. The synthesis led forward by Synge and O'Casey is a self identity and self realization as the necessary condition for happiness and eventually call for new nobility, not of birth but of character and will to make use of own sense, reasoning and every part of ourselves which give us feeling of our own existence.

The Playboy of the Western World of J. M. Synge and *Juno and the Paycock* of Sean O'Casey, as such, showcase the "double conflict"- within the individual who wishes to preserve her personality and integrity, and between herself and the group in which she must seek salvation. Written completely in the Irish background, their plays mainly focus on the fact that women are not to be judged by their sexual characteristics, but by their own capacity for being good and intelligent. In other words, the plays disclose the strong voices of the playwrights that a person is an individual first and then only a male or a female. They can hammer and carve their own lives on the basis of their own potentiality, thoughts and evaluations and engender satisfaction with life.

Chapter-2

Theoretical Discourse: Feminism

Feminist Approaches: Background and Context

It is an extraordinary fact that since centuries, across space and time, from culture to culture, women have been considered subordinate to men, petty and weak. They have been treated with misogyny and considered ambivalent by the male dominated society. Therefore, feminism appeared as a theoretical discourse that attempted to liberate women from these vicious and faulty images of being substandard, incompetent, concretely stupid and base creatures incapable of rational moral judgment. It advocates women's right and their self identification free from the stereotypical image of "male-identified women". Feminism calls for the redemption of women from the male created sphere of "anatomy is destiny for them". The stereotypical ideal thrust upon the women is that of a mother, playmate and a wife, out of which the patriarchal society offers no space to them. Therefore, the feminists crush this boundary of patriarchal restrictions and defend the status of woman, redefine her role, preserve her self concept, her sense of autonomy, cohesion and direction. Feminism also refuses the superiority of masculism that considers "woman" and "sex" synonymous and categorizes female as "second sex". It fights for the equal rights of women in social, religious, economical, psychological, personal and aesthetic level.

The "women's movement" of 1960 was not, of course, the starting point of feminism. Rather it is the renewal of the old tradition of diagnosing the problem of women's inequality in society and proposes solution. Infact, feminism first made its appearance in literature with the publication of Mary Woolstone Craft's *A Vindication*

of the Rights of Women in 1792. She innunciates the falsity of society in retaining the women only in the role of convenient domestic slaves and a submissive wife, encouraging them to give attention to their outlook to the exclusion of all else, and depriving them of their social, political and economic independence. She voices for the women's free use of reason and their equality in every rights.

In the nineteenth century, the feminist revolutionary spirit heralded by Wollstonecraft did not show much progress. Yet, in its snail's pace, Margaret Fuller with her *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), and some male writers like Friedrich Engels with his *The Origin of the family* (1884) and John Stuart Mill with his *The Subjection of Women* (1869) came forward. It is only in the twentieth century, feminism flourished in its full bloom. In the first half of twentieth century, two female writers, Virginia Woolf and Simon de Beauvoir, took the lead. *A Room of One's Own* (1929) of the former and *The Second Sex* (1949) of the later contributed largely to bring feminism into proper light. Woolf's feminism paved its own path. She lived at the time when feminist trend advocated for the absolute equality with men and the erasure of differences. However, she came up with a strong voice for radical change that should occur in the form of women's freedom. She vividly potrays the unequal treatment given to women seeking education and alternatives to marriage and motherhood. Because of this, the suppressed values imposed upon the head of females began to affect the conception of power, family and social life shaped by men in the past. On the other hand, Simon de Beauvoir analyzes the female condition of 'otherness' or 'alterity'. She insists that womanhood is a social construct, the subordination of female to male does not represent an immutable state of nature. Instead, it is the result of various social forces. In this context she claims, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." She strongly rejects "the notion of

female essence prior to individual existence, and attacks the patriarchal myth of women that presumes the false essence” (Hazard Adams 993).

The feminist criticism of today is the direct product of the ‘women’s movement’ of 1960s. The disappearance of feminism from the stage of history for several decades meant that the women of the sixties had to rediscover basic truths about the oppression of women for themselves. This movement was, in important ways, literary from the start, in the sense that it realized the significance of the images of women promulgated by literature, and saw it as vital to combat them and question their authority and their coherence. The feminist reawakening was, thus, enhanced by the Women’s Liberation Movement, and the other cross currents like the Civil Right Movement, a grant of woman suffrage, etc. During this period, Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) was published in which she detected the core problem of woman to be the problem of identity “a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystiques” (*The feminine Mystique, The Vintage Book of Feminism* 49).

Then in the 1980s, in feminism as in other critical approaches, the mood changed. Firstly, feminist criticism became much more eclectic, i.e., it turned its attention to the findings and approaches of other kinds of criticism – Marxism, structuralism, linguistics and so on. Secondly, rather than attacking the male versions of the world, it focused on exploring the nature of the female world and outlook, and reconstructing the lost or suppressed records of female experience Mary Ellman is one such writer who wrote *Thinking about Women* (1968) which is the first book that exposes the sexual stereotyping of women both in literature and literary criticism and demonstrating the inadequacy of established critical school and methods to deal fairly or sensitively with works written by women.

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969) added fuel to the fire to Ellman's rage. She defined 'Politics' as the operation of power relation in society. She argued that women have been excluded from the exercise of political power. The western institutions have manipulated power to establish the dominance of men and subordination of women in society because of which, she adds, the books of female writers are marginalized. She also criticizes Freud's psychoanalysis for its male bias and analyses D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and Jean Genet focusing mainly on how they dignify their aggressive 'phallic' selves and degrade women as submissive sexual objects in their work. Thirdly, the attention of feminist criticism was switched on to the need to construct a new canon of women's writing by rewriting the history of novel and of poetry with an intention of giving a new prominence to the female writers who were neglected.

Elaine Showalter, for instance, marks this change to the extreme in the late 1970s as a shift of attention from 'androtext' to 'gynotext'. She divides feminist criticism into two types; that which is concerned with women as reader and that which is concerned with women as writer. She coined the term 'gynocriticism' for the latter type, which means the study of gynotexts. According to her,

The subjects of gynocriticism are-the history, the style, themes, genres and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution or laws of a female literary tradition. (*The New Feminist Criticism* 123)

She also divides the history of women's writing into three different phases. First, is the "feminine phase" (1840-80), in which women's writing imitated dominant male artistic norms and aesthetic standard. The writers like George Eliot and Bronte

Sisters fall under this category. Second is the “feminist phase” (1880-1920), which is the phase of radical protest against the standards of tradition concerning social values and rights. Besides, in this phase of writing we depict the adoption of separatist tendencies. It includes writers like Elizabeth Gaskell, Frances Trollope and Oliver Schveiner. The third is the “female phase” (1920 onwards) which looked particularly at female writing and female experience. It is the phase of self-discovery and quests for self identity. It includes writers like Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. With this phasing, the requirement of terminology in feminist criticism was fulfilled and it acquired theoretical respectability. Elaine Showalter is well known for her masterpiece, *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977).

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar are the other two feminist writers who produced their work in collaboration. *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) is one of their renowned works that traces the female literary tradition and thus combat what they term women’s “anxiety of authorship”. They also challenged the view that language is man-made in the essay “Sexual Linguistics: Gender, Language, Sexuality” (*The Feminist Reader*, 1989). They talk about the psychodynamics of women writers in the nineteenth century and use the idea of ‘social castration’, which signifies the lack of social power, this lack being represented by means of word ‘castration’, as male possession. According to them, women copy or identify themselves with the dominant literary image of femininity which comes out of the phallogocentric myth of creativity. They encourage the women writers to continue their struggle against the men’s oppressive reading of women. They aim to locate a place where women’s writing is heard. They argue that women should find out a precursor who is free from patriarchal domination.

After this socio-historic dimension of feminism led by Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Patricia Meyer Spacks, etc, who recovered women's historical experiences as reader and writer, the French School of feminism came foreword. It is also called psychoanalytic and deconstructive feminism as its base lies in Jacques Lacan's Neo-Freudian psycho analysis, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction and Rolan Barthe's structuralism. Through the conceptualization of the philosophies of these three figures, the feminists stress the subtle but essential participation of language in the patriarchal forces of society. They make fine observation of the way 'the feminine' has been defined, structured and represented in the symbolic system of language, metaphysic, psychoanalysis and art, and claim the western language is in all its features to be male engendered, male constituted and male dominated discourse.

"From One Identity to Another" (1975) of Julia Kristeva and "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1980) written by Helen Cixous are the two important essays of psychoanalytic and deconstructive feminism, which emphasize women discourse and speak about women's specific experiences. Female discourse, for Kristeva, is a political act of criticism that breaks with tradition. It is a form of feminist action. She uses the terms *symbolic* and *semiotic* to designate two different aspects of language. The symbolic aspect is associated with authority, fathers, repression and control. The symbolic facet of language maintains the fixity and unification of self. On the contrary, the semiotic aspect of discourse is characterized by displacement, slippage, condensation and is conceptually linked to feminine.

Helen Cixous believes that when females can express their sexuality in their language, they can overcome the phallogocentric approach. Under the influence of Derridian deconstruction, she deconstructs the binary opposition between male and female e.g. Sun/Moon, Culture/Nature, Man/Woman, Active/Passive, which are

deeply rooted in patriarchal society. She regards women with new language for their writing to be a source of energy. In her essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa," Cixous calls for women to put their bodies into their writing. She says, "A woman's body with its thousand and one threshold or order [. . .] will make the old single grooved mother tongue reverberate with more than one language (Seldon 151).

Besides, feminism has many other facets such as black feminism, lesbianism, bio-feminism, post colonial feminism and feminist myth criticism.

Liberal feminism concerns with the distribution of equal rights to both the sexes and the freedom for women to participate in the public affairs beyond the house-hold works. It voices for the reformation and development of a liberal society offering equal opportunities to the opposite sexes. Radical feminism, on the other hand, is a revolutionary stream that considers men as a group to be the main enemy and calls for the sisterhood of women. It advocates for the redefinition and re-establishment of the position of women in society as respectable and powerful members. To be precise, radical feminism aims at creating historically clear-cut difference between men and women.

Black feminism comprises of theories created by and for black women. It provides space for them to express their concerns in validating surroundings. The black feminist criticism protests against the double suppression of black women-they are victimized by the black as well as white society. So, it raises its voice against the "massive silence" of feminist criticism about the black women's welfare and calls for the black feminist aesthetic that would deal with social and sexual issues. One of the major black feminist, bell hooks, clarifies the condition of black woman, thus, in her book *Ain't I a Woman: black woman and feminism* (1981).

As far as black slavery, white people established a social hierarchy based on race and sex, that ranked white men first, white women second, though sometimes equal to black men who ranked third and black women last. (53)

The other major black feminists like Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou try to situate the black women's writing in the context of black history and culture and explore its thematic and stylistic correspondence with the literature of black men as well as investigate its special use of language and imagery. They celebrate the black literary consciousness and believe that they possess rich cultural and sexual properties as black and as female.

Lesbian feminism directs its attention only to the writings of lesbian writers or the literature that deals with homosexual relationship amidst the heterosexual culture. The lesbian feminists encourage unity of women; women spending time together, sharing every aspect of their lives with one another and developing powerful bond between themselves as the vital aspect of all women's writing. Adrienne Rich defines the term 'lesbian' as female energy that empowers women. Rich believes that women's writing must claim for sexual independence in order to establish the independence of their bodies so that they can get rid of domination of female sexuality in males' definitions.

Bio-feminism prioritizes women's body as the most essential aspect of women's writing because they undergo more biological experiences than men do. Menstruation, gestation, ovulation and child birth are out and out women's experiences and there in lie many important things which are *terra incognita* (unexplored object) for men. Bio-feminists look up at the body as the sources of imagery. They urge for the frank exposition of their body in their writing and

condemn the limitation of female biology by patriarchy into its own narrow specification.

Post-colonial feminism exhibits the 'double colonization' of third-world women under the imperial conditions. The third-world women become the victims of both the imperial ideology and native and foreign patriarchies. They are secluded from the mainstream culture and are ghettoized even by the western cultural convention as they cannot fully adopt and adjust to it. Moreover, the western feminism shows no concern to the problems of the non-western women. As the western feminists create an inseparable division between them, the non-western females suffer the pang of seclusion and isolation. It becomes really hard for them to express their identity. So, they accuse the western model of feminism, which is 'Eurocentric' in attitude, for its inability to understand the particular condition of the women of third world countries. They accuse them of being imperialist rather than feminist and claims that the true spirit of feminism lies in the marginalized non-western society. Some of the prominent post-colonial feminists who raised their voice for the third-world women and criticized the mainstream feminist trend are Gayatri Spivak, Trinh T. M. M. and Talpade Mohanty.

Myth and Feminism

In the history of feminism, the towering figures, who first laid the foundation for women's emancipation and liberation, raised their voice with the tracing of patriarchal myths and its criticism. So, they are often known as feminist myth critics who oppose the patriarchal myths in the literary texts and in the social practice that as they believe, associate men with humanity and relegate women to an inferior position in society.

In the early twentieth century, Virginia Woolf came up with her text *A Room of One's Own* (1929) in which she discusses about women's condition through out the history and their cultural education and economic disabilities within patriarchal society which had prevented them from realizing their potentiality. She directly focuses on the causes of women authors' inability to identify their creative possibilities. She analyses the poems and novels of different female writers and declare that the limitation in their vision- expressing harassment and distraction with hates and grievance- is the result of their confinement to the patriarchal society. She praises writers like Bronte Sisters, Jane Austen, George Eliot for their endeavour to test their creativity in the time when women were compelled to stay in sitting room. She criticizes the patriarchal conviction that women should be fully dressed, load themselves with jewels, stay inside house, busy themselves in knitting and mending shocks, do the kitchen work and remain silent.

Writing was considered unsuitable for women and effort to create literary work was satirized as "a blue-stockings with an itch for scribbling". She supports female writers and their creations from the accusation of impotence by stating that every literary work is the result of one's experiences in life. Therefore, the novels were also the result of the narrowness of life that was imposed upon them. She writes, "If Jane Austen suffered in any way from her circumstances it was in the narrowness of life that was imposed upon her" (882).

She criticizes the myths created for women to inherit, as a hindrance in the process of women's development. She understands and cites the females' desire for freedom by quoting few lines of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte in which Jane longs for a power of vision which could overpass all the limitations: which could reach the busy world, towns and regions full of life that she had heard of but never seen. With

this Woolf explains that this situation of women is the result of her imprisonment within patriarchal myths. She bursts out, “[. . .] she had been starved of her proper due of experience she had been made stagnate in a personage mending stockings when she wanted to wander free over the world” (823). In other words, she claims that the ignorance, the dependency, the failure on the part of women is the consequence of men’s oppression. She states, “It was flaw in the centre that had rotten them” (824).

In 1949, Simon de Beauvoir led the most powerful foundation stone in the field of feminism by producing *The Second Sex*. In the period when womanhood was considered a less interesting and less serious topic, this book about women stirred the mind of the whole female world. This encyclopedia of women offers historical, biological, psychological perspective about them. It focuses on prevailing patriarchal myths about them, which she believes, have been explained on the basis of its usefulness to men. She defines myth as one of those snares of false objectivity into which the men who depend on readymade valuation run headlong. She makes a fine analysis of those myths that marks men as normative human being, “the one” and women as “the other”. While men are active, transcend, able to transform their environment: women are passive and “immanent”, that is, existing within themselves, with little capacity to affect outside society. Men are the “subject” of their own lives, the actor: women are “objects”, the acted upon. She traces the details of the roles that women have to perform- role of daughter, mistress, wife, mother-and exhibits how her self-identity is divided among these roles.

Beauvoir takes five male authors Montherlant, Lawrence, Claudel, Breton and Stendhal as the representative of the patriarchy and demonstrates the myths of women through them. For Montherlant, women are ignorant, obstinate, incomplete

being, immanent, lacking logic and unable to grasp reality. They are doomed to slavery and are considered weak and parasitical. He clings on the traditional attitudes of Aristotle and St. Thomas that women lack virility and it is their fate to which they must submit. They have no choice. In his view, “The ideal woman is perfectly stupid and perfectly submissive. She is always ready to accept the male and never makes any demand upon him” (234).

D. H. Lawrence also considers women subordinate. Though he doesn't call her a prey, an object, he too considers women “a pole necessary for the existence of the pole of opposite sign” (245). According to him, women is absorbed in her sentiment, she is all inwardness; she is dedicated to immanence. He places transcendence in the phallus. Like Lawrence, Claudel also considers women an instrument of salvation for man. He sticks to the myth of Adam and Eve- God has made her for the perfection of man.

He has made her capable of restoring to man the creative slumber in which she was herself conceived. [. . .] She is the point of attachment of the kindly tie that unceasingly unites the Creator with His work.
(261)

For Breton, woman is revelation because she tears him out of his subjectivity. He hopes for the human salvation from woman because she is capable of total love for her child or lover. For Stendhal, woman is a being of flesh and blood. Though he negates woman in the guise of nymph, morning stars, siren, etc, he also cannot keep his heroines aloof from the role prescribed for her. His heroines always help men fulfill their destiny and consider their own personal problem to be secondary.

Thus, through the analysis of these authors' texts, she reveals that all men in one way or the other expect altruism from women. On the other hand, women in parodying the myth, lose their existence. Therefore, Beauvoir insists that womanhood is only an essence constructed by society. It cannot precede the existence. She asserts that woman, too, is a human being with her own identity before anything else.

After that, Betty Friedan came up with her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) in which she exposes the myths and realities about "happy middle class housewife". She detests the campaign waged since the end of World War II to confine women to the myth that they could achieve happiness only through marriage and motherhood. By making them see feminine fulfillment only in husband, children and home, they were evaded from their growth and self-identification. In the form of a report, she showcases how the women cannot be happy in the myth of house wife. She states that in carrying out this role, "they share the same problem, the problem that has no name" (54). They feel empty as if they don't exist which she calls "the house wife's syndrome". Then finally, she declares the problem of all housewives is the lack of privacy, the physical burden, routine of family life and the confinement of it. The result is, she lacks her identity free from mother and wife. She needs to feel their presence in order to feel herself. This binds her physically and emotionally, which is certainly not the truth of her life. So, Friedan voices the voice of all women, "I want something more than my husband and children and my home" (67).

Mary Daly, on the other hand, explores the long history of misogyny and patriarchy in the Catholic Church and implication of male God in her book *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968). In her another work, *Beyond God the Father*, Daly argues that God need not be personified at all since God is Being. In March 12, 1971, she wrote an article "After the Death of God the Father: Women's Liberation

and the Transformation of Christian Consciousness". In it, she reflects upon the image of father God, "the great patriarch in heaven", and the change in the western religious thoughts and imagery that subordinate women by assuming that when God in heaven is male, it is in the nature of things and order of universe that society be male-dominated. The theological myths present the supreme among Gods as male. Though people have only the abstract conceptualization of God in mind, the image survive in the imagination as belonging to male sex.

Thus, the image of Father God spawned in the human imagination and sustained as plausible of patriarchy, has in turn rendered service to this type of society by making its mechanism for the oppression of women appear right and fitting. She proceeds "Within this context a mystification of roles takes place: the husband dominating his wife represents God himself" (203). The image of Virgin Mary kneeling in adoration before her own son, Eve created out of the bones of Adam by God, the male for the male, has been epitomized by the structures of patriarchy. Daly argues "These various theologies hypostatize transcendence and invariably use this 'God' to legitimate oppression, particularly that of women" (266).

Sulasmith Firestone is another feminist myth critic and also one of the founders of the women's liberation movement. In her essay, "Love", excerpted from *Dialectic of Sex* (1970), she attacks the myth about women's need for love which is known almost to the point of cliché. She argues that love, more than anything else, is the pivot of women's oppression. The patriarchal construct flatters "Women and love are underpinning". On examination the whole structure of culture is threatened. Women are barred from the culture by exploiting them in the role of loving mother when men are creating masterpieces. They are stripped into their stereotypes with flatteries that they don't need to create art and painting as they create children.

The myth advocates for women's devotion and submission to men. Women are to pour love and energy to men while they indulge in creative works. Thus, the assumption "women live for love and men for work" is made truism. It debases women's nature as dependent and projects them as parasitical. After tracing the myth, Firestone hints on the truth that (Male) culture is built on the love of women, and at their expense. She declares,

Women provided the substance of those male masterpieces; and for millennia they have done the work, and suffered the costs, of one-way emotional relationships the benefits of which went to men and to the work of men. (272)

She proves that if women are parasitical, the reverse too is true. She also illustrates that the males are unable to take love seriously. However, women have always known how men need love and how they deny this need. Males take advantage of this feeling and understanding, and manipulate them. Therefore, Firestone calls for healthy love between the sexes or else she advocates the denial of the myth that women without men are orphans: they are helpless sub-class lacking the protection of the powerful. She condemns it as an anti-thesis to women's freedom.

Similarly, in 1980, Sheila Rutch came up with her essay "Women's private space: Asymmetry Becomes the Double Standard", in which she takes the fairy tales of Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and through it showcases the myth about women's existence wrapped up in the quest for a mate. According to her, these stories are repeated so very often to the girls that they become very dear to them. They dream of its realization in their own lives. They feel that they would be chosen if they have certain attributes like physical beauty, good nature, modesty, self-effa

cement, piety, vulnerability, suffering and good luck, which Cinderella and Snow White were said to have. She says,

The story teaches us, in an extension of the principle of passivity, that it is not through our own effort that we are to be happy, but through the intervention of a powerful protector who alone can bestow on us status and security. (250)

Most of these favourite female fairy tales end with the wedding and all else is subsumed under the heading “ever-after”. Such ends have been conceived by women as their destiny. They believe that once the male is acquired, all is decided. She also touches on the images of women as playmate, mistress, wife, etc.

Besides, she highlights upon how historically our masculine society has perceived men to be the only fully and primary human creature. She also illustrates the masculine ideal of "heroes" in our culture. From the classical myths to the contemporary time, the images of the ideal male consist of certain features – he is tough in a special and desirable way: he isn't afraid of pain; he does not shun a “necessary fight; he can't be pushed; he perseveres in his will; he wins. She also refers to "Machismo" (of Latin-American) for the mystique of "manliness". The machismo element of masculinity is that of a bad boy, "of mischief that can slip into downright evil”. She explains, "The expression and intensity of mischief vary, but the component are relatively stable: general naughtiness or breaking the rules, violence, sexual potency and contempt for women" (48-49).

In 1998, Elisa Davila, a Latin American wrote an essay "On Being a 'Good Girl': Implications for Latinas in the United States". In it, she explicates women's confinement within the myth of "Marianismo", i.e., the socially constructed demand

of 'good girlism'. She says, "Among the characteristics of the ideal women are semidivinity, moral superiority, and spiritual strength. This spiritual strength engenders abnegation, that is, an infinite capacity for humility and sacrifice (60).

Last but not the least, Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* cannot be overlooked. In it, she strikes upon the belief that women's worth lies in her beauty that is immutable. Infact, woman should be endowed with the quality 'beauty' in order to be successful and to win heart of men. In her essay "Brideland" (1995), she expresses her contempt to the custom of women being dressed in bridal attire to appear like Cinderella in a ball. She considers the bridleand to be "a world of lush feminine fantasy". For her, going through the ritual is nothing more than "death by cuteness" of the women.

Displaying her affirmation to Wolf, Rita Freedman also wrote an essay, "The Myth in the Mirror" (1998), which pronounces the beauty myth as corollary images of female inferiority. She claims that by demanding the women's worth to be measured by this superficial quality, society negates the potential equality that can exist between women and men. In her words, "Their special beauty is not innate but an acquired disguise. To act out the myth is to impersonate a caricature" (116).

Synge and O'Casey exhibit the exploitation of these myths in their plays, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Playboy of the Western World*. The playwrights also centre on the irradiation of such myths from the lives of women. Through its rejection, they look forward to the evaluation of women's thoughts, beliefs and status, which in turn affirms her self identity and endows meaning to their live. The above mentioned feminist discourse helps us to observe the plays meticulously and generate arguments to justify the protagonist of the plays amidst patriarchal society.

Chapter-3

Textual Analysis

The two plays –Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* and O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* – are the parodies of Irish myths. Following the then trend of creating play on myths, these two playwrights have also modeled their plays on the background of the myths that have been created about men and women. The analysis of the myths like “The Legend of the Fair Isolt”, “Honor against Love”, “ Proserpina” and “ Juno and her Rivals” offer us the idea that they have shaped there plays and its characters within the paradigm of the myths , not exceeding the long tradition of staging plays that depicted males as great patriots and heroes , who went off to the wars to explore greater love of the country leaving behind their wives and beloveds, while the women adjusted themselves within the domain that the males designed for them. In other words, the males are owner of their own wishes and women have to consent to their males’ wishes.

Through the embodiment of the myths and dramatization of the minute nuances, the playwrights expose the women trapped physically and emotionally within the space determined by men for them. Their plays are, therefore, mockery of Irish history and a parody of the Celtic myths and others.

Male Myths in *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Juno and the Paycock*

Historically, our society perceives men as the representative of human. All the excellence of humanity is believed to be present in men. In that sense, men are categorized as superior being. The close observation of the myth, “The legend of the Fair Isolt,” also presents the men as “superior” and women as “inferior. The male in this mythical story is projected as a hero: brave, independent and decisive. He is the

master of his own will and he designs the world for himself. Princess Isolt, the female, is not only beautiful but she is skillful and intelligent, too. According to her mother, “She has always worked diligently at her books and music, and considering the time and opportunity she had for it, does rather well” (*The Masks of God: Creativity Mythology* 229). The story further says that Tristan’s teachings improved her and that she learnt various languages, music, songs, and even ‘moraliteit’, i.e., the art that teaches beautiful manner as if the whole authority lies in the hand of males and the females are inferior being, an object, a clay that can be moulded to any shape they like. In this context, Beauvoir quite aptly says:

One of the daydreams in which man takes delight is that of imbuing things with his will- modeling their form, penetrating their substance. And women is par excellence the ‘clay in his hands’, which can be passively worked and shaped; in yielding she resists, thus allowing masculine activity to go on indefinitely. (*The Second Sex* 208)

This concept of woman as inferior being and man as ‘master’ who shapes her life and attributes as per his wishes is evident in the plays, as well. In *Juno and the Paycock*, Jack Boyle shows his conformity to male chauvinism. He wants Juno to act according to his will, show her acceptance to the kind of life he offers. Her life has been shaped and conditioned by tradition and orthodox religion which have fostered in her the belief that woman could achieve meaning in life only through marriage and motherhood, in other words, conformity to the set of sex role. Her husband, Jack, idles, he lazes; he too often takes the easiest way. For him, it is so simple to be selfish, to be indulgent with himself, to be careless about his wife’s feelings, to hurt her sense of values. He, the male member of the family, is responsible for inviting financial wreck to the family. Though he is never sure of bread and butter, he

expects Juno may gather a few crumbs for him. Not only that he wants her to endure every of his nuisance and bully. He idles around with Joxer, spends money and time in snugs, which Juno does not like. Juno, on the other hand, works her finger to the bones to support the family still clinging to her remnant of hope for the future and a reprieve from utter damnation. That is her search for *balance*, for identity in family relation. Here she imbibes Virginia Woolf's concept manifested in "A Room of One's Own".

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to play on piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (822)

Even in the travail of hardship and financial disaster, she does not let her enthusiasm wane and let the despair take its place. When her husband turns out to be good for nothing, she makes Herculean effort to carry out the burden of domestic affair and at the same time maintain calm composure. She desires her husband to work and help her improve the economic condition of the family almost dismantled by poverty.

MRS. BOYLE. Your poor wife slavin' to keep the bit in your mouth,
an' you gallivantin' about all the day like a paycock! (1.14)

But for Jack it is the duty of the woman to look after her husband and home. As a male he considers himself to be the representative of the world. He defines the world from his point of view and determines the space for Juno. Therefore, though she holds the rein of the family from the driver's seat, her sense of hegemony does not permit her to be happy.

MRS. BOYLE. Isn't it terrible to have to be waiting this way! You'd think he was bringin' twenty poun's a week into the house the way he is going on. He wore out the health insurance long ago, he's thryin' to wear out me! An'constanly singin', no less, when he ought always to be on his knees offerin' up a Novena for a job. (1.7)

She pecks him now and then for his irresponsible nature and his laziness, which reflects her denial to the ordeals that he creates for her. When he comes to know about the money that he was to inherit, his vanity and male ego gets the upper hand of Juno, the submissive wife. He began imposing his authority as if he were the master and Juno his possession. He imposes his authority on her and makes her act according to his will. At his order, they buy many new things like furniture and gramophone before the money fall into their hand. Juno fears that they were making haste and creating problem for themselves, but Jack does not listen to her.

JUNO. I'm afraid we're running into too much debt; first the furniture and now this.

BOYLE. The whole lot won't be much out of 2000 pounds. (2.34)

Beauvoir is quite right in saying, "And women is less involved with human projects, she has less personal will: being made for giving herself, not for taking, she is closer to perfect devotion" (259).

The myth of Isolt and Tristan also shows that Isolt has no personal will nor is she allowed to make any decision. When the wound of Tristan is healed, he returns back to his country leaving her in Ireland. Later, he comes to her land, wins her hand and takes her to Cornwall. However, he does not wed her. He hands her over to the king Mark of Cornwall. In spite of her love for Tristan, she silently accepts the fate thrust upon her and acts with equal devotion to Mark, as well. So is the case of Juno. Though she is worried about her husband's extravagance, she cannot stop him. She works for the welfare of her husband and children. Jack confines as well as threatens her existence within the four walls of the tenement house. He permits her to play the role of a wife, an inessential object to serve man and rescue him from his loneliness, and a sacrificing mother.

MRS. BOYLE. What's consols Jack?

BOYLE. Consols? Oh, consols is- there's no use tellin' women what Consols is- th' wouldn't understand. (2.35)

Jack stands for the representative of patriarchy that has determined in very large part the nature and quality of society, its values and priorities, the place and image of women within it, and the relation between the sexes. Under the gloss of the classic heroic ideal, there is a hidden agenda, a group of themes spawned by the warrior ideal and containing the underlying realities of patriarchal manliness. Jack is endowed with this aspect of masculinity, which is termed as "machismo". There is the projection of "machismo syndrome" in him- "the undercurrent of mischief, composed of a predilection for violence, intemperate and exploitative sex, and recklessness" (Sheila Rutch, *The Dynamics of Patriarchy* 49).

On the other hand, in *The Playboy of the Western World*, Synge has shown his women dreaming through the dream of man. She wishes for a masculine hero who is

intelligent, competent, courageous, honest, healthy and strong. Typically, the mythical heroes exhibit such classic traits of human excellence. Pegeen's mind is set exactly with such image of man for her life partner. Beauvoir says, "Men have shaped for their exaltation great virile figures: Hercules, Prometheus, Parsifal" (174). Even the myths have projected the males as knights, heroes- they are warriors who fight to the finish and turn out to be victors. In "The Legend of the Fair Isolt", for example, Tristan kills a fiery dragon and saves Ireland from its threat. He is not only brave fighter, but is very good in playing harp and singing because of which Isolt falls in love with him. Tristan wins the hand of Isolt and takes her to his country. Similarly, in the myth of "Honor against Love", Diarmuid is a man of most extraordinary beauty in the world who has come to the court of king Cormac of Ireland to participate in the great goaling match. There, Grianne, the daughter of the king, turns the light of her sight upon the hero and loses her heart at him. In other words, he becomes her dream hero. Joseph Campbell says, "[. . .] from which instant forward (as she averred) she never gave such love to any other: nor would she forever" (*The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* 299).

This image of male as a hero is set in the mind of Pegeen in *The Playboy of the Western World*. In Christy, she searches for the mythical hero, a fighter, who dares to put even his life at stake in order to prove his valour. On hearing that Christy had killed his father, she gets fascinated to him.

PEGEEN. You should have had great people in your family, I'm thinking, with the little feet you have, and with the kind of a quality name, the like of what you would find on the great powers and potentates of France and Spain. (1.15)

As soon as Pegeen hears about the patricide that he has committed, she decides to appoint him as a potboy who would help her and be her support in the absence of her father. Diarmuid flies away with Grianne as per her wish into the forest and in the dead of the night, clears the bush, prepares a tender bed for her and guards her all night. In similar way, Pegeen imagines him to be a hero with the guts to slay the foe without hesitation and be her saviour. She drives away Shawn Keogh, her fiancé, whom she considers coward and weak.

Like Juno, Pegeen had been living a plain and monotonous life. She looks after her father's inn while he wanders around with his friends and remains drunk. She is bored, yet, she has no other choice. To escape this boredom and compensate for her position of inferiority, she gives herself up to a romantic day-dreams. Christy's appearance gives her a taste for this easy escape mechanism and she loses her sense of reality. Mimicking the mythical heroines like Isolt, she lays herself at the service of Christy and takes care of him. She enjoys spending the evening with him inquiring about his adventure and life.

PEGEEN (*very kindly and persuasively*). Let you stop a short while anyhow. Aren't you destroyed walking with your feet in bleeding blisters, and your whole skin needing washing like a Wicklow sheep?

CHRISTY (*looking around with satisfaction*). It's a nice room, and if it's not humbugging me you are, I'm thinking I'll surely stay.

(1.14)

PEGEEN. If you weren't destroyed traveling, you'd have as much talk and streeleen, I'm thinking, as Owen Roe O'Sullivan or the

poets of the Dingle Bay; and I've heard all times it's the poets
are your like- fine, fiery fellows with great rages when their
temper's roused. (1.16)

Pegeen tries to turn Christy, a lousy and a lazy fellow, into a dream hero and Christy also tries to accommodate to this mythical image of "man as a hero" when cherished by every one. He becomes ready to participate in sports and racing that was taking place in village. Like the mythical hero, Diarmuid, who participated in the swordfight or like Tristan who killed the fiery dragon to win Isolt, Christy also wins races in order to win the heart of Pegeen, who according to him, had promised to marry him after he brought home the prizes.

PEGEEN (*radiantly, wiping her face with her shawl*). Well, you're
the lad, and you'll have great times from this out when you
could win that wealth of prizes, and you sweating in the heart
of noon!

CHRISTY (*looking at her with delight*). I'll have great times if I win
the crowning prize I'm seeking now, and that's your prize that
you will wed me in a fortnight, when our banns is called.
(3.57)

Even Jack in *Juno and the Paycock* does not miss the chances of projecting himself as a heroic figure. He prefers to be called "captain" Boyle. Whenever he gets the opportunity he boasts of his heroic adventure in the sea amidst the high waves and strong storms.

BOYLE. Them was days, Joxer, them was days. Nothin' was too hot
or too heavy for me then. Sailing from the Gulf of Mexico to

the Antarctic Ocean. I seen things, I seen things, Joxer, that no mortal should speak about that knows his catechism. Often an' often, when I was fixed to the wheel with a marline- spike, an' the win's blowin' fierce an' the waves lashin' an' lashin', till you'd think every minute was goin' to be your last [. . .].

(1.23)

He imposes his heroism on Juno and wants her to serve him and give him rest, which she does not like. He lies, refuses to work and on top of that he is always humiliating Juno for distorting his life style.

BOYLE. It ud be better for a man to be dead, better for a man to be dead.

MRS. BOYLE (*ignoring the interruption*). Everybody calling you 'Captain' an' you only wanst on the wather, in an oul' collier from here to Liverpool, when anybody, to listen or look at you, ud take you for a second Christo For Columbus!

BOYLE. Are you never goin' to give us a rest? (1.14)

On the part of Juno, she does not dream about Jack to be a hero. Unlike Pegeen, she dislikes Jack bragging about his captainship and pointing follies of others. Yet, she wishes him to put up his sweat and toil in some work and sustain the family. That would make him a hero in her eyes if not in the eyes of the world. She does not like him trying to be a "Samaritan" in front of other people at the cost of family's dissatisfaction. She sharply points to his exaggerations about his pain on leg when it comes to working. Though with sharp tongue, she wants to drive him to work, carry out his responsibilities and be a good man in the family and social circle-

a good husband, a good father and a good neighbour. These decencies and dutiful nature are the characteristics that she enlists for the image of the 'hero' of her life, which Jack Boyle cannot maintain in him.

Her son, Johnny, also fancies himself as brave and courageous warriors, who sacrifice their lives for the sake of their nation rather than run away from the battle like a dog with its tail in between its legs. He has participated in the Civil War as a result of which he has lost his arms and has hurt his hip, as well. He is proud of his deeds and he boasts that he would do it again. He feels that his contribution to Ireland is highly essential and a must. This concept of Johnny is expressed in the conversation between the mother and son at the time of introducing him to Bentham.

MRS. BOYLE. Here he is, Mr. Bentham, Johnny. None can deny his bit for Irelan', if that's goin' to do him any good.

JOHHNY (*boastfully*). I'd do it agen, ma, I'd do it agen; for a principle's a principle. (1.27)

Juno does not accept this idea and she sees the falsity of the myth. She sees life in terms of essential human situation- bread on the table and love at heart; these are the only realities that have any meaning for her and she fights for them without any heroics.

MRS. BOYLE. Ah, you lost your best principle, me boy, when you lost your arm; them's the only sort o' principles that's any good to a workin' man. (1.27)

Here, O'Casey reflects his skepticism about the rampant heroism. David Krause states, "He is at heart more concerned about the individual nature of his people than the causes they are heroic about" (100). Johnny gets bed-ridden for a

long time. In return to his service to the country, the government provides no aid to him and his family. Instead, he is shot dead by some irregulars and his dead body is found in an unidentified state. Here, the playwright has exhibited the hollowness of the myth and its parody. In considering oneself heroic and trying to be a 'male', he gets to nowhere.

The other myth created about man is that he is looked up as "God". In other words, every religion, every tradition, conceptualize the supreme of Gods to be "male". The creator of this world is considered to be a male God. Even in the mythical tales, male Gods are projected as more powerful than goddesses. So much so that the Gods fulfill every of their wishes pounding the extremities of their rights and the goddesses are projected as helpless and unable to extricate themselves from their domination. Whether it is the biblical tale of Adam and Eve or the Irish myth of Pluto and Proserpina, the Gods have the supreme power.

The biblical tale projects God Father as the creator of Adam. He created Adam, a male, as most intelligent of his creation, where as, he created Eve out of the bone of Adam in order to give him (Adam) company. Similarly, the myth of Pluto and Proserpina presents Pluto, the God of underworld, as very powerful. On the other hand, Ceres and Proserpina are depicted as helpless, tolerant, emotional and the like. This godly image or role is manipulated in our social structure. When the 'Supreme Being' is identified as male, it is obvious that the world will be male dominated. In this reference, Mary Daly quite aptly says, "If God in 'his' heaven is a father ruling 'his' people, then it is in the 'nature' of things and according to divine plan and the order of universe the society be male dominated" (After the Death of the God: Women's Liberation and the Transformation of Christian Consciousness 263).

In the display of supreme power by Pluto, Goddess and her daughter are victimized. While roaming around, he noticed Proserpina playing with her companions and gathering lilies and violets. He at once fell in love with her and took her off. The girl screamed for help to her mother. This reflects the victimization of a girl and her helplessness before the supreme power of male God. She is taken to the underworld and made the queen. She has to accept the fate as *He* is all powerful. The mother, Ceres, wonders hither and thither in search of her daughter. When she comes to know about the fact, she cannot take action against Pluto and asks for help to Jupiter.

This situation of Ceres fits exactly to the case of Juno. She is also the mother of a daughter who is exploited and deceived by Bentham. He impregnates her and disappears. Yet, the mother can take no action against him. She asks for help to her husband, Jack, but has to return hopeless. Every aggression, manipulation of the male is overlooked as an inherent quality, a quality inherited from the divine patriarch whom we imagine to be a male.

In the myth, Pluto makes Proserpina eat some pomegranate because of which her complete release is prevented. Then a compromise is made, by which she is to pass half the time with mother, and the rest with her husband, Pluto. Finally, Ceres allows herself to be pacified and restores the greenery of the earth. This image of the person in authority and the accepted understanding of 'his' role have corresponded to the eternal masculine stereotype, which implies hyperrationality, objectivity, aggressivity, the possession of dominating and manipulative attitudes towards persons and environment, and the tendency to construct boundaries between self and the "other". Bentham leaves Mary in great humiliation and disgrace. She is tricked

by the honey tongued imposter. Yet, it is she who has to bear the accusation, while the gentleman in the mask of 'divine patriarch' escapes it all.

BOYLE. Where is she? Where is she till I tell her off? I'm telling you
when I'm done with her she'll be a sorry girl! (3.61)

JOHNNY. She should be dhruven out o' th' house she's brought
disgrace on us!(3.62)

The mask of 'divine patriarch' is not amiss in Jack. He acts as a 'Supreme Being' and wants everyone to follow his order. Besides furnishing the room and buying new accessories, Jack wants Juno to make even the minute arrangements for him.

BOYLE. Is there e' er bottle o' stout left?

MRS.BOYLE. There's two o' them here still.

BOYLE. Show us in one o' them an' leave th' 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 th' drawer. (2.53)

Not only that, he orders Juno and Mary to sing for him, which they cannot deny.

BOYLE (*with a commanding gesture*). Song! . . . Juno . . . Mary . . .
'Home to our Mountain'! (3.53)

Mary does not want to sing but she cannot deny the order of the father, the supreme figure of the family. In spite of her refusal, he orders them to sing. Just as there is no denial for the order to God, they stand and sing for him.

MARY (*bashfull*). Ah no, da; I'm not in a singin' humour. (2.42)

BOYLE. Ordher for the song!

JUNO. Come on, Mary- we'll do our best.

(Juno and Mary stand up, and choosing a suitable position, sing simply 'Home to Our Mountains'.) (2.43)

The sense of supremacy is so high in Jack that he goes to the extent of stating that Juno acquired her identity only because of him as if he is her 'creator'. He claims to have shaped and named her. Here, he seems to imply that his wife doesn't have a will or competence of her own. She lacks her self-identity.

BOYLE. You see, Juno was born an' christened in June; I met her in June; we were married in June, an' Johnny was born in June, so one day I says to her, you should have been called Juno, an' the name stuck to her ever since. (1.27)

Here, we notice the height of his patriarchal domination. Juno represents Proserpina, at this point, who gains her identity as the queen of underworld because of Pluto. The division of time period that she can spend with her mother and her husband is determined by him. He moulds the childish Proserpina into a calm and submissive wife. In the same manner, Jack practices his authority upon his wife.

In *The Playboy of the Western Wood*, on the other hand, Pegeen tries to adapt herself to the set of sex role determined by the church and social surrounding. Pegeen herself is bold and confident. Yet, she dreams of a male superior to her. She chooses a male who is savage to the extent of killing his father. She enjoys his flattery and looks up to him as to God. This myth of male is set in her mind and she cannot imagine getting through it.

PEGEEN. [. . .] I not knowing at all there was the like of you drawing nearer, like the stars of God. (3.59)

She considers Christy a great divine figure and fears that he may be uncomfortable in her house.

PEGEEN. [. . .] This would be a poor, thatched place to hold a fine lad is the like of you. (3.59)

Through the parody of the myth in portraying the males in their plays, O'Casey and Synge have projected the social customs and have mocked at the meanness embodied in them. They have highlighted the endowment of such mythical characteristics in males as a medium to measure their virile potency at the cost of women's manipulation and sacrifices. They have also exhibited their discontentment towards the church and social convention for affirming the role of male as superior to female. Infact, they have mocked these attributes of the Church and social structure that confine women within the domain that the male design for them and compel them to show their consent to their males' wishes. Mary Daly has shown her strong approval to this context. She says:

It is still not uncommon for priests and ministers, when confronted with the issue of women's liberation, to assert that God became incarnate uniquely as a male, and then to draw arguments for male supremacy from this. In deed, the tradition itself tends to justify such assertions. The underlying- and often explicit-assumption in the minds of theologians down through the centuries has been that the divinity could not have deigned to become incarnate in the "inferior" sex, and the "fact" that "he" did not do so reinforces the belief in masculine superiority. (268)

Female Myths in *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Juno and the Paycock*

Since the time immemorial, the existence of women has been in stake. If we try to survey women's state in the world, we find that since the earliest time their existence is inclined to male partners. If the males are one part of the human species, the females are the other part and they play important role in making up the half of humanity. Yet, the term "women" is used as an alternative for "womb" only. This shows that women are restricted to a certain space where they cannot even stir according to their free will. The stories made up about females limit them to the frame of "Cinderella" and "Snow white"; gentle, kind, accepting, modest, obedient, never complaining nor peevish though she suffers greatly at the hands of circumstance and cruel people. They are expected to live within this frame and see their existence in carrying out these roles. As such, they are trapped in body and mind within the limited space in such a way that they see no outlet from the imprisonment of predetermined roles. Their thoughts and feelings are shaped according to that set of sex roles determined by patriarchy beyond which they are offered no choice and within it they find no satisfaction. Referring to this state of women, Betty Freidan in her essay "The Feminine Mystique" says, "The chains that bind her in her trap are chains in her own mind and spirit. They are chain made up of mistaken ideas and misinterpreted facts, of incomplete truths and unreal choices" (*The Vintage Book of Feminism* 66).

This trend has been continuing from a long time. The analysis of the mythical tales also illustrate the fact of women being chosen rather than choosing, of being noticed for the "feminine qualities", of gaining success from endurance, patience, dependence, gentility rather than initiative, which belongs to the man. Women learn these roles and their attendant behaviours from mothers who were bent to the yoke as they are meant to be. As such, their psychology is moulded in such a way that in spite

of their potentiality, women place themselves in the position of bartering their 'self – definition' for protection.

“The Legend of the Fair Isolt” also presents woman in the stereotypical patriarchal image; submissive, loyal, tender and dependent. Princess Isolt bears the pang of departure with Tristan. Later, when he takes her to his land and exhibits his love to her, she loyally submits herself to his will. However, he does not marry her. He hands her over to King Mark, with whom she gets wedded. In spite of her close affinity to Tristan, she carries out the role of a submissive wife of the king. She beds with him and acts as a playmate for him. “[. . .] Isolt then paid her own dues, no less nobly than the maid Brangaene” (250). Not only Isolt, but her maid also obeys the order of Tristan and submits herself physically to the king. “Whatever her partner required of her, she rendered and fulfilled with brass and with gold, as fully as he wished” (250). For the protection of the prestige of Tristan, they pay homage to their virginity. They prove the truth of the clichés that behind every man there is a woman.

One of the image of a “good woman” designed for the female is that of a playmate – sexy, naughty, fun loving – in which the two women partake to please the males. They sacrifice themselves in the alter of male’s desire and he derives pleasure from them as if they were meant for gaming with him. “One woman, to him, was as another” (250). The myth shows the assertion to the statement “women are the power behind the throne”. However, in return to their submission, the women acquired nothing except pain. It was only the males who benefited. In this reference Sulasmith Firestone in her essay, “Love” quite aptly states, “Male culture was (and is) parasitical, feeding on the emotional strength of women without reciprocity” (272). With time and span, Mark notices the love for each other in the eyes of Isolt and Tristan and gives up his queen. When again after some time, he notices her in the

wood with Tristan in her deep sleep, his love for her is aroused. He desires her and takes her back. Thus, she becomes a puppet of flesh and blood. He plays with her when he desires and gives her up when tired as if she had no wishes and feelings of her own.

The case of Mary in *Juno and the Paycock* is no different from that of Isolt. Mary gives up every of her pursuer for Bentham. Jerry Devine loves her very much and is always after her but she pays no heed to him and maintains her sincerity to Charles Bentham.

MARY. You won't allow me to be friendly with you; if I try, you'd deliberately misunderstand it.

JERRY. I didn't always misunderstand it; you were often delighted to have the arms of Jerry around you.

MARY. If you go on talkin' like this, Jerry Devine, you'll make me hate you! (1.17).

She brings Bentham home, spends most of her time with him and even dresses up according to his will. She appears before him as a beautiful doll with ribbons and dress of his choice as if she is an object at sale to be liked, enjoyed, consumed and ultimately used up. The words of Sheila Rutch quoted in her essay, "Women's Private Space: Asymmetry Becomes the Double Standard" fit very well in this case.

In patriarchy, women in their sexual roles are ideally to function not as self-affirming, self-fulfilling human beings, but as beautiful dolls to be looked at, touched, felt [. . .]. Our sexual role in patriarchy is to be acted upon, not to act ourselves, except in so far as this served the users' interest or needs. (268)

Bentham, on the other hand, pretends to be sweet on her and scrapes an acquaintance with her. He seduces her with his sugar candied tongue and she becomes as blind as bat in his love. She cannot see the hypocrisy and ‘male ego’ predominant in him behind the mask of an educated gentleman. He compliments her now and then for her beauty and bamboozles her emotionally and physically. Mary submits herself in his love and the imposter, after the satiation of his physical hunger, runs away putting her on the beam-ends. He treats her as an inessential object to play with when he pleased. Once tired of her, he vanished in the air. He had no respect for her feeling nor had he considered her seriously. Through the spectacle of patriarchy, he could perceive her only as a ‘playmate’. He couldn’t see her intense love and devotion towards him. The conversation of Mary with her mother reflects the deception of Bentham and the intensity of Mary’s love for him.

MRS. BOYLE. An’ has Bentham never even written to you since –
not one line for the past month?

MARY (*tonelessly*). Not even a line mother. (3.51)

MARY. Mother, the best man for a woman is the one for whom she
has the most love, and Charlie had it all. (3.52)

As a result, Mary gets pregnant. The relation in which Mary had exceeded all her limitation turns out to be a curse upon her. She realizes that Bentham, a male, had played with her and she had been a passive recipient. Moreover, the other male members of the family – Jack, her father and Johnny, her brother – accuse her for dismantling the family status and consider her a burden. However, they pay no attention to the stage that she was in and the suffering that she was going through after the infidelity of Bentham. She has no choice other than to bear everything silently.

She fits in the myth, “Woman is woman through the lack of virility; that is the fate to which every female individual must submit without being able to modify it” (*The Second Sex* 233).

Pegeen’s case in *The Playboy of the Western World* is no different from that of Mary. Pegeen dreams of a hero and in Christy, she sees her dream coming true. She compares him to the “king of Norway” (17) and fighters like “Owen Roe o’ Sullivan” (16), and gives up Shawn Keogh whom she dislikes for his weak and coward nature. Christy, on the other hand, is a fool and a lazy bone. However, he is also accustomed to the socio – religious culture of regarding the woman an object, a play mate, to satisfy the male. He is not unaware to the fact that Pegeen is strong and confident. She is financially secure. Yet, he does not look up to her as his equal and dream of accompanying her in all she does. His attitude towards her is not of adoration, but of attraction. Besides, Pegeen also sets herself to the male code of construction, which turns out to be the heel of Achilles for her.

As a woman, she herself considers women to be a play-thing for males. She thinks that true feminine fulfillment lies in having a male partner for life. She centers herself to Christy’s wishes; takes care of him and his requirements and consents to fulfill his desire after they are married. In this pretext, Beauvoir says, “Woman is her husband’s prey, his possession” (184). Christy is only concerned about embracing her and “squeezing kisses on her puckered lips”.

CHRISTY (*encouraged*). Let you wait, to hear me talking, till we’re
 astray in Erris, when Good Friday’s by, drinking a sup from a
 well, and making mighty kisses with our wetted mouths or
 gaming in a gap of sunshine with your self stretched back onto
 your necklace in the flowers of the earth.

PEGEEN (*With real tenderness*). And what is it I have, Christy

Mahon, to make me fitting entertainment for the like of you that
has such a poet's talking, and such bravery of heart. (3.58)

Thus, the playwrights have traced the socio-historical convention of degrading women to a low status by making the females in their plays parody the mythical heroine.

The other myth propounded about women is that they cannot live without men. The patriarchy assumes that the females cry and quarrel for males but they cannot think of giving up the men and starting a life afresh. This assumption has become a noose in the neck of the female. In the myth of Isolt, we find the queen and her daughter under this mindset. Isolt not only has a good outlook, but she is intelligent and is quick in learning things. Even then, the mother cannot think about her daughter's life without male. So, she confides her under the care of Tristan whom she considers an appropriate match for Isolt. Tristan wins the challenge set forward by the king Gurmun of Ireland. He kills the dragon that had been a threat to country and wins the hand of Isolt. He claims of his love for her, yet, he takes her to Cornwall for King Mark. On the way, the two -Tristan and Isolt - get acquainted physically. In the new land, she is married to the king and has to play the part of wife for him. There is no respect and concern for her thoughts, feelings and happiness. She becomes a doll to play with in the hands of two powerful male figures. Yet, she cannot defy the males from her life.

Similarly, in the myth of Grianne and Diarmuid O'Duibhne, Grianne clings on to Diarmuid even after his refusal to accept her courtship. She puts a 'geis' on him that he will be amidst danger and destruction if he does not take her out of the palace.

Through the magic, she forces Diarmuid to be with him until death. Grianne says, “And I shall not part from you until death part me” (300).

Through the parody of such myths, Synge and O’Casey also make their females succumb to ideology of women’s inability to exterminate the males from their lives. In *The Playboy of the Western World*, Pegeen works for herself. Yet, right from the beginning we notice her in need of a support. She looks for a courageous male to accompany her at night during the absence of her father.

PEGEEN. Isn’t it long the nights are now, Shawn Keogh, to be leaving
a poor girl with her own self counting the hours to the dawn of
day? (1.2)

With the appearance of Christy as a savage and courageous fellow, she decides to shelter, him in her house. In him, she sees her dream coming true. So, she immediately appoints him as a potboy to stop him from leaving the place. She makes all arrangements for him. When the news of his false bravery spread around the village, other females also come to tempt him with cakes and eggs. They all want Christy for themselves. First, it is Widow Quin who comes to take Christy with her and Pegeen has hot exchange of words with her.

WIDOW QUIN. [. . .]. There’s great temptation in a man did slay his
da, and we’d best be going, young fellow, so rise up and come
with me.

PEGEEN (*seizing his arms*). He’ll not stir. He’s potboy in this place,
and I’ll not have him stolen off and kidnapped while himself’s
abroad. (1.21)

As females presume their life unworthy without males and the authority of males inevitable, they fight, trick and even deceive one another to win the men for themselves just as Tristan's wife does. Tristan marries a girl of another land because she also had the same name 'Isolt', but they never come close. The wife fears that with the arrival of Isolt, the beloved of Tristan, she would lose her husband. So, she deceives Tristan about the princess' denial to come to him even when he is in his death bed. That fear is evident even in Pegeen. In returning back from the field, when she notices the village girls surrounding Christy and listening to his story merrily, she becomes hot with rage. She fears that Christy would develop a liking towards the other girls. So, she drives them away and threatens Christy by deceiving him that there was a news on the paper about his murder and that he would be hanged if caught.

PEGEEN (*coming in again and crossing right*). There was not, but a story filled half a page of the hanging of a man. Ah, that should be a fearful end, young fellow, and it worst of all for man destroyed his da; for the like of him would get small mercies and when it's dead he is they'd put him in a narrow grave, with cheap sacking wrapping him around [. . .]. (2.33)

With this trick she scares him that he is unsafe with Widow Quin and other girls. When Christy prepares to leave the place to escape the danger of being hanged, she tells him the truth. She also expresses her fear of losing him and her expectation of sincerity from him.

PEGEEN (*kindly, but a little embarrassed*). I'm thinking you'll be a loyal young lad to have working around, and if you vexed me a while since with your leaguings with girls, I wouldn't give a

thraeneen for a lad hadn't mighty spirit in him and a gamey heart. (2.36)

She even groans cries and quarrels with her father when he declares Christy and inappropriate match for her. She voices her desire to marry him as if she would be happy with him all her life.

PEGEEN. [. . .] It's that lad, Christy Mahon, I'm wedding now.

MICHAEL (*Loudly, with horror*). You'd be making him a son to me, and he wet and crusted with his father's blood? (3.61)

The confirmation of women to this attitude is platitude in the play *Juno and the Paycock*, as well. Juno keeps on complaining about her husband's "strutting paycock like attributes and feels herself handicapped between husband and children. However, she cannot leave her husband nor can she be indifferent to him. There is hollowness in the relationship between the husband and wife. Juno feels the lack of husband's love, understanding and sincerity. She finds him intolerable, yet, she clings on to the hope of reforming him rather than mutilating her relation with him.

MRS. BOYLE. Yes, an'let him bring in Joxer Daly along with him?

Ay, that's what he'd like an' that's what he's waitin' for – till he thinks I'm gone to work, an' then sail in with the boul' Joxer[. . .]. But I'll stop her till he comes in, even if I have to wait till tomorrow mornin'. (1.7)

When her daughter, Mary, is courted by a gentleman, she has all the reasons why she shouldn't be happy. She is relieved that her young daughter will find a good husband who would give her protection, love and everything she needs in her life. Juno appears to perceive the life of her daughter as the favorite female fairy tales

ending with the singing of marriage bell subsumed under the heading of “happily ever-after”. Referring to the female myths and female fairy tales and highlighting this attribute Rutch says, “It is as though these tales teach that our whole existence is to be wrapped up in the quest for a mate; that once we acquire the mate all is decided [. . .]” (251). Her expectation is badly shaken when the gentle man proves to be an imposter. He leaves her in great humiliation and in disgrace. When Juno comes to know about it, she first tries to find fault in her daughter. She tells Mary that life without man would be a maze.

JUNO. But you shouldn't be frettin' the way you are; when a women loses a man, she never knows what she's after losin,' to be sure, but then, she never knows what she's after gaining either.
(3.52)

When she is sure that Bentham had left Mary, she fears that there would be no male in her daughter's life. She also thinks that they had been wrong in becoming indifferent to Jerry. In other words, she seems to divert Mary's attention to Jerry.

MRS. BOYLE. I'm afraid we made a mistake in throwin' over poor Jerry He'd have been better for you than Bentham. (3.52)

There is no concern for Mary's personal thoughts and feelings as if she hardly has means for sounding her heart. Thus, a strong and independent girl who earned for herself and fought for the rights of the laborers in Trade Union is doomed to passivity. The social convention binds her to the passive mythical role and she has to agree unresistingly to a destiny that is imposed upon her. Juno takes Mary to the doctor and when it is discovered that she is pregnant, she becomes an object of scorn for other members of the family. In this context, Beauvoir has quite aptly said, “He can get

along without her much more easily than she can without him; if he leaves her, she is the one whose life will be ruined” (500). As such, marriage becomes a sort of career for women. Juno sends Mary to her sister’s house as she fears the society would not accept her in pregnancy without a husband. She talks to Jerry about Mary hoping to rebuild their relation.

JERRY. 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 (3.66)

Amidst the economic crisis, social instability, family disruption and male domination, Juno worries that Mary would be a scapegoat. She sees an escape only in handing her over to a male who would marry her. Her thought matches exactly to Beauvoir’s statement, “The sole earthly destiny reserved for the equal, the woman-child, the soul sister, the woman sex, the woman animal is always man!” (281). Through the mimicry of the myth, the playwrights have, thus, focused on the narrow concept of “man as the ultimate destiny for woman.”

Besides, the Marian or the mother role is a primary ideal and positive image of women built up in patriarchy. A lady charged with ostensive care for children is complemented by the male power. A mother figure is to be tender, fragile, loving, charitable, loyal, submissive and sacrificing. The very term ‘mother’ reminds of ‘Mary’ the mother of Christ, who had given birth to her son without getting married. She had dared to bear all the pains of the mortal world in order to bring him into this earth. In this reference, Sheila Rutch opines, “In terms of children’s safety, the lion’s share of the work is accomplished by the mother who typically takes almost total charge of her offspring” (254). The male and female are equally responsible for the birth of a child, yet, the whole share of responsibility goes to mother.

In O' Casey's play *Juno and the Paycock*, the playwright figures Juno in the typical mother image, she takes care of her children, busies herself in preparing breakfast and feeding them. She watches them and tries to keep them happy. She is the mother of two children- Johnny and Mary. Her son, Johnny, is wounded in the war and he now and then receives fit. He calls for help to Juno, while Jack representing the typical male, considers the children to be out and out the responsibility of the mother. O' Casey has presented Juno in the image of "Mother Mary", who had moved to a far of land and had sacrificed everything in order to give birth to Christ. The very name "Mary" denotes savior, protector. In the play, Juno always remains by the side of Johnny. He calls his mother for support when some sort of fear grips him.

JOHNNY. Sit here, sit here, mother . . . between me an' the door.

MRS. BOYLE. I'll sit beside you as you like, only tell me what was it come across you at all? (2.38)

In every extent, she proves her devotion in the case of her children. Johnny has faith in no one else except his mother. He turns to his mother even for small things and she endures his nervous breakdown patiently. When everyone complains about him and takes him as a disturbance, she showers love on him and always favours him.

VOICE OF JOHNNY. Bring us in a dhrink O' wather.

MRS. BOYLE. Bring in that fella a dhrink O' wather, for Gods' sake,
Mary.

MARY. Isn't he big an' able enough to come out an' get it himself?

MRS. BOYLE. If you weren't well yourself you'd like some body to bring you in a dhrink O' wather. (1.7)

The pure mother evolves out of her when she meets Mrs. Tancred whose son is killed. She doesn't care whose friend and foe he was. She has the heart of the mother and understands what it is to lose a son.

MRS. BOYLE. God help his poor oul' creature of a mother, for no matter whose friend or enemy he was, he was her poor son.
(2.46).

On the contrary, Jack always lives in the illusion. He is the moldings of the false myth and he claims his superiority. He acts as all powerful, head of household. He only enjoys the privileges both as husband and as male: considerably more freedom, autonomy and service. The service is at large provided to him by his wife. The sense of 'otherness' is deep-rooted in the relation between the husband and wife. Juno sees no happiness and finds no satisfaction in her conjugal life. The house is under economic instability and the political inconsistency of the country is on top of that. All these problems pile up together to make her life a mess. In the midst of it all, Juno seeks hope. She tries to stand firmly. She tries to save her identity.

MRS. BOYLE. [. . .] who has kep' th' home together for the past few years – only me? An' who'll have to bear the biggest part o' this trouble but me? But whinin' an' whingin' isn't goin' to do any good. (3.64)

In the case of Mary, Juno's role as a mother is even stronger. Like the mythical goddess, Ceres, Juno cries and fights with all. When Proserpina is abducted by Pluto to the underworld, she mourns and wanders around in search of her daughter. When she comes to know about her abduction, she goes to Jupiter and begs for his help. Similarly, when Juno comes to know that Bentham had run away leaving Mary

to suffer alone she seeks support in her husband and son. When the doctor's report inform about Mary expecting a baby soon, she looks up to Jack to help overcome the situation with calm composure. Juno understands what it is to be a mother before getting married. She isn't unaware to the social convention that stoops to meanness when it is the case of woman. She knew that the society won't accept Mary and her coming baby. They will look down upon her and label her with derogatory remarks. She fears that Mary would be an outcast in the society. Just as Rutch states, "The mother is hold responsible for the emotional needs of her children [. . .] (256), only Juno, suffers for Mary. She states that the suffering Mary is going through is greater than there' s.

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, an' most of our years is spent, but Mary'll have
 may be forty years to face and handle, an' every wan of them'll
 be tainted with a bitter memory. (3.16)

The supremacy of male is also displayed in Ceres' asking for help to Jupiter, a male god. Juno also doesn't take any major decision before consulting the matter to Jack. However, her hope is shattered when Jack refuses any help and decides not even to shelter Mary in the house. Her son, Johnny, turns out to be no better– a chip from the same old block the same male chauvinism predominant in him comes into manifest. He also sees the whole fault in Mary. However, as a mother Juno cannot be indifferent to her daughter. Just as Ceres fights till the end for her daughter and gains her back at least for six months, Juno also decides to fight with the world alone for Mary.

MRS. BOYLE. If Mary goes, I'll go with her (3.62)

In the mean time, Jack reveals that they were not inheriting any money. Bentham had made a confusing will. Taking advantage of it, many of the cousins were fighting for the money that Jack was to inherit. As Charles knew about it, he had run away leaving Mary in disgust. On hearing about the reality, Juno expresses his disappointment towards male malevolence.

MRS. BOYLE. Now I know why Bentham left poor Mary in th' lurch;

I can see it all now - oh, is there not even a middlin' honest
man left in th' world? (3.63)

In the end, Johnny is killed by terrorists. When Juno comes to know about it, she drowns herself in the pool of sorrow. She prays to "Mother of God" to borrow her heart. That is, she asks goddess Mary to make her as tolerant and as patient as her. This reflects the height of her motherhood.

MRS. BOYLE. [. . .] What was the pain I suffered, Johnny, bringin'

you into the world to carry you to your cradle, to the pain I'll
suffer carrying you out o' the world to bring you to your grave!

Mother O' God, Mother O' God, have pity on us all ! (3.71)

The image of woman as a wife, mother and playmate are positive ones, and the myths created about it are also the consequences of the expectations that the patriarchal circle considers positive and desirable. However, this patriarchal social culture also looks at woman as ambivalent, which is expressed in the form of ultimate bifurcation- good woman and bad woman. These judgments of good and bad woman are out and out the male projections and it depends on a male's attitude towards the role of opposite sex at some moment in time. In this social culture women's lives are meant to be lived not for themselves, but for men's need and if they desire for

perversion from this cultural image, they flip from good to bad woman. Beauvoir says,

Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores. [. . .].
Man-the-Sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence [. . .]. (10)

Such evaluation and justification about the attributes and existence of woman by men is evident in the plays. O' Casey's Juno is sharp-tongued. Right from the opening of the play, she is in a hot mood. She expresses her aggression towards Jack. She is very much like the Goddess "Juno" of the myth "Juno and her Rivals", who is always after her husband, Jupiter. He pretends to be good in front of his wife, but he always makes merriments with one or the other nymphs pooling wool over her eyes. Juno finds it intolerable and has quarrels with her husband now and then, yet, she cannot check his activities. So, she punishes those who participate in his infidelity. Her endeavor to preserve her rights and justify her position and existence is denounced as jealousy and revenge. The important aspect of the myth is that it overlooks Jupiter's deception and unfaithfulness towards his wife. The women become an object of entertainment for him. His flatteries with other females, the fulfillment of every of his desire, his attitude of maintaining his relation with his wife as per his wish presents him as 'superior being', a master. Not only that, he saves the captives of Juno in order to prove his positivity and the negativity of his own wife.

The 'Juno' of the play also has frequent quarrels with her husband, Jack. However, his infidelity is not with other women but with Joxer representing loose and irresponsible nature. He keeps on gallivanting around like a strutting peacock with

Joxer to some snugs and makes up stories or complains about the pain in leg when Juno catches him on the spot. Like goddess Juno, she also keeps a watchful eye on her husband and has hot discussions with him.

MRS. BOYLE (*with a burst*). Look here, Mr. Jacky Boyle, them yarns won't go down with Juno. I know you an' Joxer Daly of an oul' date, an' if you think you're able to come it over me with them fairy tales, you're in the wrong shop. (1.13)

Juno's objection to Boyle's idling and irresponsible nature is taken negatively. The male members in the play- Boyle and Joxer- dislike her for pointing out their follies and trying to check their activities. Their consent is to the "male identified woman" - a servant and general labourer. They consider themselves "one" and woman the "other". For them woman is the "other half" of humanity, the half that assists the society by staying out of the way and accepting themselves as subordinate and yield to man's will.

BOYLE (*to Joxer, who is still outside*). Come on, come on in, Joxer; she's gone out long ago, man. If there's nothing else to be got, we'll furrage out a cup o' tay any way. It's the only bit I get in comfort when she's away. 'Tisnt Juno should be her pet name at all, but Deidre of the Sorras, for she's always gousin'.

JOXER. It's a terrible thing to be tied to a woman that's always gousin'. I don't know how you stick it - it ud put years on me. It's a good job she has to be so often away, for when the cat's away, the mice can play! (1.11)

Juno attempts to drive Jack to work so that the family could overcome the poverty. However, Jack always looks for an escape from job and makes mountains out of mole-hill. He complains about Juno giving him no rest and trying to throw him out of the house.

BOYLE. D'ye want to dhrove me out o' the house?

MRS. Boyle. It would be easier to dhrove you out O' the house than to dhrove you into a job. (1.14)

He considers her sneaky sending people after him spying his movements. He expresses his contempt towards her for not understanding him and nagging him all the time.

MRS. BOYLE. Well, let's see your spirit [. . .].

BOYLE (*moving towards the door on left*). It ud be better for a man to be dead ! U-ugh! There's another twinge in me other leg! Nobody but myself knows the suffering I'm goin' through with the pain in these legs o' mine! (1.16)

Jealousy, stupidity, over-emotionality, which are considered the hallmarks of women find full-fledged exhibition in *The Playboy of the Western World*, too. In the play Pegeen burns in the hell of jealousy when she sees the village girls surrounding Christy and listening to his story with great excitement. Moreover, she becomes green with jealousy to see Christy enjoying the flatteries of the girls and accepting the eggs and cakes they had brought. She stupidly drives them away in great rage. For a lousy and a lazy fellow, she acts irrationally. Here, Christy's infidelity is overshadowed and Pegeen's envy is highlighted.

CHRISTY (*very meekly*). I was making myself decent only, and this a fine country for young lovely girls.

PEGEEN (*sharply*). Whist your talking of girls. (2.32).

At this point, Christy appears very much like Jupiter. He had Juno as his legal wife, but flirted with other nymphs and goddesses. Christy also wants Pegeen to be wedded to. However, he makes merry with other girls, too. Pegeen stands very close to Juno of the myth; sharp tongued, cruel. Like Juno, she fights with other girls who come to Christy.

PEGEEN (*angrily, to SARA*). What is it you're wanting?

SARA (*twisting her apron*). An ounce of tobacco.

PEGEEN. Have you tuppence?

SARA. I've forgotten my purse.

PEGEEN. Then you'd best be getting it and not be fooling us here.

(2.32)

After meeting Christy, she maintains her sincerity towards him. She gives up Shawn Keogh. When she expects the same sincerity from Christy and expresses her discontent to his unfaithfulness, she is marked as sharp-tongued, jealous and selfish. In this context, Sheila Rutch's statement is worth quoting. "When women move toward their own needs, get 'pushy', or stand in the way of his wishes, at that point Mary becomes the Ball and Chain, and the playmate becomes the Bitch" (Images of Women in Patriarchy: The Male Identified women 93-94). Christy tries to hide his infidelity and suppress Pegeen's voice for equality by picking up a toy and threatening to kill her with it if she does not stop nagging.

CHRISTY. It was with a loy the like of that killed my father. (2.32)

It is considered the birth right of man to determine the space for woman and select the role for her. However, when woman performs the task that male can do, she is identified as an "ogress". Widow Quin, in the play, is also a murderer of her husband and children. The act of murder makes Christy a hero, while Widow Quin is presented as a cheap character. Her act is considered 'sneaky'.

PEGEEN. She hit himself with a worn pick, and the rusted poison did
corrode his blood the way he never overed it, and died after.

That was a sneaky kind of murder did win small glory with the
boys itself. (1.21)

Through Pegeen, the social congenial about Widow Quin's debasement is showcased. She is projected as very narcissistic, while Christy is considered proud for his valour. All the people are after him, praising and admiring his patricide. Girls want him as their life-partner. On the other hand, window Quin is rejected by men. Christy refuses to marry her and wants Pegeen, a sweet, blushing female for himself, not his equal.

In this parody, the playwrights have depicted the male's desire to keep the female under the thumb. They voice Motherlant as quoted by Beauvoir, "He soars in the sky of heroes; woman crouches on earth, beneath his feet [. . .]" (279).

Mockery of History and Parody of Myths

O' Casey and Synge have very successfully presented their women cuffed by myths and images the masculine universe created for them. If we survey the history of women, we notice that there is always the display of common features in the images and indictment made against women from the earliest time till today. They

are moulded by the patriarchal social culture in such a way that they cling on to the routine prepared for them. As they are accustomed to the repetition, they see their future only in the duplication of past. However, they find their lives monotonous in the repetition. Both the women in the plays are strong, able and intelligent. They are independent in nature, yet, they cannot overview their lives beyond patriarchy.

A note worthy distinction between the women of O'Casey and Synge is that if Pegeen tries to succumb to the male universe, Juno is compelled to adhere to it. Synge's woman is a typical Mayo village girl, while O'Casey's is a woman of Dublin city. Pegeen belongs to a land that is far of information and technology. She has nothing to concentrate on and exercise her mind. So, her life is plain and monotonous. On the other hand, Juno lives in the tenement house of Dublin city amidst the warfare. She sees no hope in the wars that followed one after another. Though the two women survive in completely different environment, they stand on the common ground of patriarchal social structure which hinders their self growth and self-identification. By structuring their female figures within the myths of patriarchy and projecting their lives as failure, the playwrights have mocked the parodies.

In *Juno and the Paycock*, Juno carries out the role of a wife. She makes arrangements of all her husband's requirements. She cooks dishes for him, feeds him, maintains his clothes, arranges his home to suit him, arranges entertainment for him and his friends, listens to him and supports his decisions. She is practical and does not lose herself in principles like her children or in fantasies like Captain Boyle and Joxer. She does not show her defiance to the sex role determined by the universe, too. She slaves for the husband and children. She is the breadwinner, yet, she accepts her husband as the head of household.

On the one hand, she consults every matter with her husband before coming to a certain decision and seeks his support in every case. On the other hand, she appears to be trapped physically and emotionally in the embodiment of this mythical role. At many occasions, she is deeply frustrated by the physical burden, the routine of the family life, the confinement of it and the lack of privacy. When her children quarrel with one another for minute things, she expresses such frustration.

Mrs. BOYLE. Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yours!

And don't know what any o'yous ud do without your ma. (1.9)

In his play, there is the mockery of the myth that women should resign to the institution, ethics, the legal code and the history the male create and practice. The main cause behind the woman fancying masculine world as absolute reality is their resignation to the male code of construction. This fact is very well stated in the following lines,

Men make the gods, women worship them. Men cannot kneel with complete conviction before the idols they have made, but when women encounter these mighty statues along the roads, they think they are not made with hands and obediently bow down. (Frazer, Behavior, *The Second Sex* 611)

Juno's daughter, Mary, also becomes the victim of the patriarchal domination. Mary earns for herself since early age. She is independent in nature and she keeps pace with the intellectual world by reading books of writers like Ibsen, who voices ideas about women's liberation and recognition. She fights for the rights of the workers in the Trade Union. However, the social convention, the orthodox religion and the familial tradition confine her within the system that is in practice.

At the beginning of the play, Mary is seen arranging her hair before a tiny mirror. There is her jumper lying on the chair which signifies that she has just taken it off. She also selects ribbon to beautify herself. She is the victim of ‘the beauty myth’ as Naomi Wolf calls in her book by the same name. According to this myth, women must possess an immutable quality “beauty”, in order to be successful and attractive to men. She is shown resigning to the conviction that beauty is the central measure of women’s worth. In this reference, Rita Freedman in her essay, “The Myth in the Mirror” says, “Good looks are perquisite of feminity [. . .]” (112).

MARY (*trying a ribbon fillet-wise around her head*). I don’ like this ribbon, ma; and think I’ll wear the green-it looks bettther than the blue. (1.7)

On the one hand, she talks about social freedom that it is no more the age of asking permission to the employees for doing what you like. On the other hand, she accords to the convention of female prioritizing their external beauty for enchanting the males. She looks very bold and decisive when she denies the proposal of Jerry and selects the man of her choice as her life partner. She does not like Jerry interfering in her personal affairs. She tries to maintain her privacy.

JERRY (*catching her arm*). You’re goin’ to meet another fella, you’ve clicked with someone else, my lady!

MARY. That’s no concern o’ yours Jerry Devine, let me go. (1.18)

As said in the opening of the play, we see two forces working in her mind- “One, through the circumstances of her life, pulling her back; the other, through the influence of books she has read, pushing her forward” (1.5). However, after her acquaintance with Charles Bentham, she completely devotes herself to the feminine

role designed by the male social circle. She is concerned only on pleasing Bentham. She acts as per his will. Thereafter, she becomes a doll for him, dresses for him, goes for dance and stroll with him. In this reference, Betty Friedan states, “[. . .] our culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic needs to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings” (49). Her principles narrow down to getting wedded to Bentham and becoming a ‘submissive wife’ to him. Bentham’s comfortable manners with her family members and his compliments to her make her feel that he had considered her seriously. She even submits herself physically to his will. In the mask of a gentleman she could not see that she had been a ‘prey’ to male’s physical hunger. Bentham returns to his own land never to come back again and she is left alone with her sufferings.

Here, the playwright mocks “the beauty myth” and exhibits the fact that the reality is replaced by its replica. He also hints that this myth has deviated the females from their real self. Since the moment of birth, beauty is sought, perceived and projected onto girls. As such, the false belief that the sense of self resides within the body becomes predominant in them. The women measure themselves against a mythical ideal and then remodel themselves to fit that pattern, becoming what they believe they should be, and lose their self identity. Freedman also discloses the falsity of the myth and the consequence of its parody thus, “Ultimately it exposes the fair sex once again as the other sex” (114).

The playwright has also mocked the males who consider themselves the ‘divine patriarch’; the saviour, the protector, the shelterer, in other words, the ‘Provision’. Jack is not an escape from this mockery. He is responsible for the financial wreck in the family. He is irresponsible towards his duty of father and husband. Yet, his ‘male ego’ gets the upper hand of Juno and his children. When he

is informed about the unexpected financial gain, he becomes oblivious of the family hardship, especially Juno toiling days in and days out in their lean days. He imposes his authority on her. Even then, she does not deny him the status of ‘bread winner’, ‘head of the household’ and ‘the master’, which he demands from her.

BOYLE. [. . .] I’m the master now, an’ I’m goin’ to remain master.

(2.31)

In return, Jack borrows money from everyone and puts the whole family in debt. He throws party, remains drunk through out the day and becomes indifferent even to the sufferings of his neighbors. In spite of his wife’s warning that they were becoming extravagant, he does not listen to her. He makes her work, do the shopping and even sing for him. So much so that he tries to check her emotions, too. He doesn’t allow her to express her grievance in Mrs. Tancred’s suffering.

MRS. BOYLE. [. . .]. Poor Mrs. Tancred’s only child gone west with his body made a collander of. Sure, if it’s not our business, I don’t know whose business it is.

BOYLE. Here, there, that’s enough about them things; they don’t affect us, an’ we needn’t give a damn. If they want a wake, well, let them have a wake. (2.47)

Juno goes to the extent of thinking the thoughts of Boyle. She tries to be indifferent to the death of Mrs. Tancred’s son and joins her family and friends in their merrymaking. However, she soon regrets for it. In the mishaps that befall them one after another, Boyle does not support her at all. Bentham disappears in the air leaving Mary after creating havoc in her life. At such moment, Boyle pours hell on them by

accusing Mary of ruining his prestige. Juno receives this attribute of Jack as a big blow. She had not expected this from him at least, in the case of her children.

MRS. BOYLE. If Mary goes, I'll go with her.

BOYLE. Well, go with her! Well, go, th' pair o'yous! I lived before I seen yous, an' I can live when yous are gone [. . .]. Whenever I'm seen they'll whisper, 'th father of Mary Boyle that had th' swank she used to go with' d'ye know? To be sure they'll know more about it than I will meself! (3.62)

The men from furnishing Co. come to take back the furniture that they had brought. Even at that time, the mother and children receive no help from Jack Boyle. When Juno is out looking for Jack, some irregulars enter the house and carry Johnny away. They soon come to know that Johnny is shot to death. At the crucial hour of such grievance Boyle does not come to them, but remains drunk in a snug with Joxer spending the last remains of the penny he had in pocket. She realizes that her hope of the renewal of life with Jack was nothing more than a castle built up in the air. She makes up her mind to leave the home with Mary never to come back again.

Through the grim ending of the play, the playwright has mocked the parody of myths created about women and men, and denounces the imposition of the myths upon the life of women. By presenting Jack as the representative of patriarchy that has determined to a great extent the nature and quality of our society, its values and priorities, the place and image of women with it, the relation between the sexes, and presenting the women in the pool of sorrows, family status in wreck, O'Casey has hit the hammer hard on the fakeness of the myth of "Machismo" and "Marianismo" that is ubiquitous in every social class. By presenting Jack in complete failure and alone

in the end, O'Casey exposes the meanness of the machismo image and by presenting Juno in total loss and amidst grievance, he highlights the uselessness and ignorance of women in parodying the myth of marianismo. At this point, O' Casey voices Elisa Davila's idea presented in her essay, "On Being a 'Good Girl': Implications for Latinas in the United States".

For in the long process of adjustment to the imperatives of *machismo* and *marianismo*, a woman suffers from emotional alienation from her own feelings, physical and aesthetic estrangement from her body, social isolation, betrayal of her own gender, and silencing her own voice. (60)

So has Synge done in his play *The Playboy of the Western World*. Pegeen adjusts herself to the myths. She tries to find a male partner as heroic as the mythical males for herself. She craves for such figure in Christy Mohan. She fights with girls for him and shows her devotion and sincerity towards him. She parodies the sweet blushing beloved colleens, who send their male partners to fight the challenges and wars and prove their valour. She fancies him as knights and kings. The myths also project the male figures with poetic quality in them for praising their beloveds and wives. Pegeen also hears poetry in the speech of Christy. She feels that he has the "poet's talking" and the "bravery of heart".

She expects the same kind of security from Christy that the mythical knights provided to their beloved. Amidst the monotony of life, Pegeen finds an escape in the romantic dream world with Christy. Her aspirations are limited to getting married and pleasing Christy. She overlooks her own potentiality and does her level best to catch up to the myth of "[. . .] sharing a husband's life, supporting him as he encourage us,

fulfilling ourselves in the haven of his world” (Sheila Rutch 252). She herself labels her boldness and her ability to speak the truth as “biting tongue.”

PEGEEN. And to think it’s me is talking sweetly, Christy Mohan, and
I the fright of seven town lands for my biting tongue. (3.59)

She considers herself inferior to her male partner. She accepts her subordination; she not only believes that she is weak and small to take care of herself, that she is and must be dependent, but that it is wrong to be any other way. She thanks God for bringing her close to Christy.

PEGEEN (*radiantly*). [. . .] I’ll be burning candles from this out to the
miracles of God that have brought you from the South to-day,
and I with my gowns bought ready, the way that I can wed you,
and wait at all. (3.59)

However, in the end when she discovers that Christy had not killed his father but he had made up a story of his savagery, she falls from the dream world to reality. When he turns out to be a liar and a coward, she realizes the hollowness of her dream.

PEGEEN. [. . .] there’s a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty
deed. (3.70)

She realizes that she had been running after a fake dream. The parody of the myths was not the ultimate truth of her life. Instead, it had turned her life into an illusion. She couldn’t be happy with it.

In their respective plays, O’Casey and Synge have repudiated the idealized picture of women. Through the dramatization of the minute nuances, the playwrights expose their women’s life in ordeal within the space determined by men for them. As such, there plays are the mockery of Irish history and parody of the myths which

camouflage women within its territory, suppress them and deviate them from their identity thus. Here, they highlight the fact that women do not find complete security in home and do not find satisfaction in the conditioned life with no scope or opportunity for determining their preferences and prerogatives. Through the parody and the mockery of the myths, the playwrights also claim that the myth will extinguish only when they assert themselves as human beings. Juno, by the end of the play, realizes the coldness of her relationship with her husband. Her heart goes numb for him.

MRS. BOYLE. Let your father furrage for himself now; I've done all
I could an' it was all no use-he'll be hopeless till the end of his
days. (3.71)

Pegeen also drives Christy out of the house. She tells him to leave the place. She doesn't accept Shawn, either. In denying the support of any of the males in her life, she expresses the utility of her own decisiveness. She starts realizing the futility of her conformity to the set of sex role. The play ends with Pegeen breaking into wild lamentation.

PEGEEN. Oh, my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only
Playboy of the Western World. (3.73)

In both the plays the women are in loss. They lose their males. In that loss, there is infact, the destruction and elimination of the myth woven around them.

Chapter- 4

Conclusion

Mary Piercy, in reflecting upon the image of women, has written a poem, “A Work of Artifice”, in which she very well exposes the condition of women in the hazardous patriarchal system. She has compared women to a bonsai tree. The gardener carefully prunes it to nine inches high and croons to the plant. She writes:

It is your nature
to be small and cozy,
domestic and weak;
how lucky, little tree,
to have a pot to grow in. (12-16)

In the patriarchal social system, the existence of the females is limited to a certain space no less than that of a bonsai tree; women’s roles and manners are determined by the males and they are compelled to adjust themselves within the households and they are forced to be happy in such a situation which is closer to a parody. Their dreams and aspirations are pruned to husband and children. The males croon about how women should dress, how she should act and how she should behave. The patriarchal society has created such myths as an ideal for remodeling women to fit that pattern, becoming what they believe they should be.

From the infancy, a girl child is taught by the mother to be silent, obedient and swallow the bitterness that others give her. This silence of woman kills her ‘self’ - the essence which holds and molds an individual together in order to form a complete organism. The ‘self’ is the sense of individuality that supports the view that before

anything else we are human. A woman without self identity is no more than an empty shell: with no independence, no freedom to voice ones ideas and thoughts, with no innate disposition to feel and need, a condition which Mai Kao Thao describes as “a bird without the courage to fly” (Sins of Silence 17).

In carrying out the socially constructed demands of “good woman” or “good girl”, the females undergoes major displacement or dislocation inside her own self. She is expected to confirm to the set of rules that dictates the manners by which she can act, dress, talk, have sex and even think. A woman is supposed to accept domesticity and motherhoods as the two guiding forces of her life. Thus, in becoming a good woman, she ignores her identity, swallows her pride and shuts her eyes in the face of injustice by turning the other cheek. She becomes an object. Her future depends not on her intelligence but on having a home, with a husband, children and the other status related goods, relationship, alliances and cultural identifiers. Her name gets hyphenated to her husband and she becomes an alien being because her husband does not treat her as an equal. She becomes a doll wife to him, an inessential object, the ‘other’. Within that limited space and imposed roles, she feels empty and incomplete. Her existence gets limited to server of food, putter-on of pants and a bed-maker, somebody who can be called when the males want something. This confinement leads them to deep frustration because they lack privacy, their own space. In other words, they lack their self-identity.

Every individual desires for self identity, a desire for self recognition. They want social, political, psychological, economic independence in general. However, identity also evolves out of the person’s free actions: to think one’s own thought, to see and feel with one’s heart and having no authority to govern except the authority of one’s own reason. This liberty determines a person’s individual space, authenticity

and self dignity. Only in the exaltation of such liberty, a person can experience life and love to the fullest extent. The free play of these rights does not belong exclusively to one gender or another, for both the sexes struggle to maintain their own identity in the ever changing society. However, the society does place restriction on the basis of gender and put the fulfillment of female identity at stake.

Since a long time in human history, woman's identity remained submerged, and pressurized under various guises like culture, religion and convention. The orientation of feminism is to help women overcome the state of inferiority and the lack of identity. Synge and O'Casey have also pondered upon the hazy and inferior state of woman. Because of the close attachment with the mother, they could feel and understand better the ordeals in the lives of women amidst the husband and children. They were also not unaware to the social conventions and religious orthodox beliefs of Ireland that hindered the growth and development of women. Therefore, moving a step ahead to dramatizing the myths and legends with their primitive emotions, the playwrights present their plays as the parodies of myths and mocked it. In other words, the behaviours and attributes of the characters in their plays are the caricature of the legendary figures, whether male or female. Then with the poetry of language and humour of situation, they have mocked the falsity and the meanness that lies in the roles designed by patriarchy for the males and females. In a comic manner, they have deflated the church that limits women's identity to males' wishes. That is, the males are provided the privilege to determine the status of women on the basis of their convenience. O'Casey very aptly presents his view in this context, "The Catholic Church had moulded the expanding universe into a doll's house for her, and there she lived by thronging duties pressed, with sorrows surging around, her future all unknown [. . .]" (Sean O'Casey: Autobiographies II 191).

The playwrights have presented the females in their plays amidst the whirlpool of social convention of Ireland that forced females to wilt to family's resentment and the priests' advice. Synge's Pegeen always lives with the patriarchal mindset that a woman is incomplete without a man. She looks for a man who is heroic, superior and masterful. She searches for her dream hero in Christy. She feels that a man who dares to commit patricide can only be her protection. Her thoughts are limited to the stereotypical notion and orthodox belief that women are helpless creatures to be cuddled and protected. Like the mythical heroine, she pretends to be happy in carrying out the role of sweet blushing beloved who send their male to face challenges. However, with the disclosure of the exaggeration of Christy, she escapes from the illusion and the false prejudices of males that they are superior being and can be the savior of women in every difficulties and dangers.

On the other hand, O'Casey's Juno tries to find her identity in the myth of a house wife. She searches for satisfaction in concerning only about her husband, her children and her home termed as the true "feminine fulfillment". Jack is a male chauvinist. He prefers Juno in the form of a typical house wife, subsume it under her husband, and commit her life- her time, interests and energies- to the needs of the family group, husband and offsprings. She wants her to be, in essence, a servant and general laborer, a position, furthermore, from which she may never return while the marriage endures.

She struggles days in and days out for bread and butter. The poor economic condition and the wars following one after another, make her path all the more stiff. Bentham ruins her daughter's life on top of that. Johnny, who imitates the mythical heroes, gets badly wounded in the war. In his attempt to prove his heroism, he is also put to death by some irregulars. Juno's dream of a happy family crumbles down to

dust. In essential hours, she neither receives help nor sympathy from her husband. She always senses some emptiness in her life. Thereafter, she realises the futility of her existence and finally endeavors to overcome the state of incompleteness, which Betty Friedan labels as “The problem that has no name”.

In both the plays, the women lose their males. Pegeen gives up Christy. She tells him to leave the place. Her hopes and dreams shatter to dust. In her cry of disappointment “I have lost the only Playboy of the Western World”, there is the escape of Pegeen from the maze of patriarchy and the embodiment of myths. Her dream of male as the hero turns out to be a castle built up in the air. She realises that in chasing the dream, she had been escaping from her own self. With the denial of support of the male, her quest for identity begins. Rejecting Christy denotes her rejection to the male ethics that had bound her life for so long. She frees herself from that chains of patriarchal society and finally takes her decision to lead a life of her own with no male imposition governing her life.

Juno takes a bold step out of the house with her daughter living Jack in his drunkenness and in the illusion of his superiority. This denotes her search for self identity that is unhyphenated to her husband. She understands the hypocrisy and superficiality that lied in the male ethos. She realises that her womanhood does not assert her inferiority. Instead it assures her individuality.

Synge and O’Casey were very well aware of the phase the women were going through. The society including her parents lie the woman by praising her with the lofty values of love, devotion and the gift of herself. The main features of her trainings, in reality, combine together to bar her from the roads of revolt and adventure. The truth is that if for man she is an amusement, a company, an essential boon, he for her is the meaning and justification of her existence. As such, the

identity of the two sexes does not weigh equal on the scale. The set of sex role propounded to limit woman's space make their life parasitical. Therefore, the playwrights, through the mockery of the parodies in their plays, voice for women's self identity. They look at women perspectively and state that women should be provided with their own living strength, they should be offered the opportunity to make out their own existence and then only their dependence to men will be abolished.

To sum up, both the playwrights bring their women to a state where they deny the males in their lives. This exhibits the essentiality of the eradication of myths from the lives of women and from the mind of men. They foster the belief that a new moral, social and cultural codes should be constructed to bring about the inner metamorphosis of women. They should be allowed to exercise their mind to carry out their own responsibilities and assume them. They do not favour the females' indifference to their responsibilities, but they call for the redefinition of the identity of women, reviewing of the male female relationship and the rehabilitation of love, desire, dream, faith and adventure in reciprocity. The women will no more be an 'object'. She will be a 'subject' with her own space. Standing side by side with the male partners, she acquires satisfaction in all she does and all she has.

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