

Joyce's Voices: Power and Polyphony

in *Ulysses*

By

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## Introduction

Emerging as part of the Modernist movement at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* elicited equal praise and controversy upon its initial publication in 1922. For T.S Eliot, *Ulysses*, with its rich stylistic experimentation, allusions, and vivid rendering of a single day at turn of the century in Dublin, represented "the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape" (Eliot 175). For others, however, the novel, with its erotic undercurrent, bawdy humor, and general dissidence, merited nothing more than antipathy. Harvard Professor Irving Babbit, for example, claimed that *Ulysses* was the work of an individual "in an advanced stage of psychic disintegration" (Quoted in "James Joyce Dies; Wrote *Ulysses*"). Though many were in agreement with Eliot's view, far more aligned with Babbit's interpretation. Under charges of obscenity, *Ulysses* was banned in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the United States (John McCourt 98). While the ban was eventually lifted in the 1930s, *Ulysses*' reputation as a censored novel stuck. *Ulysses*, as Katherine Mullin claims, "lives on" in the public imagination as a "moral subversive," a novel that seeks to enact a kind of artistic, sexual, and individual "freedom" in modern society (Mullin 2).

Perhaps as an effect of this reputation, in *Ulysses*' scholarship, the novel's portrayal of gender has emerged as a prominent point of critical discussion. Reading *Ulysses* in the same turn of the century Dublin cultural context that censored the novel, critics, including Christine Froula, Alyssa J. O'Brien, and

Sean P. Murphy have argued that *Ulysses*' depictions of gender and "taboo" aspects of gender – like women's sexuality, male insecurity, and transvestism – operate so as to overturn the city's "gender ideology" (O'Brien 8). Yet, in spite of the prominence of this interpretation, within Joyce scholarship, there is a distinct paucity of primary research on turn of the century Dublin culture and the way that it considered gender, as scholars have, typically, relied on secondary sources to establish a view of Dublin, and then read *Ulysses*' portrayal in that context. While this approach to the novel is not wrong - and is, in fact, founded in an excellent scholastic tradition– the general reliance on secondary sources presents an opportunity for a new reading of *Ulysses*, one that this thesis attempts to perform. Through a thorough examination of primary sources, this thesis seeks to illuminate the way that gender figured in turn of the century Dublin culture, and the way that *Ulysses* responds to the city's conceptions of that which constitutes man and woman. As the research uncovers, Dublin society did not repress gender solely through an "economy of gender," as Bonnie Kime Scott writes; the city, moreover, repressed gender dialogically (Scott 199). That is, as analysis of the way that Dublin society understood gender in the period reveals, within the city's popular discourse, men and women spoke in distinct (gendered) ways. Likely a lingering effect of separate spheres ideology – the Victorian belief that men were to occupy the public sphere, and women the domestic sphere - the men of Dublin's popular discourse speak with agency and autonomy; women, by contrast, speak through a language of femininity that works to both conventionalize (and reconventionalize) a traditional conception of women, and deny them that same agency and autonomy afforded men. Thus, gender at the turn

of the century in Dublin was repressed dialogically in that a language of gender existed in the city's popular discourse, and was applied to subjects in such a way that it empowered men, just as it disempowered women. For a cultural reading of *Ulysses*, this dynamic is of great significance. With a focus on Molly Bloom's soliloquy, this thesis argues that, *Ulysses*, through its structure as what Mikhail Bakhtin would deem a polyphonic novel, or a novel that incorporates multiple perspectives, proves to destabilize the identified dialogical gender conventions of turn of the century Dublin (Bakhtin 5).<sup>1</sup> The novel constructs Molly's voice in such a way – autonomous, agential, empowered – that it challenges and subverts the way that women were expected to speak in the period. In making this argument, this thesis aims to both evince the importance of primary research in literary interpretation, and elucidate Molly's role in the text. The thesis illustrates that, it is not merely that Molly speaks in the novel that is significant, but how she speaks, and to what end.

To begin, it is necessary to examine the current scholarship on the role of gender in *Ulysses*. Though there exist myriad interpretations of the way that gender figures within the novel, critical understanding is relatively uniform. Reading the novel in the context of turn of the century Dublin society, many critics focus on the way that *Ulysses* portrays gender, particularly “taboo” aspects

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<sup>1</sup> This exploration of gender conventions at the turn of the century in Dublin, it must be noted, focuses almost entirely on women. The reason for the focus is not that, to borrow from Simone de Beauvoir, men occupied the “standard” gender, and that women represented a divergence from that standard; instead, the reason for the focus on women is that the structure of Dublin popular discourse at the turn of the century affected women in a way that was much more acute than men in the period (Beauvoir 168). Thus, while both men and women both performed their genders, and did so, in part, dialogically, because the conventions of women's speech in the period prove more apparent, and evidently consequential, than their male counterparts, they are placed at the forefront of the study.

of gender, such as women's sexuality, male insecurity, and transvestism. Christine Froula, for example, posits that *Ulysses*' depictions of gender "vivisection the psychopolitical underpinnings of the authority wielded over gender by [Dublin's] church, state, and socioeconomic marriage system" (Froula xi). Colleen Lamos and Christine van Boheemen-Saaf contend, similarly, that *Ulysses*' depictions work to destabilize rigid conceptions of gender, "in Joyce, gender proves an unstable construct that generates intense immense self-consciousness and doubt" (Lamos and Boheemen-Saaf 7). Likewise, Sean P. Murphy, applying French philosopher Michel Foucault's theories of power to *Ulysses*, posits that the novel's representations of gender and gender identity "transform an existing reality" (Murphy 15; 111). For these critics, *Ulysses*' depictions of gender, then, perform a profound function, one that is implicitly intertwined with the culture in which the novel was produced. *Ulysses*, according to their arguments, engages Dublin culture and its "discourses of gender," reveals the underlying implications of the way that the city understood men and women and their roles in society, and then subverts those conceptions through depictions that, to use Joseph Valente's term, "destabilize" both tradition and the status quo (Valente 224). In this way, *Ulysses* and its portrayal of gender and gender identity thus become inseparable from Dublin; Joyce's work, Dominic Manganiello writes, enacts a "spiritual liberation of the city," and therefore necessitates interpretation within its cultural context (Manganiello 64).

However, in spite of the prominence of this reading, there is currently a dearth of primary research on turn of the century Dublin culture, and the way that it considered gender. Instead, much of the scholarship – including the

aforementioned scholarship of Froula, Lamos, Boheemen-Saaf, and Murphy, relies on secondary sources. Though the use of secondary sources has led to exceptional scholarship that has made invaluable contributions to critical understanding of *Ulysses*, the reliance has also presented something of a dilemma. While scholars cite turn of the century Dublin as, among other things, a “narrow-minded and repressive culture,” a “patriarchal city,” and a society that imposed an oppressive “gender system,” because these claims are founded on secondary sources, there is a paucity of primary research based literature on the way that Dublin’s repression, patriarchy, and systemic oppression was itself manifested in everyday life (Daniel R. Schwartz 34; Johanna X.K. Garvey 111; Sheldon Brivic 142). Therefore, despite the veracity of these critics’ claims, there exists a scholastic need to examine Dublin culture at the turn of the century through primary sources, and observe the way that the city understood, approached, and engaged gender in its society so that the role of gender in *Ulysses* may be more clearly understood.

This thesis began as an attempt to address this need. Using various primary sources, ranging between the years 1882-1922,<sup>2</sup> this thesis sought to illuminate the way that gender figured in Dublin culture, and how the city’s apparent “gender issues,” as critic Pin-fen Huang Yi-Ling Yang deems them, manifested in Dublin society (Yi-Ling Yang 545). In order to perform this task, this thesis, initially, focused on who, among Dublin citizens, spoke of gender, how they spoke, and to what end. Due to the complications of analyzing speech,

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<sup>2</sup> This span accounts for Dublin culture between the years that Joyce was born, and his completion of *Ulysses*.

the research did not attempt to account for everyone who spoke, or every way that people spoke. Instead, through an examination of primary sources collected at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin, the research tried to account for the city's "popular discourse," or the predominant ways that Dublin spoke of gender. To this end, the thesis focused primarily on the newspapers of the period. The reason for the focus on newspapers was that, as Declan Kiberd explains, "most inhabitants of the city read only newspapers at the time of [*Ulysses*'] publication," and, thus, newspapers served as the primary source of information, opinion, and culture for Dublin citizens (Kiberd 463). Due to this central role in Dublin society, newspapers, then, both reflect and produce the "popular discourse" to which this thesis refers. As commercial entities, their articles not only cater to, and represent the prevailing attitudes, views, and thoughts of the city on gender, but also steer the direction of the conversation through their language and editorials. Thus, newspapers point to – if not provide – answers to those three central questions: who spoke of gender, how did they speak of gender, and in what ways?

As this thesis uncovered in the analysis of primary resources from turn of the century Dublin, the city repressed gender dialogically, or in the way that its citizens spoke in the popular discourse of the period. Likely a continuation of Victorian separate spheres ideology, men in popular discourse spoke with agency and autonomy. Dublin men freely and openly discussed the matters of the day, including national and international conflict, economic developments, and topical subjects like the progression of education ("Our Glorious War" *Daily Express* p 6; "Remunerative Employment for Boys and Girls" *Dublin Evening Mail* 3; "Evils

of Over-Education” *Irish Catholic* 7). By contrast, women’s language was effectively compromised. For, while women appeared in the publications that constitute popular discourse, their voices were strained in the way that they could speak. Appearing only in demarcated “Ladies’ Sections,” women in popular discourse were limited in their speaking to traditionally feminine subjects like art, fashion, and society (“Styles in Linen” *DEM* 3; “Fashionable Marriages” *Daily Express* 4). Unable to go beyond these “women’s realms” (again, likely due to the persistence of separate spheres ideology) women lacked the same agency and autonomy that was afforded to, and expressed by, men in popular discourse. While this convention of women’s lack of agency and autonomy may seem inconsequential in that women remained present in popular discourse through their “Ladies’ Sections,” the implications of such a gender dynamic prove profound. Despite the seemingly willing way that these women speak, because their voices were filtered through a conventionalized language of femininity meant that their voices were not necessarily their own; instead, since women’s speech only appeared in demarcated women’s sections, and because it could only touch upon traditionally feminine subjects, women’s voices in popular discourses were markedly absent of any and all agency, and served merely to reinscribe a disempowered, cultural conception of both “what woman is,” and “how woman should be.” Therefore, within popular discourse, women were problematically relegated to a position of vulnerability. Speaking through a conventionalized language of femininity, women were unable to assert an autonomous self, and thus participate in the discussion of the matters of the day; women were, instead,

to stay in their sphere, as their empowered male counterparts led the conversation for them.

For a cultural reading of *Ulysses*, this dynamic carries great significance. To turn to Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of the novel, *Ulysses* is a polyphonic novel, or a work that employs polyphony, the inclusion of multiple perspectives (Bakhtin 5). While, ostensibly, a textual conceit, when one recognizes the way that gender figured in popular discourse, *Ulysses'* employment of polyphony proves a point of power. In contrast to the conventions of the period, in which women were denied agency and resigned to a language of codified femininity, *Ulysses'*, through its use of polyphony, presents a woman of distinct agency and autonomy: Molly Bloom. Though the lone female narrator in the novel, Molly performs a profound function. Through her inclusion at the end of *Ulysses*, the novel counters the gender conventions found in popular discourse. Granting the agency that accompanies first-person narration, "Penelope" works to empower Molly, as the chapter's structure allows her to clarify her position in the text, particularly as it regards her affair; enables her to declare a possession of authority and sovereignty that reworks considerations of women in the period; and grants her the capacity to democratize the narrative, as she offers her individual perspective on Bloom, love, and the nature of their relationship (Bakhtin 6). Thus, with Molly at the end, *Ulysses* no longer proceeds as a novel that is told only from a male perspective; now, through the inclusion of her voice, *Ulysses* places women in the same position as men. *Ulysses*, then, not only performs an ideological subversion of Dublin cultural conceptions of gender; the novel, likewise, subverts Dublin

cultural conceptions of gender dialogically, as it challenges the social conventions of the way that men and women were to speak.

With a focus on speech, this thesis aims to further illuminate both *Ulysses*' cultural historical context, as well as the role of gender in the novel. In this pursuit, the thesis seeks to contribute to *Ulysses* scholarship in two major ways. First, through the emphasis on popular discourse, the thesis demonstrates the importance of primary research to an understanding of *Ulysses*. As has been noted, current scholarship relies on secondary sources to the effect that notable aspects of the novel, like the significance of the way that Molly speaks within *Ulysses*' turn of the century Dublin cultural context, have gone unrecognized. Thus, as this thesis attempts to illustrate, primary research opens new possibilities for reading *Ulysses*, in that it allows a scholar to elucidate the more nuanced elements of the novel, and the ways in which they operate in the text. Second, in the analysis of Molly's soliloquy, this thesis endeavors to advance the discussion of the role that gender plays in the novel. Using Bakhtin's theories,<sup>3</sup> the thesis strives to communicate that *Ulysses* does not merely challenge cultural conceptions of gender through the inclusion of the "taboo" in the text; rather, building from the findings from the primary research, the thesis contends that *Ulysses* enacts a destabilization of gender conventions through the way that it depicts gender, and, more importantly, the way that Dublin society understood

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<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that Bakhtin's theories have been used in application to *Ulysses* before this thesis. However, unlike previous Bakhtinian readings, this thesis does not use Bakhtin as the lone means through which to interpret the novel, as RB Kershner does, nor does it argue that there existed a relationship between Bakhtin and Joyce, as M. Keith Booker does (Kershner *Bakhtin, Joyce, and Popular Culture*; Booker *Joyce, Bakhtin, and the Literary Tradition*). Instead, due to the complexity of polyphony, the thesis merely uses Bakhtin as a means of understanding the structure of the narrative.

gender expression. Thus, through this shift in reading from the ideological – what woman is - to the dialogical – how a woman is to speak – the thesis attempts to open the ways in which scholars approach and interpret *Ulysses*' depictions of gender, particularly in relation to the context in which the work was produced. Therefore, the thesis has two main objectives: to expand understanding of *Ulysses*' Dublin, and to rethink the ways that gender figures in Joyce's work.

The thesis opens with the chapter “Dueling Discourses,” which outlines the popular discourse of the period, and establishes the cultural context in which *Ulysses* was produced. With a focus on Dublin's three major factions, the British, the Catholic Church, and the Nationalists, the main questions of the chapter are: who, in these factions, spoke of gender? How did he or she do so? And, to what end? Through a close reading of primary sources from the three groups, “Dueling Discourses” illustrates the way that each faction enacted separate spheres ideology in their popular discourses. Once the dynamic is recognized, the question of the chapter then becomes, what are the implications of such an ideology, and how did it affect the men and women of the period? Though there is a certain level of speculation, between careful analysis of Dublin's popular discourse, and historical profiles of each faction, the chapter offers several potential conclusions as to why Dublin culture viewed men and women in this way, as well as the consequences of its vision.

Once the cultural context has been established, the thesis then moves into the text. The second chapter, “Who Painted the Lion?” explores the “Nausicaa” episode of *Ulysses*, which features the novel's second most prominent female character, Gerty MacDowell. Unlike Molly, Gerty's narrative proceeds in the

third person, and is imbued with what Heather Cook Callow deems “romanticized ladies’ magazine rhetoric” (Callow 156). This structure and style ostensibly compromises Gerty, and thus, the questions of the chapter are: who *is* Gerty? And, perhaps more importantly, what is her function in the narrative? Moving away from the scholarship that claims Gerty is merely Bloom’s fantasy, “Who Painted the Lion?” reads her in relation to *Ulysses*’ cultural context, and argues that she embodies the Dublin cultural feminine ideal. When read in this way, Gerty assumes greater significance in the text. As more than Bloom’s fantasy, Gerty personifies turn of the century Dublin’s conception not of “what woman is,” but of what woman “should be.” In doing so, Gerty thus performs an expository function, as she reveals both the expectations and implications of Dublin’s conventional language of femininity.

The third chapter, “yes I said yes I will yes,” examines Molly Bloom’s soliloquy. The major question of the chapter is: how does one interpret Molly’s narrative, particularly in the Dublin society that enacted a discursive version of separate spheres’ ideology? Through a close reading of the “Penelope” episode, as well as consideration of Bakhtin’s theories, the chapter argues that Molly’s soliloquy both challenges and subverts Dublin cultural conventions of the way that women were to speak. That is, as opposed to current scholarship that either reads Molly’s soliloquy as problematic due to Joyce’s male authorship of a female character, or scholarship that interprets Molly’s soliloquy as significant merely because she does speak, the chapter assesses her narrative in relation to *Ulysses*’ cultural context, and focuses on the significance of *the way that* she speaks, and

*how* her speech functions both within the novel, and within a society that limited women's modes of expression.

The final chapter presents the thesis' conclusions, as it also considers the significance of the thesis in the current critical discussion of *Ulysses*. The major question here is the way that we may read the novel in relation to its cultural context. From the thesis, it seems that there is a need to turn to primary research, particularly for a novel like *Ulysses* that has been written on extensively. For, through primary research, scholars may identify aspects of the text that have not been understood before, like the way that *Ulysses* employs polyphony, and thus attain a better sense of the way that the novel operates, and how it portrays such significant issues as gender "to be." The central idea of the conclusion, then, is that, despite the preponderance of *Ulysses* scholarship, there are still unexplored avenues through which to interpret the novel. These avenues may be subtle, nuanced, even camouflaged, but through their exploration, scholars may further illuminate *Ulysses*.

## Chapter One: Dueling Discourses

As Stephen Dedalus makes apparent with his quote in “Telemachus,” “I am the servant of two masters, an English and an Italian. And a third, there is who wants me for odd jobs,” at the turn of the century in Dublin, there existed three major social-political factions: the British, the Catholic Church, and the Nationalist Party (James Joyce 20). Though there existed other parties, as well as divisions within the groups, collectively, these three factions informed and loomed over early 20<sup>th</sup> century Dublin culture (John Ranelagh 150). In order to account for the relation between *Ulysses*’ depiction of gender and the society in which it was produced, it is necessary, then, to examine each of these faction’s histories, observe their popular discourses, account for how gender was spoken of, and, then, consider how *Ulysses*’ portrayal corresponds to Dublin cultural conceptions of that which constitutes man and woman.

To begin, one must first situate Dublin culture historically. Following a period of financial growth and development at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to the city’s relationship with Britain, Dublin, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as Sean McMahan writes, had entered an extended period of economic malaise. The economic issues of the city were not so much a consequence of action, but inaction. While other cities like Belfast, Manchester, and Liverpool, “grew like Birmingham into recognizable cities” because of the way that they “partook of the advantages of the Industrial Revolution,” Dublin did not, or could not, industrialize in the same ways (McMahan 136). As an effect, the city, which was still reeling from the potato famine in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, descended into

economic depression, which was at its most acute in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the period when Joyce lived and wrote. Declan Kiberd describes the city at the time as:

a raw and desperate place: its death-rate (forty-four in every thousand of population) was worse than the slums of Calcutta. Almost one-third of its citizens lived in tenements (many officially listed as unfit for habitation), and over two-thirds of the tenement dwellers lived in a single room. On average, over fifty people lived in each tenement (Kiberd 219).

Turn of the century Dublin, then, was anything but cosmopolitan, or particularly modern. The city was depressed to such an extent that, at the dawn of World War I, Dublin remained far more preoccupied with its domestic concerns<sup>4</sup> (McMahon 169). With “unemployment high, wages low and tuberculosis rife,” the city’s eyes could not help but to stay turned inward, as its inhabitants sought economic relief (McMahon 167).

This economic turmoil affected turn of the century Dublin culture in a number of notable ways. Perhaps most importantly, in terms of gender relations, the city’s poverty placed women in a unique position. The majority of women, as Caitriona Clear writes, tended to the home, while their male counterparts labored. Whether merely as wives that tended to their children, or employed as maids and servants in “domestic services,” “most women carried out daily life-maintenance of cleaning, cooking, organizing and foraging, usually alongside looking after the young, old and sick” (Clear “Women’s Work”). As the chapter progresses, that Dublin’s economic situation affected women in this way proves of considerable significance for an understanding of the way that gender figured in the city at the turn of the century. The prevalence of women’s work in the home – Clear notes

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<sup>4</sup> With that said, Ireland did participate in World War I, and sent over 200,000 soldiers to the continent (McMahon 166).

that domestic services alone, which does not count women that stayed in their own homes, constituted “30 percent of the Irish female workforce” – suggests that, despite the rise in suffragism, and the number of prominent proto-feminist women leaders in the period, including Charlotte Grace O’Brien, Anne Doyle Wheeler, and Anna Parnell, women did not assume a “particularly influential” role in Dublin society (Clear “Women’s Work;” Mary Cullen *Women, Power and Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Ireland*). Instead, as Mary Cullen writes, women were “excluded from political life, whether by holding public office, or as members of parliaments, or as voters. They were barred from higher education and the professions. Titles and property passed to sons in preference to daughters” (Cullen “History Women and History Men: the politics of women’s history”). Therefore, before analysis of the ways that turn of the century Dublin spoke of gender even begins, one must note that, at the time *Ulysses* was written, Dublin women were markedly lacking in economic, political, and social privilege. With the majority of Dublin homes in poverty, women, even if it came “at the expense of any serious participation in the affairs of society,” were to stay at home and attempt to alleviate austerity (Cullen, “History Women”).

With a broad understanding of Dublin culture at the turn of the century established, the objective of this chapter, then, as the emphasis on language indicates, is to illuminate *how* the people of Dublin spoke of gender, and to what effect. As has been noted in the introduction, because of the many complications associated with an analysis of language, and the ways in which individuals speak, this chapter does not claim to, nor seek to, account for everyone who spoke, or every way that people spoke. Instead, through an examination of primary

resources, this chapter aims to account for the period's "popular discourse," or the predominant ways in which Dublin citizens spoke of gender. To this end – though there are exceptions – this chapter focuses on the various British, Catholic, and Nationalist newspapers of the period. The reason for the chapter's focus on newspapers is that, as Kiberd explains, due to Dublin's poverty, "most inhabitants of the city read only newspapers at the time of [*Ulysses*'] publication" (Kiberd 463). That is, as an effect of the city's economic situation, the majority of Dublin citizens did not read high literature or journals<sup>5</sup>; rather, because of issues associated with accessibility, as well as the ways that Dublin had created an "open literary market" with newspapers, in which any number of citizens could voice their opinions, newspapers emerged represented a burgeoning "mass culture" (Kiberd 464). As the axis of "mass culture," newspapers, then, served as the primary sources of information, news, and opinion for Dublin citizens, and thus, due to this central role in Dublin society, newspapers both reflect and produce the "popular discourse" to which this chapter refers. As commercial entities, their articles and essays not only cater to, and represent, the prevailing attitudes, views, and thoughts of the city on gender, but they also steer the direction of the conversation through their language and editorials. In performing this dual

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<sup>5</sup> That Dublin citizens did not read "high literature" was a source of consternation to many of the city's artists and intellectuals. Politician Douglas Hyde, for example, once censured Irish citizens for the way that, "one of the most reading and literary peoples has become one of the least studious and most un-literary, and how the present art products of one of the quickest, most sensitive, and most artistic races on earth are now only distinguished for their hideousness" (Hyde 527). W.B. Yeats famously echoes these sentiments in his 1919 poem "The Fisherman," in which he writes: "All day I'd looked in the face / What I had hoped it would be / To write for my own race / And the reality: / The living men that I hate / The dead man that I loved, The craven man in his seat / The insolent unreprieved / ... / And great Art beaten down" (Yeats 9-24).

function, newspapers thus illustrate the “popular discourse” of the period, and lend insight into who spoke of gender, how they spoke, and in what ways. Therefore, through an analysis of the three identified factions’ newspapers, this chapter seeks to construct an image of the way that gender figured in Dublin at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While this image, again, does not account for all beliefs in the period, because of the prominence of newspapers and their ability to reflect and produce popular discourse, it will allow for a modern reader to observe Dublin’s conception of gender in the period that Joyce wrote.

### *The British Perspective*

Leaving Nighttown, though still in “Circe’s” delirium, patrolling British soldiers, Private Compton and Carr, approach Bloom and Stephen. When Stephen drunkenly provokes Carr, telling him, “the tsar and the king of England have invented arbitration (*he taps his brow*). But in here it is I must kill the priest and king,” he sparks a violent confrontation (Joyce 553). Carr declares, “I’ll wring the neck of any fucking bastard says a word against my bleeding fucking king,” and proceeds to strike down the young protagonist who has refused to heed Bloom’s warning to “quiet down” (Joyce 558).

Although the primary function of this scene is to climactically unite Bloom and Stephen, as the former comes to the latter’s rescue, it likewise serves to represent Anglo-Irish relations within the period. Britain, still firmly in the “imperial century,” had cemented its status as the “workshop of the world,” and through its unrivaled military superiority, continued to dominate those countries

that it occupied (Martin Lynn 101). Like the many other colonized nations, within Ireland, this imperial presence was highly contested (Patrick Cain and Antony Hopkins 237-239). Britain's implementation of English as the official language, its minimal aid during the potato famine, and its denial of home rule came to represent not only a tyranny over the future of Ireland, but a suppression of its past, as well (Graham Davis 86). Thus, within Ireland, there existed a strong anti-British sentiment, which became manifested in the formation of a Nationalist party, a burgeoning "Gaelic pride" movement, as well as a social push toward a "De-Anglicization" of Ireland (Ranelagh 151-153). Yet, in spite of local hostility toward the British, there also remained a significant number of sympathizers who aligned themselves with the occupying force. The sympathizers, many of them Protestant, fought against Home Rule, and sought to keep Ireland under colonial representation – a desire that heightened tension between pro-British and Nationalist citizens, and incited the latter to the point that they would rebel against their colonial occupiers in the 1916 Easter Rising, and then later declare war upon them, in the 1919 War of Independence (Ranelagh 163). Due to this considerable presence – both in terms of military force and the number of those who aligned themselves to that force – the British, then, played a dominant, determining role in turn of the century Dublin society. Therefore, in order to recreate the popular discourse of the period, it is necessary to examine how the British spoke of gender, and in what ways.

Before this examination of British popular discourse may proceed, it is important to first contextualize the faction's language both culturally and historically. At the turn of the century in Britain, social understanding of gender

underwent distinct change. Perhaps the most significant change was the move from separate spheres ideology to a more egalitarian perspective on the role of men and women. As Ben Griffin writes, following the American Revolution, which was framed in terms of a familial dispute, there emerged a “gender panic” in Britain (Griffin 8). This panic sparked the formation of a hierarchy in the home in which the husband was to assume a position of authority, while the wife was to serve as his support (Griffin 38). Industrialization in the 1820s served to bolster this dynamic, as new employment opportunities rendered the husband the provider, and made the wife the head of the household (Griffin 40). Following the industrial revolution, the growth of an Evangelical movement in Britain further reinforced rigid gender roles, as it advocated for a literal interpretation of the Bible, one in which women were to regard their husbands as the “source of law” (Griffin 56). Operating in unison, these developments, along with others, functioned to produce separate spheres ideology, or the belief that man was to occupy the public sphere, while women were to stay in the domestic (Brian Harrison 12). The implications of separate spheres for both men and women in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were multitudinous. Under the gendered ideology, Stephanie Coontz explains, men and women were understood to have fundamentally different natures and were dictated roles based on their perceived capabilities (Coontz 170).

In an 1865 essay titled “Of Queen’s Gardens,” John Ruskin eloquently outlines these roles. Ruskin writes:

Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his

energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, — and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial: — to him, therefore, the failure, the offense, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued, often misled, and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense. This is the true nature of home — it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division... This, then, I believe to be, — will you not admit it to be — the woman's true place and power? (Ruskin 69)

For an understanding of separate spheres, Ruskin's account carries great significance. As the reader observes, though separate spheres ideology was contingent upon an identification of difference between men and women, it did not necessarily posit that one was superior to the other. Instead, as Ruskin communicates, both men and women, at least nominally, had power: the former were "active, progressive, and defensive," and thus took public roles, while the latter, imbued with an ability to rule were to manage the home. However, in spite of the apparent equality of separate spheres, as Coontz notes, any sense of egalitarianism was more or less illusory. Women's "power" lay not in any autonomy, agency, or control of self, but rather, as Ruskin's passage makes clear, their ability to serve, or "praise" their husbands (Coontz 164-166). In this way, though women may have ostensibly possessed "power," it was in name only; not allowed to vote, take certain jobs, or even gain custody of their children in cases of violence against them, in separate spheres, women were made second-class citizens to their male peers (Coontz 167). As this chapter progresses, this illusory

power becomes crucial to recognize. The British, as the reader will see, deployed the dynamic in more ways than one.

To return to historical and cultural context, notably, beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a push away from separate spheres. Women, dissatisfied with their role, began to advocate for equal rights, perhaps most significantly, the right to vote. Banding together under the name “the Suffragettes,” women fought against the idea – to use H.H. Asquith’s quote – that they were “uneducated, politically inexperienced and irrational” (Asquith in Harrison 170). The Suffragettes lobbied for reform, and although they did not receive the right to vote until 1928, the growth of their movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century represented a shift in gender understanding. Out of suffragism, men and women could no longer be seen as distinctly separate beings that fulfilled predetermined roles. Instead, through new conceptions, ideas, and awareness of gender, there emerged a need to reassess how man and woman were “to be.”

Within the British faction of Dublin popular discourse, the emergence of suffragism manifests in a number of intriguing ways. To turn to one of the most widely circulated British newspapers in Dublin, *The Daily Express*, there appear a number of articles on the importance of women’s social economic, and political equality. *The Daily Express* printed, for example, such writings as the Provost of Trinity College’s speech to the university’s first graduating class of women. From the transcript, the Provost encourages and celebrates the women, stating:

It is astonishing, after years of obstruction and delay, to notice what rapid progress is at last being made in the direction of women’s education in Trinity College...I had the pleasure of congratulating a lady Junior Sophister, and three Junior Freshwomen on their first appearance tackling the examination in the same hall as the young men (applause)...Another

most important part and valuable part of this report is that which deals with athletics. They are quite as important for girls as for boys. We all know the games of childhood are essential and conducive to their growth, and it is quite a mistake to suppose that these should cease with childhood. (“Rutland School Prize Distribution” 7)

This speech, and *The Daily Express*’s decision to publish it, marks the gradual movement toward women’s rights – a movement signified by the desire to see women’s social progress (a term that the Provost himself uses to describe women’s access to a Trinity education), but also real, tangible efforts to affect that change. These efforts are further evidenced in such rhetoric as a male journalist’s assessment of women in a *Daily Express* article, in which he writes, “all assumptions of the mental and moral superiority of man to woman must be abandoned as totally false; or, if partially true, totally irrelevant” (“Women’s Suffrage: Meeting in Dublin” 7). While the journalist subtly leaves the possibility that women are, in fact, inferior, his dismissal of that possibility as “totally irrelevant” is what ultimately matters. Through his dismissal, the journalist identifies the popular conception of woman and rejects it, thereby affirming the notion that women ought to have the same rights as men. Other articles likewise serve to reinforce this developing language of women’s validation, including one 1903 *Dublin Express* piece by T. Sharper Knowlson that extols women’s social prominence in the United States, and the way that, there, “woman is a leader, and has been for generations” (Knowlson 7). Notably, Knowlson concludes with the assertion that the respect and power afforded women in the United States represents an attractive alternative to their current status in British and Irish culture (Knowlson 8). Along with these essays, there are also a number of articles that recognize and champion real moments of change, including one *Daily*

*Express* essay from 1921 that celebrates women's newfound right to serve on a jury. Although the article assumes a vaguely paternalistic tone, as it describes the women as "special" and "petit," it is also firmly supportive. The journalist writes, "all looked eagerly expectant as to what was likely to take place and what would be expected of them in discharging a new duty to their country" ("The Jurywoman: First Appearance" 6). By referring to the assignment as a "duty," and one to which the women were "eager" to attend, the journalists renders the scene in such a way that the women are portrayed as capable citizens – ones that deserve the ability to exercise their rights. When taken together, these articles demonstrate a discernible desire for women's equality. With the Suffragettes' growing influence, women could no longer be confined to the home and relegated to the sphere of domesticity. Instead, as these articles make clear, women were not only active participants in society, but lauded ones at that.

Yet, while there existed this desire for women's equality, as well as tangible efforts toward the attainment of their rights, it seems that the desire was more ideal than real. When one examines the British popular discourse of Dublin at the turn of the century, it soon becomes apparent that men and women remained in separation. Though subtle, this continued separation manifests in the way that men and women wrote, and thus participated in popular discourse. Men, as *The Daily Express* and equally popular *Irish Times* evince, generated the majority of a given British newspaper's content, and were free to touch upon any subject that interested them, whether that be adolescent development, divorce, or developments of the day, like a burgeoning interest in eugenics ("The Problem of Early Manhood" 1; "Divorce and Re-Marriage" 2; "Eugenics Section" 10).

Women, by contrast, may have spoken in popular discourse, but they distinctly lacked agency and autonomy. For, while women's writing - their "speech" - was included in the newspapers, it was not necessarily their own. Instead, women's writing was expressed through a conventionalized language of femininity, and produced in separation. To illustrate, *The Irish Times* employed women writers whose work would appear in a demarcated section titled, "A Page for Woman." On these "Pages for Women," the writers would address such issues as - to take from a random page written by Molly Bawn,<sup>6</sup> and published on October 17, 1908 - "Triple Wedding on a Liner," "Cookery recipes," and "Where Girls Sell Their Hair" (Bawn 15). Such banal subject matter was not anomalous. From 1899-1920, a section devoted to women appears at least once weekly in *The Irish Times*, with articles on the best winter garments, the production of silk stockings, and the sanctity of marriage (Bawn 12; "Women and their World" 14; "The Sanctity of Marriage" 15). As the reader observes from the limited range of topics, as well as the distinction of who writes the articles, and for whom they are written, though women may have been included in popular discourse, they remained separate and unequal. Limited to fashions, art, and society, women's language was restricted to the point of insignificance. Women could not and did not speak on issues beyond those that were recognizably, conventionally feminine, and thus they were unable to assert their own opinions on the matter of the day in a free, and constructive way. In popular discourse, women, then, lacked an autonomous voice, even as they were speaking.

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<sup>6</sup> "Molly Bawn" was, in fact, the pseudonym of Margaret Wolfe Hungerford, a prominent Irish novelist most famous for her novel of the same name.

This lack of an autonomous voice had a number of consequences for women. Most immediately, as has been noted, because women were limited to such subjects as art, society, and fashion, their participation in popular discourse was severely compromised. Without the ability to speak on matters beyond the traditionally feminine, women could not engage in a dialogue with their male counterparts, and offer their own opinions on the matters of the day. Women were thus repressed dialogically, in that their speech was limited by conventions of acceptable femininity. More subtly, as an effect of women's lack of an autonomous voice, they became "spoken of" by men. That is, to return to the difference in the way that men and women spoke in the period, because women's writing only appeared in demarcated sections, filtered through a conventionalized language of femininity, in popular discourse, men spoke of women and offered their conception of "what woman is." Although this dynamic led to the pro-equality rhetoric identified above, it also problematically resulted in rhetoric that proposed and promoted an idea of women's inherent inferiority. In an *Irish Times* article from 1894, for example, writer Glencolumbkille opines, "Woman is the queerest and drollest creature in all creation. Nobody, not even herself can explain her motives. Sentiment is her forte, and practical common sense her *bede suoir*. Her complex nature is composed of the most opposite elements" (Glencolumbkille 4). Moreover, there likewise appear a number of advertisements and essays in both *The Irish Times* and *The Daily Express* that invoke the 19<sup>th</sup> century belief popularized by Sigmund Freud, that women's physical bodies affected their psychological condition (Freud *Studies in Hysteria*). One such advertisement from *The Irish Times* posits that women suffer necessarily due to

their lesser physiology: “She [woman] must pay for her privileges. Nature exacts the prices in bodily sufferings, which even the healthiest woman occasionally endures, and must always dread – especially in the years when she is entering middle age” (“It is the Woman who Pays” 4). Reinforcing this notion, a 1914 essay from *The Irish Times* offers a medical doctor’s views on the “peculiarities of the fair sex.” The doctor claims, “Heretofore mankind has been greatly puzzled by the eccentric foibles and peculiarities of the fair sex... Sometimes they have given rise to hilarious mirth, and too often to even more unpleasant condemnation. But the poor things really can’t help it, for scientific investigation has proved that all these peculiarities are connected with the origin of the human race” (“Peculiarities of the Fair Sex” 2). Effectively, the doctor proposes that, while women are indeed “eccentric,” “peculiar,” and often anger-inducing, they cannot help themselves: biology has rendered them in such a way that they are “naturally” different – physiology has determined that they act in those ways that both confuse and anger men.

That women were spoken of in this way, as lesser, separate, and essentially different beings, carries great significance. These articles and advertisements demonstrate that, while there existed a push toward women’s rights, men and women remained distinct subjects. Through the ability to speak freely, men attained and retained power, while women, lacking agency, were unable to participate in popular discourse. Without this ability to participate freely, women became compromised: though they featured in popular discourse, because they could not assert themselves beyond those codified subjects deemed appropriate for them, they were effectively denied autonomy, and rendered

beholden to the words of men. In this way, the British popular discourse thus reflects Ruskin's vision of separate spheres. Just as in the Victorian ideology, women ostensibly possessed power in that they were present in popular discourse, and had authority over their "Page for Women." Yet, when one considers the dynamics underlying this notion of women's authority, it becomes clear that their power, like the "power" of the domestic sphere, was illusory. Confined to the "Page for Women," women not only lacked the ability to engage men in popular discourse, but they also spoke in a language that was distinctly not their own.

For this thesis' cultural interpretation of *Ulysses*, this dynamic is of considerable importance. As the reader observes from the British popular discourse, gender existed in paradox. At once, there is an identifiable discussion of the need for women's rights, and the social necessity of equality; yet, there is also the matter of women's placement into demarcated sections, and a plethora of male writing that effectively speaks of them. To return to gender criticism on *Ulysses*, women's continued inequality – whether explicitly manifested in such writing as that of Glencolumbkille's – or implicitly asserted through women's denial of agency within popular discourse – reflects the ideological gender suppression that critics such as Christine Froula, Bonnie Kime Scott, and Sean P. Murphy have identified, as it also points to an issue of dialogism, or speech. Through the possession of an autonomous voice, men maintained their power and constructed an image of "what woman is." Though this construction was, in part, positive, women's distinct lack of agency renders the pro-equality sentiment largely irrelevant. Without agency and autonomous voice, women could not truly participate in popular discourse. Therefore, within the British faction, gender

struggles manifested not only in barriers to women's rights, but in the ways that they could assert themselves dialogically; that is, in how they could speak.

*The Catholic Perspective*

In the "Hades" episode, Bloom accompanies several other men to Paddy Dignam's funeral. During the Catholic service, Bloom considers the proceedings and their theological significance. As the priest begins the ritual, Bloom thinks, "Makes them feel important to be prayed over in Latin. Requiem mass. Crape weepers. Blackedged notepaper. Your name on the altarlist. Want to feed well, sitting in there all the morning in the gloom kicking his heels waiting for the next please. Eyes of a toad too. What swells him up that way? Molly gets swelled after cabbage" (Joyce 100). Here, Bloom takes the scripture and reorganizes it into his own terms. Though distinctly scatological, Bloom's thought communicates the heft of those Latin words, and the way that they lend the biological a touch of the divine.

As "Hades" makes apparent, however irreverently, historically, the Catholic Church has loomed over Ireland. Socially, politically, and ideologically, the institution has informed Irish self-perception and constructed a social order.

Timothy J. White writes:

The faithfulness of the Irish to their religious heritage has historically provided the church tremendous institutional power. In the past the Church has been able to utilize its power to transmit its message effectively from the pulpit and through its control of the schools and the administration of social service. The result has been that Ireland is one of the most religious societies on earth. The Church has been able to

influence the values and behavior of the Irish people to conform to its doctrine and teachings (White 48).

For the Irish at the turn of the century, the Church's power proved something of a double-edged sword. As White explains, in the creation of an Irish free state, the Church acted as a means through which the Nationalists could unite the Irish under a "common Catholic identity" and "reinvent Gaelic Ireland" (White 48). Though the Church did not condone the Nationalists' violent efforts, particularly at the top of its hierarchy, because of the Nationalist's persistent use of the Irish Catholic identity as a unifying banner, the Church was seen as a key component of Ireland's successful independence and formation as a free state in 1922 (White 49). Due to this perception, the Church gained tremendous social and political power within the nascent Irish Republic (White 50). Through its cultural cachet, the Church established appropriate modes of behavior, regulated subjects, and enforced a system of belief based on its tenets (White 50). At the turn of the century in Dublin, then, the Church's rule was effectively law.

The Church's social authority and cultural prominence had several implications for gender relations. As Catriona Beaumont writes, in its power, the Church asserted a singular image of woman, one defined by tradition and modesty. Woman, Pope Leo XIII declared in 1891, was "by her nature fitted for home work and it is this which is best adapted to preserve her modesty and promote the good upbringing of the children as well as the family" (Pope Leo XIII in Beaumont 564). A point then echoed by Pope Pius XI in 1931, "mothers will above all devote their work to the home and the things connected with it." As the reader observes, for the Catholics at the turn of the century, there remained a strong belief in separate spheres. When read following an analysis of the British

perspective, the presence of this belief represents an intriguing difference. Unlike the British, within the Irish Catholic faction, there is not a pro-suffragism turn. Instead, as Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI's language evinces, the Catholics continued to believe that women were inherently different, and thus, ought to serve different roles than that of men. Of course, while separate spheres ultimately proved to resonate in British popular discourse, despite the development of suffragism, the Catholic's explicit upholding of the ideology's tenets poses an intriguing question: how were women represented in popular discourse within a faction that was overtly pro-separate spheres?

Intriguingly, despite this explicitly pro-separate spheres belief that distinguishes the Catholics from the British, when the former faction's popular discourse is examined, their understanding of gender proves to follow the patterns discerned in the latter party. Much like the British, within Catholic popular discourse, there is a considerable amount of writing on women's involvement in the traditionally male public sphere. There are, for example, articles in *The Irish Catholic* on women running a training center for young girls that have recently moved to Dublin, Nuns in Siberia that have "suffered for the faith," as well as essays that argue the need for restaurants like the ones in France that not only employ women, but actively welcome and accommodate women laborers ("A Good Work: St. Kevin's House" 1; "Nuns in Siberia" 6; "Restaurants for Work-Women" 5). Moreover, there are also essays on women's strength and valor. Although many of these essays often focus on revered Catholic women, like Joan of Arc – "The enemy so long attacked and besieged the assailants that we were assured by General Dunois that six hundred of the very men who a few days

before would have run away were now ready in the presence of Joan, to face all forces of the English army” – there also exist somewhat incongruous, though still relevant, features like a 1903 piece that details the life of Elizabeth Tait, a gold medal mountain climber, described as in possession of “exceptional genius” (Robert Sillard 5; “Record Mountain Climb: The Champion Lady” 3). When taken together, these articles suggest a number of things. Perhaps most importantly, the rhetoric shows that, in spite of the Church’s overt belief in separate spheres, there existed, at least on some level, a championing of women, and, significantly, not only women in the home. Instead, as the language on Joan of Arc and Tait illustrate, however traditional the Church may have been, there was acknowledgment among its followers that women could embody such hallowed characteristics as courage and leadership, and participate in such demanding activities as outdoor sport. In this way, though the Catholics did not historically observe a rise in the same pro-equality rhetoric at the turn of the century that the British did, within their popular discourse, there is evidence of that same language which celebrates women in everyday society.

Beyond championing women, Catholic popular discourse likewise mirrors that of the British in that it also features essays that argue for women’s rights. Though it must be noted that these essays only begin to appear around 1910, following a period in which there is extensive writing against women’s rights - including such rhetoric as that of Cardinal Gibbons, who declared in an 1894 edition of *The Irish Catholic*, “I hope the day will never come when she can vote, and if the right of suffrage is granted her, I hope she reject it, even though there are some misguided women who think they want it” – the presence of such

writing remains significant nonetheless (Cardinal Gibbons 3). Through essays in *The Irish Catholic* like “Women’s Rights,” which claims “it seems decidedly absurd and out of place that a woman of brains and education, say like Lady Aberdeen or any other of the philanthropic, literary or educational women of the day should be ruthlessly denied a vote when it is ungrudgingly accorded to totally illiterate and often sottish and brutal men of the lowest classes,” there emerges within Catholic popular discourse a sentiment of equality, one placed in diametric opposition to the earlier language of figures like Cardinal Gibbons (“Women’s Rights” 2). This pro-equality sentiment also manifests in writing on other efforts, including women’s greater involvement in the Church. A 1920 article in *The Irish Catholic*, for example, reports, “Concerning the position of women in the Councils and Ministrations of the Church, the Conference recommends: women should be admitted to those Councils of the Church to which laymen are committed and on equal terms” (“Women Preachers” 2). Although Samuel Johnson’s famous quip on women preachers is noted – “Sir, a woman’s preaching is like a dog walking on his hind legs; it is not well done, but you are surprised that it is done at all!” – ultimately, the article proves positive, concluding with the succinct summary, “Opportunity should be given to women as to men.”

Furthermore, in a sign of *The Irish Catholic*’s own progression, it also featured women writers. These women, like Kathleen Cooney, would write articles on such theologically important subjects as Christmas, and offer thoughts on what the celebration meant, in terms of both the personal and the communal (Cooney 13).

Whether they present a pro-equality position, argued for women's inclusion in the Church, or the employment of women writers, when taken together, these articles serve to suggest that, while the Church remained fervent in their belief of separate spheres, the belief did not necessarily manifest in the way that one might expect. Instead, though there may have been instances of oppressive rhetoric, like that of Cardinal Gibbons, there existed a considerable amount of writing that celebrated women and their value in society, and asserted the necessity of their equal rights ("The Late Mr. Taffe" 3; "Sister Gilbert and her Irish Benefactors" 3). Thus, in spite of the Church's explicit belief in separate sphere's ideology, their popular discourse comes to, effectively, parallel that of the British. For, even without suffragism, within the Catholic popular discourse, there exists, at one level, a dialogue that seeks to elevate and praise women, rather than deny them in the way that a belief in separate spheres would suggest.

However, despite the presence of this pro-equality rhetoric, when one examines the Catholic popular discourse holistically, it becomes clear that separate spheres continued to persist. Further mirroring the British, separate spheres manifests in Catholic popular discourse through a stratification of men and women's writing. Though women's writing in *The Irish Catholic* does not appear in the same demarcated style as that of *The Irish Times*, or *The Daily Express*, women within the paper were allowed to touch upon such subjects as holidays, martyrs, and, if a Nun, personal accounts, but little beyond that (Eleanor Post "Our Lady of Miracles" 3; Sister Gilbert 5). Limited to these topics, women were effectively confined to an inoffensive, distinctly Catholic language that served to either reify the sanctity of the Church, or to promote religious holidays.

These women were, therefore, disempowered in the same way as their British sisters. Lacking the ability to speak on matters outside of those deemed appropriate for them, Catholic women lost agency in popular discourse, as well as the autonomy to address the issues that most affected them, like suffragism or marriage rights. Men spoke of them, and thus there appear essays like the Archbishop of Tuam's 1910 *Irish Catholic* essay, in which he calls for women to "stamp out any foreign fashions not consistent with that delicate female modesty which is the fairest ornament of woman" (Archbishop of Tuam 4). As the reader observes from such rhetoric, for the Catholics, women were not only beholden to a male authority, but unable to even assert a sense of self. Their clothing, like their writing, may have been theirs in name, but in name only. Thus, to return to the broader thesis, Catholic popular discourse ultimately proves to reinforce the centrality of speech to gender dynamics at the turn of the century in Dublin. Women were praised, celebrated, and ostensibly included, yet, when one examines the nature of popular discourse more closely, it is soon evident that, while these women were both present and recognized by the public, they too were dialogically repressed, as their speaking remained in a separate sphere.

When the various aspects of the Catholic perspective are considered, the faction's perspective on gender presents a distinctly complicated, yet familiar, case. At once, in Catholic popular discourse, there exists a well-documented belief in the necessity of separate spheres; a language that celebrates women; and a dynamic within the newspapers that denies women agency and the ability to address subjects beyond those deemed "acceptable" for a woman speaker. The Catholic perspective, then, echoes that of the British, as it also lends insight into

the ideology that informed gender relations at the turn of the century: due to the long-standing belief that women's place was in the home, it seems that, while there existed a movement towards women's equality, tradition ultimately overshadowed modernity. That is, for the Catholics (and, if it can be assumed, the British, as well), the traditional belief in men's superiority and autonomy was ingrained to such an extent that, despite the burgeoning desire for women's rights, women remained seen as distinct (and lesser) subjects, who lacked both the intelligence as well as the mental and physical fortitude to participate in popular discourse, and offer their thoughts on the matters of the day. Therefore, what the reader observes in analysis of the Catholic popular discourse is a traditional belief continuing to influence a modern perspective. New attitudes may have emerged, but those embedded thoughts continued to persist. Thus, complexity marks the Catholic perspective. The nature of the Catholic faith denied women's agency and participation, even as it allowed for their praise and inclusion.

### *The Nationalist Perspective*

Though Stephen clarifies two of his "masters" to a confused Haines – "the British imperial state" and "the holy Roman apostolic Church" – the third is left unidentified, referred to merely as a group that wants Stephen for "odd jobs" (Joyce 20). Despite the lack of direct address, this third "master" is the Nationalist party. A group dedicated to the liberation of Ireland, the Nationalist perspective pervades *Ulysses*, featuring most prominently in the "Cyclops" episode. Speaking in Gaelic, the episode's Citizen embodies the core of Nationalist ideology as he

declares, “*Sinn Fein! Sinn Fein amhain!* The friends we love are by our side and the foes we hate before us” (Joyce 293).

A faction comprised of various political organizations and groups, the “Nationalist Party” refers to those that fought against the British colonial presence, and sought to establish Irish Home Rule. The Nationalist party first emerged in 1873, when Isaac Butt founded the Home Rule League. With the League, Butt proposed that, Ireland, rather than secede from Britain, would create an “Irish parliament, subservient to Westminster, [which] would have control of Ireland’s domestic affairs, [while] leaving Westminster responsible for foreign and defence matters” (Ranelagh, 133). Despite the relative conservatism of Butt’s initial proposal, as the Nationalist party developed in the ensuing years, the faction’s demands and actions became more radical. Split into various groups following charismatic leader Charles Stewart Parnell’s controversial affair in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Arthur Griffin’s Sinn Fein party rose to prominence, and won the Irish 1918 general election (Ranelagh 188). Uniting the once split constitutional and revolutionary Nationalists, following the 1916 Easter Rising, Griffith, along with Eamon de Valera, and Michael Collins, founded a new government, Dáil Éireann, which declared independence from Britain in 1919 (Ranelagh 189). After more than two years of fighting, the Nationalist Irish Republican Army secured victory in 1921, thus granting Ireland nationhood, and home rule (Ranelagh 207). In the formation of turn of the century Dublin history and culture, the Nationalists, then, played a central role. The faction not only ensured a Free State, but brought the nation together under a Gaelic identity (Ranelagh 155).

Notably, women in the Nationalist faction occupied a distinctly different position than that of their British or Catholic counterparts. As Brittany Columbus writes, women not only contributed and participated in the development of the Nationalist party, but were encouraged to do so by the men of the group (Columbus 1-2). Women, for example, were accepted into prominent Nationalist organizations like the Gaelic League, which, significantly, “admitted women from the beginning on equal terms to men,” and were thus given the opportunity to affect change in Ireland (Bernadette Whelan and Mary O’Dowd 1). Among these changes, women helped to organize the Irish Volunteers, who lobbied and canvassed for home rule; women participated in the Easter Rising, which was seen as a turning point in Anglo-Irish relations; and in a famous act, they helped to free the editors of *The United Ireland*, whom the British had imprisoned due to their denouncement of the Coercion Act (Whelan and O’Dowd 1-3; J.A. Hollander 62). Moreover, women also helped to shape Nationalist identity and ideology. With groups like Inghinide h-Ereann, the “Daughters of Erin,” for example, women “stressed the importance” of a traditional “Irish life,” as they also lobbied for “a more prominent role for women in Irish society” (Columbus 3). When the reader considers the way that the British and the Catholics viewed women historically, these various examples of women’s participation in the Nationalist party present a stark contrast to the previously explored factions. Unlike the British, who observed the rise of suffragism, but remained pro-separate spheres, or the Catholics, who observed no such rise, and were explicitly pro-separate spheres, the Nationalists clearly involved women in the growth and development of their party. As Bernadette Whelan and Mary O’Dowd write, “it is

evident that women were extensively involved in many aspects of the key [Nationalist] political events, movements and organizations between 1912-1922,” and so, the Nationalists raise an intriguing question: if women were involved in the party, how, then, does the reader consider this involvement in light of the patterns identified in the British and Catholic factions? (Whelan and O’Dowd 5). That is, does the evidence of women’s involvement in the Nationalist faction imply that, while the British and Catholics may have upheld separate spheres, the Nationalists achieved something approaching gender equality? And, if so, does that equality overshadow the patterns found in the British and Catholic perspective, thus indicating that turn of the century Dublin was more egalitarian than either faction’s popular discourse suggests? As the following examination of popular discourse will show, the answer is more complex than one might suppose.

At one level, the Nationalist perspective suggests gender equality in that, unlike the British or Catholic popular discourses, within the Nationalist popular discourse, there not only appear instances of women writing, but women writing with definitive agency and autonomy. This distinctive element of Nationalist popular discourse most clearly manifests in the monthly journal, *Bean Na h-Eireann*, or “The Daughters of Ireland.” Both radical and widely circulated, *Bean Na h-Eireann* was dedicated to issues of Nationalism, Feminism, and the return to a Gaelic identity (Columbus 1). Frequently, these focuses were intertwined, resulting in such writing as, “It is disappointing to find women simply wanting to follow blindly in men’s footsteps instead of profiting by their experience and avoiding their mistakes” (“Editorial Notes” 1). Likewise, there also appear essays that examine how modern Irish women, through Nationalism, could achieve an

empowered social position. Hanna Skeehey-Skeffington, for example, writes, “It is for Irishwomen to set about working out their political salvation until the Parliamentarian and Sinn Fein women alike possess the vote, the keystone of citizenship” (Skeffington 5). To return to the patterns so far identified, this language carries great significance for a number of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, as the reader observes, these Nationalist women were not limited to issues of art, society, and fashion, as in the case of the British popular discourse, or an inoffensive language of feminine piety, as in the case of the Catholic popular discourse. Instead, representing an extreme departure from the standards of the former factions, these women engaged in issues of suffragism, Nationalism, and the relationship between men and women, and thus evince a voice imbued with the agency that their counterparts lacked. With this agency, this freedom to make such claims as, “in ancient Ireland, women occupied a prouder, freer position than they now hold even in the most modern states...it is through the medium of the vote alone that the party can achieve any measure of success,” the Nationalist women thus complicate a reading of gender relations at the turn of the century in Dublin (Skeffington 5). Speaking with autonomy and a kind of self-sovereignty, and participating in Nationalist popular discourse, the women of *Bean Na h-Eireann* challenge of whether the constructions of women’s language were as restricted as the British and Catholic faction’s popular discourses suggest. For, as the nature of the writing featured in *Bean Na h-Eireann* makes evident, not all women adhered to that conventionalized language of femininity.

Yet, while *Bean Na h-Eireann* presents an intriguing counter to the patterns so far identified, when one examines the broader Nationalist popular

discourse, the faction's apparent gender equality proves misleading. Turning to the two most widely circulated Nationalist newspapers of the period, *The Evening Telegraph* and *The Irish Independent*, neither paper evinces the same agential women speakers found in *Bean Na h-Eireann* (Padraig Yeats 40; Fearghal McGarry 70). Instead, much like the British and the Catholic newspapers, there appears that same paradoxical dynamic, in which men speak of women effusively, while the women writers are confined to a conventionalized language of femininity. To illustrate, *The Evening Telegraph*, at one level, features pro-equality essays, including this 1890 piece on a women's labor strike, "These girls, we do not hesitate to say, have set a good example to their sex, who have long been the helpless slaves of the labour market," a description of events that not only recognizes the way that women have been marginalized by a patriarchal labor system, but celebrates their actions against its injustices ("The First Girls' Strike" 2). *The Irish Independent* likewise conveys this egalitarian sentiment, with essays like this 1920 piece that argues the need for women's education: "Young ladies could be taught to read intelligently, to speak grammatically, to think logically, to write legibly in a few lessons. That would be the foundation – but alas! Where is such an education to be found? She must now do with the minimum...Plain cookery and housekeeping" ("Some Thoughts on the Educated Girl" 4). However, just as in the case of the British and Catholic popular discourses, despite signs of a pro-equality position, women were not afforded agency within the papers. The women were, instead, placed into demarcated "Ladies' Sections," just as they were in the British newspapers. Though these sections carried different names – in *The Telegraph*, the section was titled

“Fashions of the Week,” and in *The Independent*, “in Woman’s realm” – their function was the same: women seen as fundamentally different were not to engage in the matters of the day, but rather, were expected to speak through a language of conventionalized femininity (“Fashions of the Week” 2 April 1892 7; Lady Molly 3). Thus, while *Bean Na h-Eireann* showcased women with agency, the women of *The Telegraph* and *Independent* remained firmly in the domestic. In place of suffrage, feminism, and National identity, the women of these papers addressed such subjects as “summer hats,” and appropriate “Tea-Time Talk” (Lady Molly 4; “Tea-Time Talk” 5).

If the women of *Bean Na h-Eireann* spoke with agency, and the women of *The Evening Telegraph* and *The Irish Independent* spoke through a constrained, conventionalized language of femininity, the question then becomes: how do we interpret gender relations in the Nationalist Perspective? To return to the beginning of this chapter, the answer lies in the nature of popular discourse. Popular discourse, as the chapter established, refers to the *predominant* ways in which people spoke, and the prevailing means through which they understood an idea or concept. Decidedly normative, popular discourse, again, does not reflect all who spoke, but rather, *those who spoke in the majority*. With this definition in mind, it seems that, despite the presence of journals like *Bean Na h-Eireann*, as well as historical accounts of women’s participation in Nationalist causes, the Nationalist perspective proves just as traditionally gender stratified as that of the British and Catholic factions. For, while *Bean Na h-Eireann* may have existed as a Nationalist newspaper, it was not, in fact, representative of the faction’s popular discourse. Instead, with significantly less circulation than either *The Evening*

*Telegraph* or *The Irish Independent*, and an audience that was, by and large, limited to women, *Bean Na h-Eireann* was a more or less marginal publication (Yeats 40; McGarry 70). The journal may have touched upon the matters of the day, but because it was so specialized, it was not a part of the public conversation in the same way as *The Telegraph* and *The Independent* were. Therefore, though the women of *Bean Na h-Eireann* may have written essays that argued for suffragism, in the Nationalist popular discourse, there continued to appear writing that openly mocked women's attempts at attaining the vote, like Thomas More's satirical poem in *The Evening Telegraph*, in which he writes:

Hurrah then for the Petticoats!  
 To them we pledge our free-bor votes;  
 We'll have all she and only she –  
 Part blues shall act as “best debaters”  
 Old dowagers our Bishops be  
 And termagants our agitators  
 ....  
 And mid our Unions Joyal chorus,  
 Reign jollily for ever over us. (More 3)

When the reader considers how much greater *The Telegraph* and the *Independent*'s circulation were, when compared to *Bean Na h-Eireann*, it becomes clear that this type of dismissive language reflected how the Nationalist majority saw women. Just as in the case of the British or the Catholics, within Nationalist popular discourse, women were to remain in their “Ladies' Sections,” while the men addressed the issues of the day – even those that directly affected women, like the vote. In this way, the Nationalist perspective mirrors that of the British and Catholics, while *Bean Na h-Eireann* proves something of an anomaly. The women of the journal may have had agency among themselves, but in popular discourse – in the majority – they remained dialogically repressed in that

they were expected to speak through that same conventionalized language of femininity through which British and Catholic women spoke. Thus, while women may have had a more participative role in the Nationalist faction, ultimately, as Janine Booth writes, one observes that “support for women’s rights” was never, in fact, one of the Nationalists’ “priorities” (Booth “Women in Irish Nationalist Movement 1900-1916”).

Perhaps the best way to understand the role of women in the Nationalist faction is to consider Cathleen Ni Houlihan. A mythical emblem, Cathleen Ni Houlihan represents Ireland personified as a woman. Traditionally, Declan Kiberd writes, Cathleen Ni Houlihan has been deployed as a rallying point in Nationalist politics. Figured as a woman that the male Britain has victimized, young Nationalist men were to unite around Cathleen Ni Houlihan and win back her freedom “if necessary by death” – a conceit made manifest in W.B Yeats play, “Cathleen Ni Houlihan,” which riotously encouraged men to sacrifice themselves for their mother country (Dr. P.J. Matthews “Literature and 1916”). For an understanding of Nationalist gender relations, the prominence of Cathleen Ni Houlihan is of considerable importance. At one level, under the terms of the Cathleen Ni Houlihan conceit, women come to occupy a central position. Not only is a woman rendered the emblem of Ireland, but she is also made key to Ireland’s freedom. Yet, as the reader observes in the sacrificial element of Cathleen Ni Houlihan, her centrality does not necessarily render her a figure of agency or power. Instead, as Cathleen Ni Houlihan is a woman who needs to be saved, she is implicitly dependent on male sovereignty. As an effect, femininity for the Nationalists proves unvalued; if the Nationalists were to redeem Cathleen

Ni Houlihan from her disgrace, the men of the faction were to don a kind of hyper-masculinity (Kiberd 239). Thus, as Dr. P.J Matthews writes, Cathleen Ni Houlihan represents “a rather disabling notion of female possibility. The only option open to the female character in this instance is to inspire male heroic action” (Matthews “Literature”). If the reader interprets Cathleen Ni Houlihan as a symbolic reflection of Nationalist thought, then the character helps to illuminate the apparent paradox within the Nationalist perspective. Like Cathleen Ni Houlihan, though the Nationalists well-documented history of women’s involvement in the faction ostensibly presents evidence of equality, when the broader context is examined, any notion of egalitarianism proves misrepresentative of the Nationalist perspective at the turn of the century. For, in spite of signs that indicate women’s substantial, essential role in the formation of the Nationalist party, that role was not necessarily seen as valuable; instead, like Cathleen Ni Houlihan, women, as the Nationalist popular discourse suggests, were present but not equal. Women, for the Nationalists, remained lesser beings from whom men could posit their masculinity and, presumably - from the men’s perspective - their superiority. The Nationalists, then, despite their history, and despite the presence of publications like *Bean Na h-Eireann*, were no different from their British occupiers, or the Catholic Church. Mirroring the other groups, the Nationalists may have superficially recognized women, and even afforded them presence in their popular discourse, but in the end, they enacted a dialogical repression that made women speak through a language of femininity, and ensured that they continued to both exist and speak in separation.

*Synthesis*

While the examination of primary sources cannot account for all of those who spoke, the practice lends invaluable insight into how they were speaking. As the British, Catholic, and Nationalist popular discourses evince, women occupied a distinctly paradoxical position in Dublin society. At one level, likely due to suffragism, there exists a considerable amount of writing in which women were spoken of with respect, and, in some cases, admiration. Seemingly, this respect would suggest men and women were on equal terms; however, when one considers the structure of the popular discourse, it becomes clear that there remained gender inequality. For, in spite of the myriad examples in which women are regarded with admiration, in popular discourse, women, as analysis of their speech shows, were repressed dialogically. That is, within Dublin popular discourse, though there are examples of women speaking, they did not speak freely. Instead, within popular discourse, women only appear in demarcated “Ladies’ Sections,” wherein they spoke through a conventionalized language of femininity. Since this language served only to purport a codified image of “what woman is,” or, perhaps more accurately, “what woman ought to be,” women distinctly lacked agency and power in the period. For, in speaking through this conventionalized language of femininity, women could not assert their views, conceptions, or opinions on the matters of the day; they were confined to subjects that adhered to a requisite “womanliness.” Without this power to speak freely, women were thus resigned to a position of vulnerability. Since women’s language was not their own, but a conventionalized language of femininity, men spoke of

and for them, even on the issues that affected women most directly. In this way, Dublin's popular discourse effectively enacted a kind of dialogical separate spheres. Men spoke of the issues of the day and occupied the public sphere, while women spoke of fashions, arts, and society, and thus remained entrenched in a sphere of domesticity.

Chapter Two: Painted the lion?"

While Molly Bloom's soliloquy represents what is perhaps the best-known example of woman's narration in *Ulysses*, there appears another instance of a woman "speaking" before that final chapter. On Sandymount Strand in the "Nausicaa" episode, Leopold Bloom comes across Cissy Caffrey, Edy Boardman, and Gerty MacDowell. Portrayed in impersonal, third person narration, Gerty becomes the focus of the chapter, as "Nausicaa" explores her inner life, and attempts to answer the opening question of the episode: "But who was Gerty?" (Joyce 333). Though the chapter leaves the answer purposefully ambiguous, for many scholars, including Jeri Johnson, Fritz Senn, and Patrick McGee, Gerty is nothing more than Bloom's fantasy (Johnson 900; Senn 277; McGee 314). Citing the third-person narration, Johnson writes, "Gerty here is the object of ["Nausicaa"] not its subject...she is [Bloom's] fantasy, a product of the masculine desire of what a woman would be *for him*" (Johnson 900). In this way, Gerty becomes problematic, particularly for feminist criticism. Gerty is not presented in the text as an individual figure; she is Bloom's ideal of "what woman is," or, to build from Johnson's phrase "what a woman ought to be" (Johnson 900). Yet, while an important interpretation – and one supported by Joyce's claim that "it all took place in Bloom's imagination" – there is another way to read Gerty and her role in the narrative (Joyce in Johnson 900). To return to "Dueling Discourses," Gerty does not figure in the text solely as part of Bloom's reverie. Instead, if the reader considers the way that women featured in popular discourse, Gerty comes to personify a Dublin feminine ideal, existing by and through the

conventionalized language of femininity found in those “Ladies’ Sections.” When taken in this way, as an embodiment rather than fantasy, Gerty, then, performs an expository function. Through the text’s depiction of Gerty as the incarnation of “Ladies Section” rhetoric, “Nausicaa” reveals the consequences of such a language, and the restrictions that it placed on the ways that women were to speak.

For many scholars, Gerty is nothing more than Bloom’s fantasy. As Jeri Johnson contends, “Nausicaa” first makes Gerty’s role as fantasy apparent through the structure of the episode. Johnson writes, though Gerty is the focus of the chapter, unlike Bloom or Stephen, whose respective streams of consciousness afford them an “integral subjectivity,” Gerty lacks the same “narrative control” as the male protagonists (Johnson 899). Gerty’s narration, instead, proceeds “in the third person as free indirect discourse provided courtesy of Madame Vera Verity, Miss Cummins, the litany of Our Lady of Loreto and *The Lady’s Pictorial*,” and thus, she has, as Johnson writes, “no voice of her own” (Johnson 899). Ostensibly, that Gerty does not have a “voice of her own” does not necessarily indicate her status as fantasy. However, as Fritz Senn argues, when “Nausicaa” reveals at the end of the episode that Bloom has been watching over and masturbating to Gerty, the reason why her narrative proceeds in this way becomes clear: Gerty, Senn writes, exists only to “gratify Bloom,” and thus her narrative is presented in the third person because it is Bloom who is, in fact, constructing Gerty – rendering her in such a way that she provides him pleasure in his reverie (Senn 277). “Nausicaa,” then, as Senn writes, offers the reader “a particularly one-eyed romanticized perspective” (Senn 277). Gerty functions as Bloom’s fantasy,

represented in the text as the product of his desire, and thus as McGee argues that the reader cannot accept “Nausicaa’s” account of Gerty as an accurate representation of the young woman and her identity. Masked in the notions of woman that Bloom uses to produce her before him, the reader must instead interpret Gerty as an “imaginary representation of the real,” or a figure that originates in, and “lives through” the mind of an other (McGee 316). Therefore, it seems that in the world of *Ulysses*, Gerty does not exist autonomously. Gerty, instead, proceeds in the text as a fantastical vision – the woman that Bloom *wishes to see*.

Yet, in spite of the prominence of this interpretation, as well as the considerable evidence that supports the claim that Gerty is, indeed, Bloom’s fantasy, there is another way to interpret the chapter, and the nature of Gerty’s identity. Throughout “Nausicaa,” the text goes to great lengths to establish Gerty’s feminine beauty. “Nausicaa” posits Gerty’s visage as “Greekly perfect;” the chapter claims “A truerhearted ass never drew the breath of life;” and it also contends that Gerty’s “crowning glory was her wealth of wonderful hair” (Joyce 332-334). Notably, as the chapter aims to capture Gerty’s beauty, it also emphasizes the “Irishness” of her beauty. Gerty’s eyes, “Nausicaa” claims, were “of the bluest Irish blue;” her deportment, “Nausicaa” asserts, were so sweet, “that of a surety God’s fair land of Ireland did not hold her equal;” and her mere being, the chapter declares, captures the essence of “winsome Irish girlhood” (Joyce 333-334). This focus on Gerty’s feminine, Irish beauty does not seem to support the idea that Gerty functions solely as part of Bloom’s reverie; instead, the Irish-focused language seems to posit Gerty as a reflection of Dublin society

(Heather Cook Callow 155). More specifically, as Heather Cook Callow argues, Gerty reflects “the Irish society that regularly turns out such “specimens of winsome Irish girlhood” and teaches them to think of themselves as such” (Cook Callow 156). When read in this way, Gerty, then, assumes greater significance in the text. Rather than operate as a vision whose narrative can be dismissed as purely fantasy, Gerty, if understood as reflection, becomes a manifestation: in representing Irish society’s conception of woman, she embodies Dublin’s cultural conception of “what woman is,” and how woman is “to be.” Ostensibly, there would be little to no difference between whether Gerty operates as Bloom’s fantasy or Dublin society’s conception of woman; however, when read as the latter rather than the former, Gerty presents new interpretative possibilities. Reading Gerty as embodiment instead of fantasy, Gerty performs an expository function: “living out” Dublin cultural conventions of woman’s position in society, Gerty reveals the consequences and implications underlying that conception. Therefore, despite Joyce’s claim and the number of scholars that interpret Gerty as Bloom’s fantasy, because of the way that “Nausicaa” frames Gerty, and the possibilities that the episode presents in that framing, this chapter will read Gerty and her narrative independent of the contention that she figures entirely in Bloom’s imagination. This independent reading does not signify that Bloom’s role will not be considered, nor that Gerty will be interpreted as an entirely autonomous subject in the text – her lack of first-person speech almost immediately denies that reading – but rather that the character will be read as a subject who has internalized turn of the century Dublin’s feminine ideal – that same feminine ideal identified in the previous chapter, “Dueling Discourses,” –

and thus exposes the consequences underlying both the expectations and construction of such a figure.

If Gerty is taken as the embodiment of Dublin culture's feminine ideal, the question then becomes, how does she perform this role? Though implicit rather than explicit, Gerty embodies Dublin's feminine ideal through an internalization of what Cook Callow deems "romanticized ladies' magazine rhetoric" (Callow 156). "Nausicaa" makes this dynamic apparent when the episode answers the question, "but who was Gerty?" (Joyce 333). The text responds with a long paragraph containing a number of allusions to women's products, magazines, advertisements, and journals, including "Widow Welch's female pills," "The Princess Novelette," and *The Lady's Pictorial* (Joyce 333-334). On one level, the presence of these products and publications serves to underline Gerty's femininity. As Thomas Karr Richards notes, the products and publications signal Gerty's "immersion in the prefabricated world" of woman, as they demonstrate the centrality of constitutively feminine material to her identity (Karr Richard 756). On another level, the language of these products and publications also influences the text, as it imbues the narration with a style that Joyce himself described as "namby pamby marmalady, drawersy" (Joyce in Cook Callow 156). When the reader considers "Nausicaa's" third-person narration, this style assumes great significance. The style reinforces the notion that Gerty's narrative is not hers alone; though Gerty may feature as "Nausicaa's" focus, because she has internalized Dublin culture's conventionalized language of femininity, the rhetoric of such publications as *The Lady's Pictorial* speaks for her, as it narrates the chapter in a third person, free indirect discourse that reflects Gerty's thoughts,

all while denying her the first-person narration that would allow her to speak on her own. In fact, as the text evinces, this language has such an influence over Gerty that it even comes to determine Gerty's actions. Adhering to the advice of *The Lady's Pictorial*, Gerty purchases a "neat blouse of electric blue," because "it was expected that electric blue would be worn;" footwear that allows for her ankle to "display its perfect proportions;" and hosiery to ensure that "just the proper amount and no more of her shapely limbs [were] encased" (335).

"Nausicaa," then, not only inscribes Gerty as Dublin's feminine ideal in that she "exists through" "romanticized ladies magazine rhetoric," but in that this rhetoric directs Gerty, as well. In the text, Gerty thus materializes an ideology of conventionalized femininity; she may not exist as fantasy, but she dons, and thus embodies, a cultural conception of how a woman should be, based on the conventionalized language of femininity in the period.

For a reading of "Nausicaa," Gerty's relationship to a conventionalized language of femininity functions as a crucial textual dynamic. As "Nausicaa" suggests through the way that these products and publications usurp Gerty, as character's, narrative control, and influence her actions, the period's conventionalized language of femininity has, to turn to the theories of French philosopher Louis Althusser, interpellated Gerty. Interpellation, as Peggy Ochoa explains through an analysis of Althusser's essay on "Ideological State Apparatuses" is a process that:

Both identifies individuals and allows them to identify with societal values... The result of this process is twofold: individuals see, in an ideological mirror, an idealized image with which they identify, and they become bound to the higher authority of ideological absolute subject. (Ochoa 785-786).

In “Nausicaa,” Gerty thus operates as an interpellated subject. These woman’s products and publications that promote a conventionalized language of femininity render Gerty in the image of woman that they uphold, cloaking her in those commodities and characters that correspond to their conception of “what woman is.” That Gerty figures in this way is notable for a number of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, if woman’s products and publications have interpellated Gerty, then she may be read in the context of the previous chapter, “Dueling Discourses.” For, in “living out” a cultural notion of how woman *ought to be*, based on a conventionalized language of femininity, Gerty, then, as an interpellated subject, reflects and embodies the image of woman that these woman’s products and publications fostered at the turn of the century in Dublin. When taken in this way, Gerty thus performs an expository function. Through Gerty’s portrayal as the embodiment of Dublin culture’s feminine ideal, “Nausicaa,” and, therefore, *Ulysses*, illuminate the implications underlying the conventionalized language of femininity in the period, as well as the consequences of the vision that popular discourse put forth.

As an embodiment of Dublin culture’s feminine ideal, one who exposes the implications of such a vision, Gerty reveals the way that the conventionalized language of femininity worked so as to deny women agency. Within “Nausicaa,” this dynamic first becomes apparent in the structure of the narrative. As has been noted earlier in the chapter, “Nausicaa” does not afford Gerty first-person narration. Instead, “Nausicaa” proceeds in the third person, written in that “namby pamby marmalady, drawersy” style. In capturing Gerty, “Nausicaa,” for example, describes her romantic longings in terms of fairy-tale trope, “No prince charming

is her beau ideal to lay a rare and wondrous love at her feet but rather a manly man with a strong quiet face who had not found his ideal” (Joyce 336). The episode, moreover, relates Gerty’s physicality in language that evokes an advertisement, “a navy threequarter skirt cut to the strideshowed off her slim graceful figure to perfection” (Joyce 335). Perhaps most importantly, though, “Nausicaa” portrays Gerty’s inner thoughts in that “romanticized ladies magazine rhetoric” to which Cook Callow refers. “Nausicaa” posits, “The paly light of evening falls upon a face infinitely sad and wistful. Gerty MacDowell yearns in vain” (Joyce 336). To turn to Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of the novel, that “Nausicaa” constructs Gerty in this way represents a significant power dynamic. As Bakhtin explains, within a given novel, first-person narration is the means through which a character achieves agency in the text. Granted the ability to control the narrative through his or her own, individual perspective, the first-person narrator enters an “unmediated” state, in which he or she attains an independent narrative “I” that thus allows him or her to become a “fully valid, autonomous carrier of his [or her] own word” (Bakhtin 5). By contrast, a character that is constructed in third-person narration – even free, indirect narration that reflects his or her thoughts – is implicitly compromised. Unlike the first-person narrator who acts as subject and directs the narrative, the character that is narrated becomes its object; he or she is mediated by the narration (Bakhtin 6). Therefore, the construction of “Nausicaa” is in and of itself a sign of Gerty’s disempowerment: in contrast to Bloom and Stephen, who both possess the independent “I” that accompanies first-person narration, Gerty relies on a

conventionalized language of femininity to construct her identity and narrative; she does not assert herself alone.

Though subtle, this dynamic is of considerable significance. To return to the previous chapter “Dueling Discourses,” one of the central issues for women in popular discourse was that they only appeared in demarcated “Ladies Sections.” Though these “Ladies Sections” granted women presence in popular discourse, their construction was inherently problematic. In contrast to the men of popular discourse, who spoke on any number of subjects, these women, as the chapter uncovered, were limited to traditionally feminine subjects, like arts, fashions, and society. As an effect, women lacked agency in popular discourse. With their voices filtered through a conventionalized language of femininity, these women did not have the power to assert autonomy, discuss the matters of the day, and thus, the ability to participate in Dublin’s public conversation. If Gerty is read as the embodiment of the feminine ideal that woman’s products and publications put forth, then her lack of control over the narrative serves to reflect this dynamic. Like the women of the “Ladies Sections,” Gerty does not speak in the narrative through an independent “I.” Instead, though Gerty does speak, in her role as embodiment, she does so through a conventionalized language of femininity, thus yielding passages like, “It was Madame Vera Verity, directress of the Woman Beautiful page of the Princess novelette, who had first advised her to try eyebrowline which gave that haunting expression to the eyes, so becoming in leaders of fashion, and she had never regretted in” in which an action of Gerty’s is expressed, and yet done so in such a way that it relates to fashion, and the way that a publication that promotes a codified conception of woman’s beauty, exerted

its influence over Gerty (Joyce 334). Therefore, even before the action of the episode begins, “Nausicaa,” through the construction of its narrative, reveals the way that the “Ladies Sections” to which Gerty subscribes, and which she embodies, placed problematic constraints on the way that women could speak. Rendered in the third person, Gerty shows that, in “ladies magazine rhetoric,” women’s voices were not their own. Resigned to a conventionalized language of femininity, agency was denied them, as they spoke not for themselves, but for a codified conception of “what woman is,” or how “woman is to be.”

Just as “Nausicaa” exposes the way that Dublin’s conventionalized language of femininity operated so as to deny women agency, the episode likewise reveals the way that the city’s construction of a feminine ideal inculcated a repressive silence in women. At multiple junctures in “Nausicaa,” there are instances in which Gerty wishes to speak, yet refrains. For example, while in conversation with Cissy and Edy, “Nausicaa” writes of Gerty, “She was about to retort but something checked the words on her tongue. Inclination told her to speak: dignity told her to be silent. The pretty lips outed, but then she glanced upon and broke out into a little laugh, which had in it all the freshness of a young May morning” (Joyce 334). Later on, when Cissy inquires about Reggie Wylie, Gerty’s romantic interest, who recently “threw her over,” Gerty initially feels “scorn immeasurable,” but, ultimately, succeeds in fighting “back the sob that rose to her throat, so slim, so flawless, so beautifully molded” (Joyce 346). Then, in perhaps the most revealing passage, “Nausicaa” posits how, after Cissy’s brother caused a commotion, “Gerty stifled a smothered expression and gave a nervous cough and Edy asked what and she was just going to tell her to catch it

while it was flying but she was ever ladylike in her deportment so she simply passed it off with consummate tact” (Joyce 347). With these scenes, “Nausicaa” presents a juxtaposition between “inclination” and “dignity.” Gerty wishes to speak, but she does not. The reason, as the text suggests, is that, in her role as the feminine ideal, Gerty must adhere to a notion of “ladylike deportment,” and thus must resist her urge to speak freely (Joyce 347).

Gerty’s refusal to speak freely due to her adherence to a notion of “ladylike deportment” is notable for a number of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, Gerty’s lack of free speech, or her silence, demonstrates how, as an effect of the way that women’s language was constructed, women had to decline their “inclinations.” That is, because women in popular discourse only wrote in ways that reified and conventionalized a traditional image of woman (as such articles like an *Evening Telegraph* piece on “the Princess style of gown,” or an *Irish Times* essay on the need for mothers to “keep their own high standard in the home” evidence), women could not touch upon matters beyond that realm (“Fashions of the Week” 2 September 1899 3; “The Sanctity of Marriage” 3). Instead, because their language had to operate through requisite “girlishness,” and abide that “womanly dignity” to which Gerty refers, these women had to stifle certain thoughts and feelings so that they could uphold the image of woman that their language was to put forth (Joyce 334). Thus, Gerty’s inability, or refusal, to speak freely, despite her desire to do so, serves to reveal this dynamic in the text. In her position as feminine ideal, Gerty exposes how, under the terms and authority of a codified conception of femininity, women’s language became effectively limited. Beholden to socially approved lines of speaking, women

expressed themselves not autonomously- as Gerty herself illustrates when Cissy uses the evidently vulgar word “beetetom” in reference to spanking her brother, thus causing Gerty to bend “her head down and crimson at the idea of Cissy saying an unladylike thing like that she’d be ashamed of her life to say, flushing a deep rosy red” – but in the conventionalized language of femininity that popular discourse put forth (Joyce 338). Therefore, as “Nausicaa” evinces through its depiction of Gerty, the period’s conventionalized language of femininity inculcated a repressive silence in women in that their speech was not truly their own. Turn of the century women’s language, instead, repressed those thoughts that may have been understood as “unladylike,” and offered a language of fashion, beauty, and society – a language the expressed only the “freshness of a young May morning” (Joyce 334).

Closely related to the idea of women’s lack of agency, and their repressive silence, “Nausicaa,” through Gerty, also exposes the way that the conventionalized language of femininity denied women an independent identity. Though it must be noted that, to return to Althusser, no identity is ever “truly” independent, as all subjects are interpellated into one ideological state apparatus or another, the extent to which women’s identities became compromised through the conventionalized language of femininity represents an extreme example, one that extends beyond the theory that Althusser proposes, in that the language almost entirely denies an individual sense of self, as well as the potential of self-sovereignty (Althusser 176). To illustrate, in “Nausicaa,” though Gerty “lives” through a conventionalized language of femininity - that same language that denies agency and inculcates silence – the implications of such a role do not

necessarily signify complete silence, nor an absence of a sense of self; in “Nausicaa,” Gerty both speaks and presents an ostensibly individual identity. Ostensibly, that she does so would suggest a kind of independence, however, the text denies this interpretation. In a powerful passage, “Nausicaa” describes Gerty’s internal life. The passage proceeds:

Gerty had her dreams that no-one knew of. She loved to read poetry and when she got a keepsake from Bertha Supple of that lovely confession album with the coralpink cover to write her thoughts in she laid it in the drawer of her toiletable which, though it did not err on the side of luxury was scrupulously neat and clean. It was there she kept her girlish treasure trove...there were some beautiful thoughts written in it in violet ink that she bought in Hely’s of Dame Street for she felt that she too could write poetry if she could only express herself like that poem that appealed to her so deeply that she had copied out of the newspaper she found one evening round the potherbs. (Joyce 347-348)

As the reader observes, Gerty does indeed possess her own desires and interests, which seems to imply that the character does not exist in as compromised a state as supposed; yet, the text suggests otherwise. Though Gerty may have her own objects and “treasures,” they are all coded traditionally feminine, whether manifested in the “coralpink” confession album, the “girlish” trove, or the “violet” ink. That “Nausicaa” codes these objects in Gerty’s private box serves a telling function. Through the objects’ coding, “Nausicaa” implies that, while these objects give Gerty pleasure – and, apparently, for her, some form of identity – ultimately, they operate as signs of Gerty’s interpellation. That is, as “Nausicaa” suggests through these objects, as well as Gerty’s clothing and action, though Gerty may, superficially, present an individual identity, it is not her own. Instead, as an interpellated subject, Gerty achieves a sense of self as subject through those commodities and characteristics associated with a conventionalized image of “what woman is,” or “how woman ought to be.”

Though seemingly harmless, that Gerty's identity is not her own serves as a profound statement. To return to "Dueling Discourses," perhaps the central problem of the period's conventionalized language of femininity is that it promoted a notion of woman, not as women saw themselves, but rather, as society wished woman to be seen. For women, this dynamic proved consequential in that the image of woman put forth was decidedly resigned. Based in the visions of marital harmony that Victorian separate spheres promoted, women as the various articles of the period evidence, were to exist as homemaker, wife, and mother, and nothing more. Figured in this way, women's independence, and access to an independent identity became compromised. Rather than present an autonomous image of self in language, women, as articles in *The Irish Independent* and *The Evening Telegraph* on women's complexions, appropriate lengths of sleeves on a dress, and the best kinds of summer hairstyles, evince, spoke through a language that granted them nominal identity as "woman," and yet denied a true self – one free to adopt, comment upon, or embrace issues and interests beyond the traditionally feminine ("The Majesty of Beauty" 6; "Fashions of the Week" 21 September 1905 3; "Our Paris Mirror" 4). "Nausicaa" thus exposes this dynamic through its depiction of Gerty and her identity. As the text suggests through the final detail of the passage above, "she felt that she too could write poetry if she could only express herself like that poem that appealed to her so deeply," the conventionalized language of femininity to which Gerty subscribes ultimately limits her individuality. For, like the women of the "Ladies Sections," though Gerty may speak, just as they, seemingly willfully speak on those subjects that define them, because her language is filtered through a codified notion of women,

it does not proceed freely. Finding a sense of self through a conventionalized notion of “what woman is,” the language and the identity it represents are, instead, compromised. Masked in an ideal of femininity, the speech and signs of individual identity are based in false liberty. As “Nausicaa” makes apparent, the language and the identity it represents correspond not to an autonomous, free-thinking self, but to a prevailing ideal.

Although the beginning of “Nausicaa” focuses on the ways in which the conventionalized language of femininity harmed women on the individual level, the chapter reveals the more significant consequences of the discourse’s construction when Bloom comes into view. As the text slowly reveals, Bloom has been watching over Cissy, Edy, and Gerty throughout the “Nausicaa” episode (Joyce 350). Initially, Bloom’s watching appears inconsequential; however, as the episode gradually uncovers, Bloom has been masturbating to Gerty’s image, while the chapter has been exploring her inner world (Joyce 351). Notably, “Nausicaa” frames Bloom’s masturbation in terms of a power relation: as he looks at Gerty, he assumes the role of agent and acts upon her. Evoking a hunt, “Nausicaa” posits, “[Bloom] was eying her as a snake eyes its prey” (Joyce 344). Later, reinforcing the dynamics of Bloom and Gerty’s arrangement, the narrator describes how “His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul,” and then, later, “Whitehot passion was in that face, passion silent as the grave, and it had made her his” (Joyce 349). As those aforementioned critics that view Gerty as Bloom’s fantasy have noted, this language primarily serves to highlight a traditional understanding of the relationship between man and woman, wherein the man acts as subject and the

woman object. However, when the reader considers the discursive patterns identified, the scene performs another, equally important function. To return to Bakhtin, without the narrative “I” through which to assert herself, Gerty becomes vulnerable to exterior meaning making. That is, unable to speak freely, and thus, unable to assert the self, Gerty cannot negotiate the way in which she is seen, or perceived. Gerty thus becomes the object of Bloom’s sexual fantasy not merely as an effect of traditional constructs, but instead, due to a dynamic in which women were unable to voice themselves beyond “womanly dignity.” Therefore, the way that Bloom sees Gerty reflects one of the central consequences of a codified women’s language. Without the ability to assert the self, or speak on matters beyond the coded-feminine, women were left vulnerable to men’s meaning making – their power to render women as they wished to see them, or to, like Bloom with Gerty, “make her his.”

“Nausicaa” further illustrates the nature of the relationship between Bloom and Gerty through the depiction of the former’s fantasy. Notably, in the fantasy’s arrangement, the text draws upon the characteristics and items that had previously been assigned to Gerty in the construction of her identity. For example, when Gerty removes her hat, the narrator – representing Bloom’s view – writes, “a prettier, a daintier head of nutbrown tresses was never seen on a girl’s shoulders, a radiant little vision in sooth, almost maddening in its sweetness.” (Joyce 344). Though the passage seemingly operates as description, the portrayal functions so as to show that those traits belonging to Gerty are not necessarily hers. Instead, because of Gerty’s status as the ideal posits her as an object for men to view, those traits become “a little vision” for Bloom. Further illuminating this idea,

Bloom then sexualizes Gerty through her clothing and appearance, as he renders her into something “maddening” (Joyce 344). In reference to the hosiery that Gerty bought on the recommendation of *The Lady’s Pictorial*, “Nausicaa” describes from Bloom’s perspective, “Three and eleven she paid for those stockings...and there wasn’t a brack on them and that was what he was looking at, transparent (the cheek of her!) because he had eyes in his head to see the difference for himself” (Joyce 344). As Craig Smith argues, this scene serves to establish a “connectedness” between the characters. Through Bloom’s commodification of Gerty’s clothing and qualities, the text evinces that they “share the same world,” and thus exist in a distinct relation (Smith 635).

Ostensibly, because Bloom and Gerty “share the same world,” each character should engage interactively, or, engage with each other in such a way that they exerted mutual influence; yet, as the text evinces, Bloom and Gerty do not achieve this kind of equality. Gerty, instead, becomes acted upon. In her position as the feminine ideal, Gerty, adhering to the discourses that construct her, fashions herself in that “ladylike mode” through which she achieves a sense of identity, and assumes the codified image that accompanies her role as the feminine ideal. This image, as the text suggests, places Gerty in a compromised position. Like the treasure trove and the poetry within it, though Gerty’s self-fashioning grants her a sense of identity, because that identity works through a conventional notion of woman, one that must communicate through the lens of the codified image, she loses her agency and thus becomes object. Bloom constructs her as he wishes, appropriating her conventional femininity for his own sexual reverie. Through this act of appropriation, the text suggests the

consequences of that codified image beyond its effects on the self. When a man becomes involved, though the interpellated woman subject, like Gerty, may achieve something resembling a sense of self, because the image that interpellates her originates in a cultural ideology that implicitly sought to disempower women, the assumption of that identity only leads to a position of vulnerability. For, interpellated into a codified image of woman that lacks agency, that cannot speak freely, and that is absent any and all independence, the woman subject not only loses autonomous identity, but also become, effectively, the property of man, to view.

Through this arrangement, “Nausicaa” arrives at perhaps the most significant consequences of Dublin’s cultural conception of women, and the city’s construction of the conventionalized language of femininity. As the text establishes through the depiction of Gerty as an interpellated subject, the conventionalized language of femininity worked to render women disempowered, resigned objects in the popular discourse. Speaking through a language not of their own, but rather, through a language that relied on, and promoted, a codified conception of femininity, women lacked the ability to assert themselves beyond those spheres of fashion, arts, and society, and thus lost the capacity to assert that internal, autonomous self. Women, as an effect, became spoken of by men, resulting in those myriad male-written articles on the nature of women, which worked only to reinforce a codified conception of what woman is. “Nausicaa,” then, exposes this dynamic and its implications through its depiction of Gerty and her relationship to Bloom. In her role as a socially constructed vision of woman, Gerty not only reflects the dialogical repression that the conventionalized

language of femininity inculcated, but the way that the repression positioned women. Unable to speak with agency, freedom, independence, and thus power, women became relegated to the status of object. For, without an autonomous “I,” women could not make meaning for themselves, and thus, as Bloom’s fantasy makes apparent, meaning was made for them.

Yet, in spite of the far-reaching implications of Dublin’s conventionalized language of femininity, “Nausicaa” suggests that, even under its terms, there remains the possibility of rectification. As the chapter suggests, during Bloom’s masturbation, he does not remain as the sole figure “acting.” Instead, toward the climax of Bloom’s reverie, the narrative slowly complicates the dynamic that it initially presented. A shift first begins when Gerty’s stockings and underwear become exposed. At first, the description of the exposure stays consistent with the narrative, as Gerty, in her position as object, remains looked upon “passionately” beneath Bloom’s gaze (Joyce 345). As the fireworks from the bazaar begin to go off, the narrator writes of Gerty, as she admires the Roman Candles, “she had to lean back more and more to look up after...an entrancing blush from straining back and he could see her other things too, naisook knickers, the fabric that caresses the skin, better than those other pettiwidth...and she let him in” (Joyce 350). Up until the last passage, the line reiterates the same themes and power dynamics that have been explored between the two characters: Bloom admires and sexualizes Gerty, as he focuses on her appearance, as well as her clothing. However, with the last line “she let him in,” there suddenly appears a challenge to that reading. In contrast to the previous passages in which Bloom functioned as subject, and Gerty object, this sentence structure, in which Gerty is subject and

Bloom object, implies that Gerty has agency, or at least exerts some influence over Bloom's proceedings. With this detail, Bloom, then, can no longer be understood as in the sole possession of power, nor, to return to an earlier argument, can Gerty be seen purely as his fantasy. Instead, as the text firmly establishes that Gerty *gives* Bloom the opportunity to see, she assumes a different role, that of the conductor – the one that enables Bloom's view.

“Nausicaa” slowly reveals the implications of Gerty's new role, as Bloom works toward orgasm. Now in the role of “conductor,” Gerty exerts more and more influence over Bloom's proceedings: “she saw that he saw...and she was trembling in every limb. From being bent so far back that he had a full view up above her knee...and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either” (Joyce 350). To turn to Hélène Cixous's essay, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Gerty's “conducting” here represents a kind of language, one that stems from the body. Referring to the way that the female sex has been problematically marginalized, Cixous claims that this language, which she deems *écriture féminine*, represents a means to women's freedom. Cixous writes:

Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reverse-discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word “silence,” the one that, aiming for the impossible, stops short before the word “impossible” and writes it as “the end” (Cixous 886).

According to Cixous, then, if women are to subvert a language that has thus far denied them the same dialogical freedom as men, they must push against a phallogocentric discourse, and write both from and through the body. If the reader considers Cixous's proposal in relation to “Nausicaa,” the power of Gerty's action becomes clear. Through her body, Gerty overcomes that dialogical repression of

which she is victim. That is, in her position as “conductor,” Gerty transcends the language denied her, and regains agency. For, notably, as the scene progresses, “Nausicaa” reveals that Gerty not only “conducts” Bloom through her body, but experiences pleasure, as well. “Nausicaa” proceeds, “She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow, the cry of a young girl’s love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her lips, that cry has rung through the ages” (Joyce 350). Though it must be noted that the language of the sentence, with its reference to “snowy slender arms” and “little strangled cry,” represents a continuation of “Nausicaa’s” “romanticized ladies’ magazine rhetoric,” it is not the diction, but the action that is significant. Gerty, the sentence shows, has conducted Bloom, attained pleasure, and achieved orgasm, the latter of which she does even before him. The following line reads, “then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O!...O so lovely! O so soft, sweet, soft!” (Joyce 350). Through this passage, “Nausicaa” effectively inverts the power dynamic that it has thus far proposed. Gerty, despite her initial, vulnerable position, has taken charge over Bloom’s proceedings, and achieved her own pleasure in his fantasy. In doing so, Gerty displays a distinct form of autonomy, one that raises an important critical question: if Gerty has thus far acted as compromised object, how, then, do we interpret this shift in power relations?

Although there does not exist a single correct interpretation, when the reader considers *Ulysses*’ cultural context, Gerty’s assumption of power represents both a counter to the status quo, as well as a potential means of social negotiation for women. In regard to the former function, Gerty’s agency

represents a counter to social expectation in that the autonomous depiction reworks the trope of femininity. To return to the language of those “Ladies’ Sections,” the conventionalized language of femininity purported an image of woman that, as has been noted, inculcated a codified, repressed identity whose range of subjects remained limited to fashions, beauty, and society. With her power, Gerty thus disrupts this image, as she refutes the presupposed resignation of these women. Gerty, whom Jules David Law succinctly describes as “at once yielding and defiant,” “conducts” Bloom’s reverie, and therefore, she becomes not object, but indeed, subject. (Law 244). Through Gerty’s process of becoming, “Nausicaa” then arrives at the latter issue, that of negotiation. If the reader considers Cixous’ argument, “Nausicaa” makes a profound statement through Gerty’s language of the body. For, as the text suggests through Gerty’s pleasure, while there may exist a social structure that compromises women, and marginalizes their place within society, that social structure does not last in perpetuity. Instead, though the social structure may seem impenetrable, because it endures as a construct, there remains the possibility to rework the terms of its production. That is, whether through a language of the body like Gerty’s, or by some other means, the standards and expectations of society do not stay in a fixed state; the subject possesses a power to negotiate their reality. In countering expectation, and making clear the importance of negotiation, Gerty’s assumption of power, then, ultimately, represents possibility. The shift demonstrates that, in spite of dominant social thought, like women’s silent submission to men, these thoughts, no matter how prevailing, remain susceptible to change.

As a chapter, “Nausicaa” at once performs an expository and disruptive function. Through the depiction of Gerty as interpellated Dublin subject, “Nausicaa” reveals the consequences of the city’s conception of femininity, and its language of women. Reflecting those “Ladies Sections,” Gerty not only illuminates the problems inherent to a codified understanding of women, including repression and objectification, but also illustrates the way that, under the terms of that conventionalized language, even when women spoke, their language was not their own. Instead, lacking that “I,” women became beholden to a language that was distinctly limited, compromised by a prevailing ideal of “what woman is.” Though Bloom’s masturbation leads this expectation to a realm of the grotesque, “Nausicaa” ultimately shows that there is light. Through her body, Gerty evinces that the terms of women’s existence are not fixed. Within social relations, there remains that possibility of negotiation, a possibility that, while often complex, opens the opportunity for rectification – a reclamation of power and agency. Therefore, “Nausicaa” exposes the problematic consequences of women’s expectation, just as it posits a way out.

Chapter Three: “...yes I said yes I will Yes”

Though introduced in “Calypso,” the audience first hears from Molly Bloom in the final “Penelope” episode. In contrast to the both spoken of and spoken for Gerty MacDowell, Molly’s chapter is entirely her own. Through a flowing, internalized narrative, Molly touches upon a number of topics, including past lovers, her encounter with Blazes Boylan earlier that afternoon, as well as her husband Leopold Bloom. While the unfiltered, unchallenged nature of Molly’s soliloquy represents a dynamic portrayal of a woman speaker, for some, the chapter serves as nothing more than deceptive misogyny. As critics Diana Henderson and Elaine Unkeless argue, Molly plays into stereotypes of the turn of the century Dublin woman, the structure of “Penelope” reduces women to body parts, and Joyce’s role in the production of Molly’s voice renders the portrayal nothing more than a man’s flawed conception of “what woman is” (Henderon 518-519; Unkeless 150). Yet, in spite of the strength and scholastic importance of this interpretation, when one reads Molly’s soliloquy in consideration of *Ulysses*’ broader narrative, the empowering agency that underlies Molly’s first-person narration, and the novel’s social-historical context, it becomes clear that the misogynist reading of the episode overlooks the significance of “Penelope” both textually and culturally. Through the inclusion of Molly’s voice at the end of the novel, *Ulysses* exposes and deconstructs early 20<sup>th</sup> century Dublin’s expectation of how men and women were to speak. “Penelope” allows Molly to establish her sense of self beyond those men’s accounts of her, that, until the final chapter, lent the reader a singular vision of her identity; in granting Molly first-person

narration, the chapter affords her the authority to assert both her, and more broadly, women's autonomy; and, perhaps most importantly, in an act of coronation that requires a reconsideration of power, "Penelope" posits Molly as the figure that affirms Bloom, in the end. Therefore, while the dynamic of the male Joyce writing the voice of a female character poses certain implications, ultimately, the relationship between author and text does not deny or devalue the importance of the portrayal. For, through the depiction of Molly and her voice, Joyce not only counters both Dublin's dialogical repression, and oppressive ideological conceptions of women at the turn of the century, but forces the reader to reevaluate the text, and the role of voice and perspective.

Before analysis of "Penelope" can begin, it is necessary to note that, for many critics, Molly's soliloquy represents a problematic depiction of "what woman is." Among the central issues with the episode, as Diana Henderson argues, is the question of "who speaks" within the narrative. As Henderson contends, in "Penelope," though the chapter is meant to represent a woman speaking, the reader must recognize that the audience is not, in fact, given Molly's voice. Rather, Molly's speech is "Joyce's textual impersonation of a woman's voice," and thus, for Henderson, the chapter raises issues of authority, experience, and authenticity (Henderson 518). Due to Joyce's sex, Henderson writes, he, as an author, can only offer a man's perspective of that which constitutes woman, and, problematically, as Henderson claims, his is a decidedly misogynistic one: "[Joyce constructs Molly as] the delightful, even childish, but not empowered Other" (Henderson 520). Elaine Unkeless reinforces this skeptical reading of Molly's soliloquy with her own interpretation of the chapter, in which she argues

that Joyce consequentially produces Molly through stereotypes of femininity. Unkeless writes, “It is Joyce’s language that makes Molly so alive, but the traits with which he endows her stem from conventional notions of the way that a woman acts and thinks” (Unkeless 150). Among the problematic “conventional traits” that Unkeless cites include Molly’s focus on sex, “Most of Molly’s actions are associated directly or indirectly with sex, and non-sexual activities are scarcely mentioned;” her domesticity, “[Molly’s chores] manifest [Joyce’s] assumption that the responsibility of executing chores rests on the female;” and what Unkeless deems the character’s “mindless narcissism:” “Molly [is] a comic figure whose unraveling thoughts, composed of illogical juxtapositions reveal her naiveté” (Unkeless 151-155). For these critics, then, “Penelope” presents a number of textually compromising issues: Joyce’s influence as author functions so as to propagate a false image of an ostensibly autonomous woman; the episode portrays women through negative stereotypes, and, thus, the episode, rather than represent liberation or revolution, merely acts as another form of patriarchal oppression. Under Joyce’s control, Henderson writes, Molly like Gerty “cannot fully know or own even her own language,” as “Joyce keeps Molly in bed, inside the house, in her place” (Henderson 521). Thus, as Henderson claims, though there may exist a considerable segment of male readers to whom Molly’s soliloquy is appealing, it is this very appeal that is the problem. Molly is not a woman; she is what those “‘womanly,’ sensitive” men wish women to be (Henderson 517).

Yet, in spite of the articulation and critical sobriety with which this assessment of Molly is offered, the reading is, ultimately, flawed. The issue is not

necessarily that the interpretation is wrong, for – to take from Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia, which examines the way that a writer’s voice affects the language of his or her works – it is important to recognize the top-down relationship between author and text, and the potential issues that arise as an effect of the dynamic (Bakhtin 270-271; 324). The issue, instead, lies in the fact that, in these readings, the opponents of Molly’s efficacy as a character falsely assume that Joyce’s sex precludes him from writing a woman character,<sup>7</sup> as they also fail to consider the significance of Molly’s voice within what has been, before the “Penelope” episode, an almost entirely male-dominated novel. In regard to the former issue, it is perhaps best addressed by H  l  ne Cixous, who, in her essay, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” calls for women to create a new language – *  criture f  minine* – in order to overcome patriarchal oppression (Cixous 879). Notably, for Cixous, Molly’s soliloquy represents the ideal of this new language: “...and yes,” says Molly, carrying *Ulysses* off beyond any book and toward the new writing; “I said yes, I will yes” (Cixous 884). Although Cixous does not reconcile Joyce’s masculinity to the creation of a feminine language, that she uses his work as the exemplar of this *  criture f  minine* is significant in that it counters Henderson and Unkeless’ assumption that Joyce’s sex compromises his ability to write a woman’s voice. The reason, as Derek Attridge explains in his essay “Molly’s Flow: The Writing of “Penelope” and the Question of Women’s Language,” in which he builds from Cixous’ argument, is that, within Joyce’s

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<sup>7</sup> If we consider Judith Butler’s essay, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” we know that, while Joyce’s sex – his biology, or anatomy – denies him the physiological possibility of “becoming” the female sex, because gender – those behaviors, traits and characteristics associated with sex – is not intrinsically tied to sex, but is instead “performed,” Joyce has the power to express womanhood, even if he remains male (Butler 312).

work, though Joyce points to a difference in gender, the difference is not exclusive (Attridge 546). That is, while the unpunctuated “flow” of Molly’s soliloquy stylistically distinguishes her from Bloom and Stephen,<sup>8</sup> the point of Joyce’s text – which is made manifest in “Circe’s” crossdressing,<sup>9</sup> as well as Bloom’s ambiguous allusions to his own genitalia in “Lotos Eaters”<sup>10</sup> – is to move away from the gender ideologies that place “two sexes in unproductive opposition” (Attridge 562). Joyce asserts “neither an absolute difference between these opposed terms [female and male] nor a transcendence of all difference,” and thus, within the language of *Ulysses*, there is no rule that signifies Joyce’s inability to write a woman’s voice. Under his terms, though there may exist a difference between genders, it does not operate through a concrete binary. Therefore, to return to Cixous, as well as Henderson and Unkeless, the reason that Joyce can write a woman’s voice, and do so without compromising a kind of gendered integrity, is that, for him, there is no designation or demarcation that limits one sex to solely the expression of the gender with which it is associated. These are arbitrary, constructed traits, and though the hint of difference exists,

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, as Attridge notes, though many cite Molly’s flow as a sign of “mindlessness” to use Unkeless’s term, it is, in many ways, more structured and coherent than either Bloom or Stephen’s streams of consciousness: “The interior monologues of Stephen and Leopold infringe grammatical conventions far more radically—you only have to rewrite a stretch of Leopold’s monologue using the transcription conventions of “Penelope” to get a piece of language that really does overflow the boundaries of orthodox English” (Attridge 546)

<sup>9</sup> As Bella, tellingly, commands Bloom: “What you longed for has come to pass. Henceforth you are unmanned and mine in earnest, a thing under the yoke. Now for your punishment frock” (Joyce 50)

<sup>10</sup> “[Bloom] saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower” (Joyce 83).

Joyce's text shows that it is neither oppositional nor concrete; like Molly's flow, in *Ulysses'* language, genders are more fluid than we think.

Just as Joyce's influence can be accounted for through a consideration of the text's aims, the second major issue that skeptical critics of Molly's soliloquy raise – her “stereotyped” construction – may be addressed by an assessment of its purpose within the novel. For critics like Henderson and Unkeless, Molly, much like Gerty, is constructed both by and through traditional, repressive conceptions of femininity and womanhood. Yet, as Kimberly J. Devlin writes, “to claim Molly is a stereotype in a straightforward, unqualified way is to miss the subtleties of Joyce's representation of “woman” in *Ulysses'* last chapter” (Devlin 73). Molly, as Devlin argues, performs a strategic function. Through the character, *Ulysses* attempts to offer an image of woman, while it also seeks to deconstruct that conception. As an effect, the text relies on standard, recognizable characteristics of “woman,” like Molly's focus on sex, domesticity, and her relationship to the men around her (Devlin 87). Yet, while the text relies on these attributes to construct an image of Molly, it also deploys them in such a way that they destabilize popular assumptions and stereotypes of women. That is, as Devlin writes, “[Molly] weaves and unweaves ideological clichés. Molly is interesting to examine as an engendered character, insofar as Joyce represents her not as the feminine, but as cultural femininities – constructed, labile, assumable rejectable” (Devlin 74). When read in this way, the stereotypes, then, are not the product of a male writer's inability to conceive a woman's identity beyond “conventional” tropes assigned them. Instead, it is through these stereotypes that Joyce's text attempts to elicit change; in order to counter an idea of “what woman is,” *Ulysses*

must take into account ideas of “how woman is to be.” Therefore, though the stereotypes exist, their purpose is not necessarily to perform as concrete, essential characterization of woman, but as ideas that, as Devlin argues, Molly exposes to be but constructs – notions of woman that women can both assume and deny. As such, while Henderson and Unkeless emphasize the issues of stereotypes, their reading misses the ways in which the conventions function within the text, and, thus, their argument – though valuable – can be negotiated.

With the criticism of Molly’s soliloquy accounted for, the episode can then be examined. To begin, it must be noted that, before “Penelope,” Molly is, throughout the narrative, “spoken of,” by a variety of men. For example, in the “Hades” episode, John Henry Menton recalls that Molly “was a finelooking woman...a good armful she was;” in “Sirens,” Simon Dedalus fondly deems her a “buxom lass;” and in a more critical assessment, in “Cyclops,” the unnamed narrator refers to her as a “fat heap” (Joyce 102; 258; 293). Though there are other instances in which the men of Dublin reference Molly, the assessment and conversation on Bloom’s wife is relatively uniform: the men almost always refer to Molly in physical terms, and, for many, there is a question of why she would marry Bloom – a question succinctly summarized by Menton, who asks Ned Lambert, “what did she marry a coon like that for? She had plenty of game in her then” (Joyce 102). Until “Penelope,” the effect of these various considerations of, and questions about Molly is to grant her presence even in her absence. For, while the audience has not seen Molly outside of the “Calypso” episode, through these discussions, the audience achieves a sense of her identity. According to these men, Molly is physical, sexual, and, as the men’s confusion about her marriage to

Bloom signifies, she is something of a complex being – a woman that, because of her beauty, could have married a number of men, but said yes to that “coon,” Bloom.

Ostensibly, this discussion of Molly is inconsequential, as the rhetorical discussion of the character merely seems to operate as a means through which the audience may attain an idea of her, even in her absence. However, that Molly, as Paul Schwaber writes, “for 19/20ths of *Ulysses* figures all but in the awareness of others, most of them men,” is crucial for an interpretation of the character and her soliloquy (Schwaber 767). To return to the idea of dialogical repression that was explored both in the “Dueling Discourses” and “Who Painted the Lion?” chapters, this dynamic of Molly being “spoken of” serves as further representation of the way that women were denied autonomous language in popular discourse, and the consequences of that denial. As the way that men speak of Molly suggests, when women occupy the compromising, conventionalizing domestic sphere of popular discourse, they lose the ability to assert their own identity. Like Molly (as well as Gerty), women are reduced to their physical attributes, understood in terms of “finelooking” or “fat heap” – terms that they can neither negotiate nor rectify. Thus, as an effect, women are rendered objects to be “acted upon,” a consequence observed in the “Wandering Rocks” episode when Lenehan claims that he groped Molly while in the same carriage with Bloom, “She was well primed with a good load of Delahunt’s port under her bellyband. Every jolt the bloody car gave I had her bumping up against me. Hell’s delights! She has a fine pair, God bless her” (Joyce 225). Therefore, while the men’s various references to Molly are, seemingly, a function of the text – allusions to a character that is not present –

they operate as a sign of women's exclusion. Denied an autonomous voice, women become spoken of by men, and, thus, they become beholden to a language that is not their own. The male perspective dominates, allowing men to make of women what *they* will.

When the reader considers the way that Molly is spoken of within the narrative, that she *does* ultimately speak represents a significant act, one that both empowers Molly and effectively democratizes<sup>11</sup> the text. To understand how the inclusion of Molly's voice performs these tasks, it is first necessary to situate *Ulysses* as a polyphonic novel, and understand the implications of its status as such. As Bakhtin explains, polyphonic texts, or texts that incorporate "polyphony," contain a multitude of voices, sometimes typified in the inclusion of first-person narrators, as in the case of *Ulysses*. With their own perspectives and attitudes, these autonomous narrators work together in such a way that what unfolds is not "a multitude of authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousness, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of an event" (Bakhtin 6). A polyphonic novel, then, actively avoids focalized third person narration or single, first-person narration. The polyphonic novel, instead, embraces multiple narrators so as to deny a singular perspective on the events portrayed, and to distribute textual authority to a

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<sup>11</sup> By democratization, I mean the way that *Ulysses*, through its structure as a polyphonic text, and its inclusion of Molly as first-person narrator, lends equal representation to her, Bloom, and Stephen's perspectives. Clearly, *Ulysses* does not present any of these voices as completely correct or objective, nor does it lend each the same number of pages; however, since the text affords them each agency and autonomy, and produces them in such a way that they carry the same narrative weight, the novel itself becomes democratized in that it allows all three characters to voice their views and opinions in an unmediated state.

number of narrators, each of whom, through the independent “I” that accompanies his or her narration, gains the ability to discuss the matters of the novel from his or her own point of view. This ability to articulate individual perspective enables the narrator to assert control over the narrative, speak freely, and achieve an “unmediated state” in which he or she becomes a “fully valid, autonomous carrier of his [or her] own word” (Bakhtin 5). Therefore, polyphony effectively operates so as to disrupt what Bakhtin deems “the monologic plane,” or an essentially one-sided view (Bakhtin 7). The inclusion of multiple voices highlights that there does not exist one single perspective on an event, nor does there ever occur complete objectivity. A polyphonic novel, instead, reveals the subjectivity of experience, and incorporates multiple speakers not so as to complicate the action of the narrative, but to deny partiality and illuminate the various ways in which a single event, character, or theme can be viewed.

If one considers Bakhtin’s theory of polyphony in relation to “Penelope,” Molly’s narration, then, carries great textual significance. Through the inclusion of Molly’s voice alongside Bloom and Stephen’s, the reader attains an understanding of her identity beyond the ways in which the various men of the novel have spoken of her. Whether it manifests in Molly’s musings on Bloom, or her wistful account of life on Gibraltar, Molly now possesses an independent “I” that affords her agency, and the ability to assert her own sense of self (Joyce 697; 710). This ability thus empowers Molly in two crucial ways. First, the presence of her voice now means that *Ulysses* will not be told merely from Bloom and Stephen’s perspectives. Instead, with Molly as an autonomous narrator, the reader is now offered insight into the way that she views the both the proceedings and

characters of the novel with which the reader is now acquainted. Second, as an autonomous narrator, Molly escapes the compromised state that afflicted women speakers in the period. That is, to return to “Dueling Discourses,” though many women spoke in the popular discourse of the period, and even did so as first-person narrators, their language was distinctly compromised. Women spoke through a conventionalized language of femininity, and thus, their language was not their own, but instead, the language of “how woman should be,” according to a social standard. Molly, by contrast, faces no such issue. Speaking freely and explicitly on such taboo subjects as sex and sexual desire, Molly shows no need or wish to adhere to the “ladylike” ideal to which Gerty subscribes in the “Nausicaa” episode; Molly’s language is unfiltered, unbound to codified conception of femininity, and, thus, quite clearly, her own (Joyce 717; 720). As narrator, Molly, then, exists in that “unmediated state” to which Bakhtin refers. Molly possesses an independent “I,” and she is therefore empowered not only in that she is able to offer her own individual perspective, but in that she can do so autonomously – free from both men and “matters feminine.”

Beyond empowerment, Molly’s narrative likewise serves to democratize the text, and, to some extent, deconstruct separate spheres. Critically, Molly’s inclusion at the end of *Ulysses* does not democratize the text in that she engages Bloom in a long conversation, or that she directly, physically counters the men that have spoken of her. Instead, while subtle, Molly’s inclusion democratizes the text in that Molly gains representation. Though this representation may be several hundreds pages less than Bloom or Stephen’s, and though it may occur in its own section, perhaps intimating a perpetuation of separate spheres, the significance of

Molly's words ultimately outweighs these potential criticisms. As has been mentioned, through that empowered, independent "I," Molly ensures that the text does not belong solely to the men of the novel. Molly reflects on and addresses those central characters and themes of *Ulysses*, including Rudy, her affair, and Bloom, and, thus, to return to Bakhtin, she engages in a kind of conversation - one in which she, through her own perspective, sheds new light on previously encountered topics, characters, and ideas (Joyce 728; 709; 725). That Molly does so thus represents democratization and deconstruction, in that *Ulysses* now presents men *and women's* thoughts on the matters of the day. If the reader considers the consequence of separate spheres and the discursive stratification between men and women - namely, that women, due to their compromised, codified language could not engage in a discussion of subjects beyond the conventionally feminine - then this presentation of men and women's voices, and Molly's ability to converse and offer her opinion represents a profound, subversive act. For, while Molly's soliloquy must, by definition, appear in isolation, that isolation becomes irrelevant when one recognizes that, because of the subject matter she addresses and how she addresses it, she is now fully immersed both in the plot of the text, and the reader's understanding of *Ulysses*. Moreover, because Molly has the same authority as any other narrator, her word is as good as Bloom's or Stephen's. Therefore, "Penelope" serves to democratize the text in that, through the episode's inclusion of Molly's narration, the chapter grants Molly and her perspective the same autonomy and representation afforded Bloom and Stephen. Likewise, that Molly gains representation serves to deconstruct separate spheres. Through the distribution of authority that polyphony

performs, and the presentation of Molly's voice beside the voices of the men of the novel, *Ulysses* lends a woman's voice equal weight in the illumination of the text. That is, with Molly included, the reader can no longer rely solely on Bloom and Stephen's account; the reader must now consider Molly's voice, and understand the three perspectives together, rather than in separation.

In "Penelope," this notion of empowerment, democratization, and deconstruction through narration manifests in several intriguing ways. Among the most profound is Molly's discussion of her affair. Crucially, up to this point in the narrative, the affair has loomed large in Bloom's mind. From "Calypso," in which Bloom discovers Blazes Boylan's letter to Molly, "He stopped and gathered them. Mrs. Marion Bloom. His quick heart slowed at once. Bold hand. Mrs. Marion" to "Lestrygonians," in which Bloom spots Boylan and hides, "Is it? Almost certain. Won't look. Wine in my face. Why did I? too heady. Yes. I it is. The walk. Not see. Not see. Get on," to "Circe," in which Bloom visualizes his wife and Blazes' meeting that afternoon, and even imagines himself thanking Blazes after the singer tells the protagonist, "you can apply your eye to the keyhole and play with yourself while I just go through her some time," the affair consumes Bloom and near constantly recurs as the subject of his stream of consciousness (Joyce 59; 174; 527). Ultimately, Bloom's preoccupation reaches its climax in the penultimate "Ithaca" episode. Finally home after his night with Stephen, the narrative develops into a catechistic style, in which the text answers various questions from the day. Notably, the answers to these questions are characteristically lengthy, and aim for a kind of objectivity. As Jeri Johnson writes of "Ithaca," "Here most explicitly the text plays at being an encyclopedia,

though an oddly catechetical one. We acquire more “factual” information over the course of its pages than in any one other episode, probably more than in all episodes combined” (Johnson 958). With this “factual” objective, “Ithaca,” then, would seem to provide the reader greater insight into the happenings of the day. Thus, when “Ithaca” claims that Molly has had affairs with nearly twenty different men, including John Henry Menton, Simon Dedalus, and Blazes Boylan, the suggestion, seemingly, is that Molly, as Marilyn French writes, embodies the “figure of the whore” (Joyce 683; 258). Molly has taken advantage of her husband, carried out multiple affairs, and, effectively, defiled the sanctity of their marriage. Yet, as the reader learns from Molly’s soliloquy, this promiscuity – this “whorishness” – is not necessarily so. As Terrence Doody and Wesley Morris write, as Molly moves through her soliloquy and discusses her preparation for Boylan, her acknowledgment that Bloom anticipated the tryst, and her conflicted feelings on the act, the reader comes to “realize that her affair with Boylan is her first” (Doody and Morris 237).

That Molly’s tryst with Boylan is her first affair presents an immediate need to reevaluate the text, and the ways in which she has been portrayed so far. Before “Penelope,” Molly is generally posited as a promiscuous, overtly sensual woman. Whether this characterization manifests in the various men’s comments on her, and Lenehan’s claim that he groped her; Bloom’s anxiety riddled stream of consciousness and the allusions to him as a cuckold in “Nausicaa” and “Circe;” or, the seemingly objective narrator of “Ithaca’s” claim, Molly figures as a distinctly uninhibited woman, one whose desires overcome her sense of fidelity (Joyce 365; 444). Yet, as the reader learns once Molly begins to speak, she has

been falsely represented, and is neither “the whore,” nor driven entirely by her own selfishness. Instead, as Molly makes apparent, if anything, Bloom has been the transgressor in the relationship. Between his letters to other women, his late arrival home, which causes Molly to believe that he visited a prostitute – “she must have given him great value for his money of course he has to pay for it” – and his suspicious relationship with their servant, Mary Driscoll, whom Bloom invited to his and Molly’s Christmas dinner, it seems that Bloom is, in fact, the one responsible for creating an atmosphere of mistrust and infidelity (Joyce 691; 722; 691). Moreover, as the reader also learns, since Rudy’s death, Bloom has not made conventional love to Molly in over ten years (Joyce 728). Without that intimacy, Molly intimates that she had to look for another, and thus, as she claims “its all his own fault if I am an adulteress” (Joyce 730).

This articulation of events and actions is significant for a number of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, to return to polyphony, it is here that the reader recognizes the importance of representation and a character’s ability to speak freely in the text. Prior to “Penelope,” the reader’s conception of Molly relies entirely upon men, and her promiscuity becomes more than common-knowledge, but instead as “Ithaca” suggests, established fact. Yet, when the reader hears from Molly herself, he or she realizes that the text has only lent one (skewed) perspective. As Molly’s narration clarifies, she is not necessarily a wanton adulterer, but rather a woman caught in a difficult circumstance, who sought comfort in another. That “Penelope” allows Molly to clarify her position in this way demonstrates the importance of her inclusion. Through the possession of an independent “I,” Molly attains the power to redirect the reader and call into

question previously assumed to be true aspects of the text, like her apparent “whorishness.” Molly’s narration, moreover, serves to democratize the text. Though subtle, Molly’s soliloquy democratizes the text in that, through the inclusion of her voice, the reader can no longer rely upon Bloom’s word alone. Now that Molly is present in the narrative, the reader must instead take her perspective into account, reassess the information that *Ulysses* has presented so far, and consider the potential unreliability of Bloom’s narration. Molly’s soliloquy, then, democratizes the text through a distribution of authority, one that enables the reader to interpret the novel from multiple perspectives rather than one singular view. Furthermore, that Molly democratizes the text and proposes a reassessment of the novel, likewise signifies a deconstruction of separate spheres. For, in the inclusion of Molly’s autonomous voice, as she speaks freely on a number of subjects, *Ulysses* does not confine her narration to a realm of femininity. Instead, Molly’s words both address an important matter that extends well beyond “matters feminine,” as they also directly challenge Bloom’s account of her and the affair. By granting Molly the agency and ability to question Bloom’s claims, *Ulysses*, therefore, deconstructs separate spheres in that it renders the text interactive; Molly engages in a kind of conversation with Bloom, and thus a woman and man’s voices become positioned on the same authoritative plane, rather than in stratification.

Just as empowerment, democratization, and deconstruction manifest in Molly’s clarification of the affair, these aspects of her narration likewise manifest in the way that she discusses her relationships to the other men in the novel. To briefly return to “Nausicaa,” as *Ulysses* suggests through that chapter’s depiction

of events, due to the problematically exclusive and compromising nature of women's language in Dublin popular discourse, men attained an ability to render women objects, things to be "acted upon" – a dynamic that affects Molly both in the way that the aforementioned men of *Ulysses* discuss her, and how some, like Lenehan, even make claims about a tryst between them. Yet, in spite of the prevalence of this dynamic, as Molly evinces in "Penelope," this relationship was not necessarily fixed. For, in contrast to the ways in which men spoke of women as dependent subjects that received action from men – both culturally, as evidenced in the analysis of newspapers, as well as textually in those conversations that appear within those first "19/20ths" of *Ulysses* – under Molly's narrative control, women become the ones that commit the "doing." Molly's inversion of the traditional dynamic begins with her claim that men are dependent on women, "theyre so weak and puling when theyre sick they want a woman" (Joyce 690). Though the claim may be read as playing into the Victorian stereotype of the domesticated woman, who was, in fact, seen as in command of the home, Molly's assertions progress only to become more and more radical, until they ultimately become antithetical to the Victorian conception of "what woman is" (Ben Griffin 8). Molly, for example, goes on to claim of Stephen that she will act upon him, and seduce him, "I can teach him the other part Ill make him feel all over him till he half faints under me then hell write about me lover and mistress publicly too;" while, evoking the way that Gerty comes to conduct Bloom's reverie at the end of "Nausicaa," Molly also frames her relationships with Boylan and Bloom in such a way that she becomes the possessor of power, the one that acts upon the men. Of her encounter with Boylan, Molly states, "I

made him pull it out...the last time I let him finish,” and of giving Bloom another opportunity to make love to her, Molly thinks, “Ill let him do it off on me provided he doesn’t smear my drawers” (Joyce 726; 694; 730). When the reader considers Molly’s language, what one observes in these passages is the way that she, as narrator, constructs herself as the definite subject. She is the one that has the power to seduce men like Stephen, just as she is the one that allows – or to use her term, “lets” – men to become intimate with her and her body. Molly’s soliloquy, then, presents a crucial shift. As the autonomous narrator, Molly counters the idea that women were to exist as the resigned objects upon which men would act. Under her terms, Molly presents a new vision of woman, one that renounces men’s attempts at constructing her identity, and who asserts her own sense of self, beyond conventionalized notions of “what woman is.” For Molly, then, women assume a place of dominance, one that is contingent upon a sense of agency and autonomy.

While perhaps simplistic today, within the cultural and historical context of the novel and the period in which it was produced, Molly’s reframing of the relationship between men and women represents a notable form of empowerment. On the most basic level, through her language, Molly empowers women in that she inverts a gender trope. By contending that she acts on men, Molly expresses a kind of behavior and agency typically associated with masculine action. In doing so, Molly, then, shows that gender roles, while prevalent, are not intrinsically assigned: women, despite a culture that suggested otherwise, could indeed exhibit coded masculine traits, and possess the same agency, autonomy, and power typically associated with men. Molly, as Irina Rasmussen Goloubeva writes, thus

escapes “the private space of the bedroom and undermines the masculine fantasy of the ‘other,’” as she shows that there is not necessarily an inferior or superior gender subject position (Goloubeva 396). More subtly, and perhaps more powerfully, Molly’s reframing of the relationship between men and women serves as an act of empowerment in that her negotiation of the terms reflects her own autonomy. That is, while some critics like Unkeless and Henderson have dismissed Molly, her ability to rework traditional gender roles serves as a testament to her power. The act illustrates that Molly, like any speaker, can reassess the terms of the status quo, and posit a new conception of ideas, identities, and the dynamics between them. When the reader considers the period in which *Ulysses* was written, this ability becomes significant, in that, in contrast to those resigned women of the “Ladies Sections,” Molly challenges men that attempt to speak for women- including a Bishop, whose language on women Molly effectively dismisses “that old Bishop that spoke off the altar his long preach about womans higher functions about girls now riding the bicycle and wearing peak caps and the new woman bloomers God send him sense and me more money” – as she also subverts the notion that women were limited solely to discussions of fashion, beauty, and society (Joyce 712). Molly contends that women possess power, and in making that contention, she proves her own empowerment.

To build from this idea that Molly’s language itself acts as a sign of empowerment, her narration once again operates so as to democratize the text and work toward the deconstruction of separate spheres. Molly’s narration democratizes the text in that, through her reframing, the reader is now confronted

with a woman's perspective that challenges the power dynamic between man and woman that the novel has so far presented. Until "Penelope," the men of the narrative act upon women, whether in small moments like Bloom's attempt to catch a glimpse of a woman's stockings on the tram, or, in more powerful instances, such as Bloom's interaction with Gerty, in which he "makes her his" (Joyce 71; 349). Yet, with Molly's claim that she "lets" Bloom (and Boylan) become intimate with her, this dynamic is effectively undermined. In control of the narrative, and in possession of that independent "I," Molly makes apparent that, while there may exist a standard for the relationship between men and women, when women are given voice, given representation, the standard is not necessarily so. Instead, as Michel Foucault explains, because power is "expressed rather than possessed," then depending on the way that the relationship is framed – that is, how one constructs the subject and the object – one can see that women, too, may express power; power is not isolated to a male authority (Foucault 26-27). That Molly's narration exposes this point thus represents democratization in that it offers a woman's perspective on power and the relationship between men and women.

Moreover, the inclusion of Molly's perspective likewise serves to deconstruct separate spheres. For, in giving Molly both the opportunity and the autonomy to assert her view, and to do so in such a way that her perspective appears alongside Bloom and Stephen's, *Ulysses* produces her in contrast to the women of those "Ladies Sections." As an empowered narrator, Molly refuses confinement to subjects perceived as conventionally feminine, and thus, she is, unlike those women writers, free to engage in a discussion on men and women's

roles and relationships. Since Molly's view on the relationship between men and women directly addresses the male characters of the novel, and their perspectives on the way that the two sexes are "to be," the presence of Molly's assessment of men and women's respective "place" thus functions as an act of deconstruction. For, rather than place men as the sole subjects with the authority to discuss gender relations, *Ulysses*, in giving Molly narration, and thus a platform through which to communicate her opinion, presents an interactive conversation. With Molly's voice represented, women now participate in the discussion of the way that they and men relate, and thus, they are no longer confined to a feminine sphere.

In consideration of power, democratization, deconstruction, perhaps the most profound act Molly performs with her narrative is her ultimate affirmation of Bloom. From the beginning of the novel in the "Calypso" episode, the fate of the characters' marriage is cast in doubt. Bloom, aware of Molly's affair, is resigned to anxiety and reminiscence, forced to find happiness in the annals of memory: "Wildly I lay on her, kissed her; eyes her lips her stretched neck, beating, woman's breasts...She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding, she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me. Me. And me now" (Joyce 168). Meanwhile, Molly, as has been noted, can only think that it is Bloom's fault that she has become an adulteress. During the soliloquy, this sense of doubt, blame, and melancholy pervades Molly's thoughts, as she thinks to herself, "Id rather die 20 times over than marry another one of their sex," an anti-Bloom sentiment that culminates in her comparison of Bloom to Boylan (Joyce 694). Among other traits, Molly considers their respective "size" and "spunk," their levels of education," and their abilities to make love (Joyce 694; 726; 698-699). Though Molly acknowledges

Bloom's advantage in certain areas, between her expressed desire to go to Belfast with Boylan, "wouldnt be pleasant if he did suppose our rooms at the hotel were beside each other and any fooling went on in the new bed," and her remarks toward the end of the chapter on Bloom's peculiarities and failures, "living with him so cold never embracing me except sometimes when hes asleep the wrong end of me," as well as her unconnected, though still significant desire to seduce Stephen, "Im not too old for him if hes 23 or 24," *Ulysses* suggests that the relationship will fail (700; 727; 725). For, following Molly's lines of thought, Bloom has been usurped as husband; his position already overtaken by Blazes, and presumably, if Molly has her way, by Stephen later on. Yet, in the eighth sentence, there is a shift. First, Molly seems to dismiss Boylan, as she calls him an "ignoramus" and considers the rudeness of his having spanked her earlier in the day (726). Then, after further criticism of Bloom, she decides to grant her husband an ultimatum: "Ill give him one last chance" (729). As Molly ponders what this "chance" will entail, suddenly, her thoughts turn to Bloom's proposal. Returning to Howth Head, Molly thinks of why she first loved Bloom; she recalls, "...and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is" (731). Rediscovering the love that marked their initial connection, Molly then concludes her soliloquy, "I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I say yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfumed yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes" (732). With this final line, Molly not only accepts Bloom, both then and now, she affirms him.

Although there exists an argument that Molly's final line merely operates so as to confirm Victorian values,<sup>12</sup> as it plays into the notion of the domesticated woman who "saves" her husband and restores the sanctity of the home, when the reader considers the dynamics at play, Molly's "Yes" resonates far beyond separate spheres. Through Molly's affirmation of Bloom, the text not only delivers its greatest example of empowerment through narration, but makes its most meaningful case for democratization, and deconstruction. To begin with empowerment, as John Turner writes, it is through Molly's "Yes" that Bloom becomes the novel's titular hero - that he finally ascends to his role as Ulysses. Turner claims, "She doesn't accept him openly or outright or simply, but she does accept him, remembers the kiss he gave her," and in "recreating the moment of their engagement," avers Bloom's value as a man (Turner 54). For, in saying "Yes," Molly shows that, in spite of Bloom's faults, his idiosyncrasies, his odd attempts at love, there remains a reason that "she liked him," and a reason why she accepted him, and continues to do so. With this acceptance, Bloom, then, becomes Ulysses in that, through the possibility of reunion, he is no longer merely, like the horse he accidentally tips off, a "throwaway." Now, through this "Yes," there is hope: a sign that he can, indeed "win" over Blazes. That Bloom's ultimate embodiment of Ulysses operates through Molly's "Yes" thus serves as a sign of empowerment. Without Molly's words, without her affirmation of Bloom, the novel would end anticlimactically. Like Bloom's relationship to Stephen,

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<sup>12</sup> Bruce Williams writes, "Molly is an embodiment not of what woman is, but of what man, at least in a sexist society, would like her to be - a warm body, lying in bed and moaning "yes" (Williams 546).

which concludes not with the happy union of the novel's figurative father and son, but rather Stephen's recitation of an anti-Semitic song, if *Ulysses* were to conclude with "Ithaca," and leave out Molly's "Yes," there would be nothing to affirm Bloom, no sign of validation (Joyce 644). For Molly to say "Yes," then, and effectively coronate Bloom reflects her empowerment in that his success as protagonist ultimately proves contingent upon her word. Therefore, with this act, the reader observes that Molly possesses power, and that her narrative performs a crucial function: it is through Molly's "Yes" that Bloom achieves redemption (Lisa Sternlieb 772).

That Molly's narrative enables Bloom to achieve redemption, likewise serves as an act of democratization and deconstruction that denies the Victorian reading of her narrative. Though less overt than the other previously explored examples, Molly's affirmation of Bloom operates as a sign of democratization in that the reader finally gains Molly's perspective on their relationship. The reader, rather than understand Molly and Bloom through the latter's eyes, comes to learn in "Penelope" that Molly cherishes the memories of their early days together, that she was attracted to his attempts at resembling Lord Byron, and that, as has been noted, there was a very specific reason why she fell in love with him: "I saw he understood or felt what a woman is" (Joyce 695; 731). These moments, however brief, democratize the text in that the reader can no longer interpret Molly and Bloom's marriage through Bloom's perspective alone. Now, with Molly's soliloquy included in the text, the reader must take into account the way that Molly sees her husband, and consider the passion with which she recalls the early days of their relationship. To return to the affair, this early passion, among other

things, intimates the devastation of Rudy's death, and the way that it affected the Bloom household. Molly, from this account, did not turn to Boylan out of spite, as Bloom's narration would suggest; instead, her affair, as we learn from her, seems an attempt to recapture the old flames of her earlier love life. That "Penelope" illuminates Molly and Bloom's marriage in this way thus signifies democratization in that the reader attains a fuller image of the way that the couple view one another, as well as the way that each character understands their love, both as it was before Rudy, and as it is now, long after his death.

Perhaps more importantly, though, Molly's affirmation of Bloom also functions so as to deconstruct separate spheres. Notably, a central belief of separate spheres ideology was that women had power in the home, and the ability to direct their husbands (Griffin 8). Seemingly, this aspect of separate spheres would compromise Molly's narrative, as her affirmation would merely reinscribe a Victorian belief. Yet, when read archivally, one realizes that this is not the case. To return to the "Ladies' Sections," as the reader observed in "Dueling Discourses," while women could "speak," their speech was not their own. Filtered through a language of conventionalized femininity, these women lacked the autonomy to assert their own view, and thus became compromised: they were featured in popular discourse, but did not participate in its proceedings. Critically, this dynamic carried over to separate spheres ideology. In the domestic sphere, as Stephanie Coontz writes, women were understood to possess a "healing" power for their men (Coontz 166). This "power" stemmed from a notion that women were innately pure, effectively asexual beings, who, by virtue of their innocence would provide their husbands with a kind of "moral guidance" (Coontz 164-166).

Though some women, like Nathaniel Hawthorne's wife, Sophia Peabody, asserted that this "healing" role lent women "a power which no king or conqueror can cope with," this "power" was, ultimately illusory (Coontz 162). Like the women of the "Ladies Sections," the domestic woman lacked any and all self-possession; their "power" originated not in any action that they performed, but rather, in that resigned purity that they were thought to possess (Coontz 165). When the reader recognizes this dynamic, it quickly becomes apparent that Molly's affirmation of Bloom does not uphold separate spheres ideology; it deconstructs it. For, through that final "Yes," *Ulysses* establishes the crucial role that Molly assumes in her marriage. From the line "*I* asked him with *my* eyes to ask again," to the conclusive affirmation, *Ulysses* posits Molly as a figure of agency, the sole character who has the ability to redeem Bloom (Joyce 732). That the text renders her in this way thus deconstructs separate spheres in that it subverts the notion of the resigned woman from whom the man uncovers a sense of morality. Under *Ulysses* terms, the woman instead conducts the action, and utters the words that deliver the man. By depicting Molly in this way, and illuminating her significance, the text thus makes a claim for a kind of mutuality rather than the alterity of separate spheres. *Ulysses* shows that, since man and woman must constitute their sense of self through one another, as Bloom's "coronation" evinces, a woman cannot be reduced to object, just as man cannot be made definite subject. Instead, due to a mutual dependence, men and women must work together, with their perspectives engaged not in the cacophony of separation, but in the harmony of unison.

As the final episode, Molly's soliloquy represents a radical conclusion. Rather than end with the Bloom focused "Where?" of "Ithaca," or Stephen's wandering into the night, with "Penelope," *Ulysses* offers the perspective of one that has, until now, been spoken of and for. In doing so, the novel and the parameters of its relations become reworked. Through Molly's eyes, the audience comes to better understand her affair, and the reasons behind the tryst; is exposed to a reframing of men and women's relations; and observes that, ultimately, the power to coronate Bloom rests not in *Ulysses'* hero, but in its Penelope. The chapter, then, is significant on a number of levels. By including Molly's voice, "Penelope" not only allows Molly to assert her identity, but, in granting her narrative autonomy, rescues her from the margins of textual exclusion. Once included, Molly both counters and affirms. She exposes the fallacies of Dublin's gender relations, just as she delivers her "Yes," thereby giving light to a new vision.

## Conclusion

In a letter to his partner, Nora Barnacle, Joyce writes, “my mind rejects the whole present social order and Christianity – home, the recognized virtues, and religious doctrines...Now I make war upon it by what I write and say and do. I cannot enter the social order except as a vagabond” (Joyce 207). Though author’s intent is a lens of interpretation fraught with conflict, Joyce’s statement is telling. The declaration of “war” suggests the nature of his writing. Rather than accept the status quo, the “way things are,” Joyce’s works ask how the world “could be.”

Though many scholars, including Christine Froula, Colleen Lamos and Christine van Boheemen Saaf, as well as Sean P. Murphy have focused on the way that *Ulysses* enacts “war” on Dublin culture through its depiction of taboo aspects of gender, like female sexuality, male insecurity, and transvestism, as this thesis aims to illustrate, *Ulysses* reimagines how Dublin society could “be” in an equally significant, thus far unexplored, way. Through extensive primary research, it becomes clear that, at the turn of century in Dublin, men and women occupied distinct positions in Dublin society. Likely a continued effect of separate spheres ideology, in the city’s popular discourse, men possessed power and agency, while women were confined to a discursive domestic sphere, one in which their writing was filtered through a conventionalized language of femininity. When this dynamic is recognized, *Ulysses* assumes new significance. The novel’s use of multiple first-person narrators, rather than acting as textual conceit, serves to destabilize the social order found in the newspapers of the period. *Ulysses*, through its portrayal of female characters, not only illuminates

and thus exposes the consequential ways in which Dublin culture constructed femininity, as in the case of Gerty MacDowell in “Nausicaa,” but also, through the inclusion of Molly as narrator, affords a woman the agency and power that would have been denied her in turn of the century Dublin culture. In this way, *Ulysses* does more than merely “vivisection the psychopolitical underpinnings of the authority wielded over gender,” as Froula posits; the novel, moreover, performs a kind of dialogical subversion, in which it reveals and undermines both how men and women were conventionally supposed “to be,” as well as how men and women were to speak.

That *Ulysses*’ performs this dialogical subversion is significant for many reasons. On a cultural level that extends beyond the page, the novel’s destabilization of men and women’s discursive separation demonstrates the necessity of multiple perspectives in the formation and understanding of a social reality. That is, to return to Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of the novel, as *Ulysses* illustrates through Molly’s soliloquy, to confine women – or any subject, for that matter – to a singular mode of speaking that limits their ability to participate in the discussion of an issue problematically denies a semblance of veracity (Bakhtin 5). Reality, Bakhtin writes, is interactive, constructed by and through the perspectives of many, and thus it is necessary to have multiple voices, or “a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world,” to work together to construct “the unity of an event” (Bakhtin 6). For, while there may not exist a definitive, concrete, universally agreed upon truth in an event, in order to understand how an action like Molly Bloom’s affair transpired, it is not sufficient to have only one (male) perspective; one must hear from the individual

involved, and understand, or attempt to understand, his or her view of the situation. When considered in this way, *Ulysses*' dialogical subversion, or its destabilization of the conventional ways that men and women were to speak, thus operates as a profound statement. The text both exposes the underlying consequences of a society that limits the ability of its subjects to speak, including its effects on agency, autonomy, and the ability to represent the self, as it also affirms the need for the participation of multiple subjects in the construction and understanding of a shared social reality.

On another level, that *Ulysses*' performs this dialogical subversion of Dublin culture is significant in that it presents new interpretative possibilities for reading the text. As has been noted in the introduction, despite the considerable amount of literature on *Ulysses*, there is a distinct paucity of primary research on the novel, even in interpretations that read Joyce's work within its Dublin cultural context. Due to this lack of primary research, in cultural interpretations of *Ulysses*, there remain aspects and functions of the text that critics have not yet understood or identified as significant – such as the novel's subversion of the conventional ways that men and women were to speak – simply because they have not yet looked into the city's cultural context, and have instead relied on secondary accounts of Dublin that presents an idea not of how things were, but how they were supposed to “be.” Though the use of secondary sources has led to some excellent scholarship, the reliance on secondary sources also presents certain scholastic opportunity. Because there is a paucity of primary research on the cultural context of *Ulysses*, there are likely a number of cultural dynamics to which the text corresponds, or responds, that have not yet been recognized. And,

though it must be conceded that historicist interpretations are not the lone means through which to regard a given novel, that this swath of underexplored information exists remains notable – especially for an extensively written upon novel like *Ulysses* – in that it demonstrates that there are new avenues through which to approach the novel, and find meaning in the text.

One such avenue - one related to, but just beyond the scope of this thesis - may lie in a study of masculinity. Since the gender dynamic found in popular discourse most directly affected women, this thesis paid little attention to men, and instead focused on *Ulysses*' female characters, and the way that they figured within the novel's turn of the century Dublin cultural context. Despite this lack of focus on men, however, based on a cursory glance of the way that men were rendered in Dublin culture, it seems that an examination of the way that *Ulysses* depicts Bloom and Stephen would prove fruitful. Perhaps using the same approach that this thesis employed, one could study men's role and construction in popular discourse, and then examine how Bloom and Stephen either play into, or disrupt that role. Moreover, should a scholar wish to assess Bloom and Stephen outside of a dialogical lens, he or she could also analyze the ideas, behaviors, and characteristics associated with men at the turn of the century in Dublin, and observe how Bloom and Stephen function in relation to those cultural identities. In any case, the study would help contribute to the current scholarship on Bloom and Stephen, and allow the reader to better understand the characters, and how they perform in *Ulysses*.

Ultimately, this thesis aimed to show that, in spite of the amount of criticism on *Ulysses*, there are still unexplored ways in which to interpret the text.

Whether these avenues result in such studies as this thesis' exploration of the way that men and women spoke at the turn of the century, and how that convention figures in *Ulysses*, or an examination of how *Ulysses* portrays masculinity, the object remains the same: through the analysis of cultural context, the text becomes illuminated. Both the scholar and the reader understand the novel through an idea of how things were, rather than how they were supposed "to be," according to cultural convention, and thus they attain a better sense of the novel, as well as the way that Joyce made "war" on Dublin society.

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