Introduction

The celebrations for the Bloomsday Centenary Festival were held around the world in June, 2004. It is unquestionable that James Joyce established the fictional date’s fame with his *Ulysses*, the world’s most acclaimed novel. The question posed by Hélène Cixous in *The Exile of James Joyce*—“How far and to what degree can one speak of ‘realism’ in Joyce’s art?”—may pertinently voice many Joycean interests and concerns for how Joyce’s poetics affects his treatment of reality (x). Cixous believes that “Joyce wrote *Ulysses*, the work which reconciles unity and multiplicity to an end which is both realistic, moral and universal” (673). To some degree, it is agreed that the hour-by-hour events unfolded in the novel epitomize the life of the twentieth-century Dubliners. “The concrete evocation of a Dublin day in June 1904 in *Ulysses* is,” argues Derek Attridge, “a textual achievement in which Leopold Bloom is alive as George Russell, and the burying of Paddy Dignam in Glasnevin Cemetery as historical an event as the running of the Gold Cup” (186). The distinction between the fictive creations in *Ulysses* and the referents of the historical realities that Joyce weaves together with his creations does not obscure the realistic delineation of Dublin’s city landscape and the citizens’ psychic landscape in the 1920s. Recounting one-day life of the fictional everyman and everywoman in *Ulysses*, Joyce furthermore recasts his insight of Ireland in his time into a universal one.

Joyce’s oeuvre, for both readers and critics, is an acknowledged challenge. His *Ulysses*, since its publication in 1922, has engaged a daunting number of theoretical analyses and critical assessments. As Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer put it, “any reader cannot but feel that the text constantly overreaches the landmarks established by the best critical constructions. It is impossible to exert any mastery over it, its *shifts* are such that you can never pin it down in any definite place” (10). In addition, Alan Roughley notes the parallel between the development of Joycean Criticism and that of critical theory: “the
history of Joyce studies can in some ways be seen as a microcosm of the historical
development of critical theory and its application to literary texts” (x). The
comprehensiveness of *Ulysses* affords Joyce studies of different critical trends to apply
their theories to the text, and the applications fulfill their critical agendas respectively.
Many of these fruitful academic results demonstrate the close and complex relationship
between Joyce’s *Ulysses* and its particular time and social context. It is also due to their
notice of “power” and “power relations” within a piece of literary work that most critics
are able to adequately amplify the goal of their critique through the textual interpretations.

Speaking of power and its relation to knowledge, Michel Foucault exactly comes to
my mind. Although Foucault and his critical works are several decades behind us, his
ideas remain of incomparable value. Terry Eagleton states in *After Theory* that the world
has changed dramatically since Foucault first settled to his typewriter (2). Like the status
and vision Joyce has built up in the literary canon, not much of Foucault’s originality and
ambitiousness of his theoretical formulation has been matched. Many critical theorists in
the wake of Foucault develop Foucault’s original ideas, add to them, criticize them, and
apply them. Thinking of Foucault’s influence, I start figuring on the application of
Foucault’s insights into power and knowledge to Joyce’s creation of the Irish life in
*Ulysses*. When reviewing the applications of theory in Joyce studies, I discover that the
way many Joyceans approach Joyce’s writing and the outcomes of their study bear close
resemblance to what are regarded as Foucauldian methodology and Foucault’s critical
insights.

Feminist Joyce criticism designs a re-consideration of *Ulysses* in feminist terms by
drawing upon Molly Bloom’s revolutionary feats in the finale of the novel, and attempts a
fresh uncovering of feminist consciousness in this male-authored masterpiece. Feminist
Joyceans strive to unearth the neglected female appearances in Joyce’s work and Joyce
criticism. Joyce’s attitude towards women and his portrayal of female characters in
Ulysses have provoked much debate in the study of Joyce. For instance, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar seek to evidence Joyce’s misogyny throughout episodes in Ulysses. In the first volume of No Man’s Land—The War of the Words, Gilbert and Gubar look at “Nausicaa” as an episode that expresses Joyce’s “highbrow male modernist disgust with the [female] lowbrow scribbler” (146). Examining the power-relations between the male author and the female characters he creates, Gilbert and Gubar claim that Gerty MacDowell “attempts to etherealize herself” and Joyce wants his readers to realize that Gerty can only “ascend to sentimentality” (Vol.1, 232). The “omission of intellect” in Joyce’s female characters rather exposes the male author’s anxiety and compromise; in other words, “the commercial crap of her [Gerty’s] genteel Victorian diction is at least in part associated with the reaction-formation of intensified misogyny with which male writers greeted the entrance of women into the literary marketplace” (Gilbert and Gubar, Vol.1, 232-33). As regards Molly Bloom, they suggest that she has been characterized as a woman who “dribbles and drivels as she dreams of male jinglings” and “babble[s] the parrot-like blankness” as she “respond[s] to abstract concepts” (Gilbert and Gubar, Vol.1, 232). Gilbert and Gubar believe such dramatized misogyny in the work of male writers results largely from men’s anxiety while they are “disturbed by their dependence on women” and “troubled by women’s usurpation of the market place” (Vol.1, 147). They consider that Joyce, like other major twentieth-century male authors, suffocates women’s gradual independence and equality with men by means of words which connote controls over the fictional females. The “parodic narrative” of Joyce’s writing, in the eyes of Gilbert and Gubar, implies that female characters are both figuratively and literally degraded; in this regard, Joyce was deemed a misogynist (Vol.2, 333). It is manifest that the conclusion Gilbert and Gubar hold for Joyce not only expresses their feminist intentionality but also echoes the foundations that Foucault has laid for the concept of power and its relation to knowledge.
It is apparent that feminists like Gilbert and Gubar are filled with anxiety about the authorship of female writers and the literary voices of female characters in the canonized works. Therefore, they locate their critical stance at the refutation to Joyce’s language that stereotypes and subjugates female characters. Nevertheless, other feminist critics may not share the same viewpoint; they rather value the subversive traits of Joyce’s portraying women in *Ulysses* and take up the recuperation of woman subjectivity with a re-interpretation of the text. To argue against some strong and negative criticisms of Joyce’s depiction of Molly Bloom, Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless find both historical accuracy and social authenticity crucial to feminist evaluation in exploring Joyce’s female characters. In *Women in Joyce*, they contend that the historical period in which Joyce wrote *Ulysses* must be taken into consideration: “it is possible for Molly to be male-identified but nonetheless realistic. It might, in fact, be historically accurate to assume that a woman of Molly’s era would probably interpret her sexuality in terms of male attraction” (Henke and Unkeless xiv). That is to say, Joyce’s characterization of women, situated in the historical context of his lifetime, exhibits to what extent individuals are shaped by discourse. Dwelling on the historical contexts of *Ulysses*, Henke and Unkeless’s argument projects the archaeological methodology they inherit from Foucault. In a similar archaeologist vein, Bonnie Kime Scott affirms Joyce’s importance for feminist literary criticism. Unlike some feminists who object to the study of Joyce for Joyce’s being a major male author, Scott suggests studying Joyce within a feminist framework and examining the mythical, historical, and cultural contexts for Joyce’s women in Ireland. She advises a feminist approach to Joyce in *Joyce and Feminism*: “Critics have been amused by traces of misogyny in Joyce’s conversation and letters. To compensate, feminist critics must consider the corresponding attitudes of the usual male audience for such pronouncements. They must also focus upon Joyce’s feminist statements, never carefully collected and attended to in previous criticism” (Scott
6-7). Also, she expounds the need for Joyce to use women in creating his work and excavates Joyce’s sensitivity to the problems of women in their real life. Scott is very aware that the “Joycean critical canon has been superintended by men, and male critics have emerged as its stars and privileged theoreticians, though women began to occupy more visible positions in the late 1970s” (James Joyce 2). In view of such disequilibrium of sexual power relations in Joyce studies, Scott’s endeavor to recover the language and life of female characters neglected in Joyce’s text can be valued as a prospective revolution confronting the andro-centricism in Joyce criticism.

The spirit and approach with which Foucault launches archaeology onto the history of insanity in the Age of Reason in Madness and Civilization (1961) must inspire confidence in feminist literary criticism to declare Ulysses, such a canonized work by the major male writer, a feminist text. Thinking both Joyce’s depiction of women and the literary critical emphases on Joyce’s female characters rather limited, Feminist critics aim for a re-vision of women and Joyce in fullness and diversity. Mary Colum sees no harm in the contents of Ulysses which were formerly accused of being offensive and anti-feminist. She interprets the revelation of the mind of Molly Bloom in “Penelope” as “an extraordinary exhibition of the mind of a female gorilla who has been corrupted by contact with humans” (Colum 233). Julia Kristeva thinks highly of the subversive nature of Joyce’s writing. She is particularly interested in the history of the “Religion of the Father,” and she sees Joyce’s writing as an upheaval in this history (Kristeva 156). Joyce’s Ulysses is important, for Kristeva, because of its reversal of the rejection of the mother and the “reinstatement of maternal territory in language” (137). The politics of gender in Joyce is being formulated into an agenda for subversion with which the feminist practitioners expect to hew a path through the patri-dominated jungle.

Traces of what Foucault has contributed to theory and criticism since the sixties are also manifest in the New Historicist Joyce and the Joyce of culture criticism that emerge
in the Joycean territory around the nineties. The New Historicist and Cultural Joyceans, sharing the subversive ambition with the feminist Joyce, explore topics such as the construction of the gendered body in Joyce’s text and the intersections of gender, race, and colonialism. Cheryl Temple Herr, in “The Silence of the Hares: Peripherality in Ireland and in Joyce,” points out the silenced and marginal position of the Irish people. She brings the theoretical cluster of postcolonialism in her essay and argues that the colonial history has long oppressed Irish people and relegated the Irish to “an afterthought of Europe”\(^1\) (qtd. in Herr 219). Herr proposes a subversive reading of English literature through “the heterogeneously subaltern eyes” of the Irish (219). This postcolonial re-reading of Joyce accords with Foucault’s contention in his first volume of history of sexuality that the idiosyncrasy of homosexuality forms in the homosexual an identifiable subjectivity. A subversive rediscovery of the effaced Irish in the established canon of English literature can bring about a certain counter-discourse to the canonized anthologies. The site of the repressed becomes the Foucauldian site of resistance. Norms by which homosexuality is relegated to the abnormal and deviant render the homosexual tangible appearances; the perceptible marginality of the Irish enables Irish people to articulate their subjectivities within the colonial and postcolonial contexts of Ireland.

To decode the interweaving cultural texts in Joyce’s writing, the Joyceans of Culture Criticism and New Historicism apply more or less Foucault’s conception of discourse to their critical assessments. As Tracey Teets Schwarze puts forward in the introduction to *Joyce and the Victorians*, “the cultural ‘text’ is a tightly constructed tapestry of innumerable fibers, each discursive thread, when loomed, becoming inseparable from the others” (2-3). She argues that Joyce “transforms Irish-Victorian and Irish-Edwardian culture into a multifaceted, discursive narrative composed of a variety of rhetorics—political, religious, gendered,” and renders the subjectivities of his characters “surrounded

\(^1\) Herr quotes “an afterthought of Europe” from Joyce’s *Stephen Hero* in which Stephen sees his world from the perspective of the pope while reflecting on the religion of Ireland (53).
and shaped by the force this discourse exerts” (3). *Ulysses*, for Schwarze, is the novel in which Joyce expands his exploration of the impact of Victorian and Edwardian cultural discourses on Irish subjectivity. The characters are shaped by the social forces of gender, politics, and religion. Yet, Schwarze contends that Joyce achieves deconstruction from within the authoritative discourse by virtue of “the conflation of apparently dissimilar discourses into unsettling synthesis” (10). For example, the discourse of the confession and penance ritual and the ecclesiastical power is compared to sadism according to Bloom’s associative logic in “Lotus Eaters,” and the icon of the Blessed Virgin is juxtaposed with the sexual desire filtered through religious dogma in Gerty’s musings in “Nausicaa” (Schwarze 10-11). Joyce unsettles and denaturalizes the authority of religious discourse through synthesizing the colliding ideas and images, and hence, he destabilizes the discursive dominance from within the discursive practice. Schwarze’s observation about the collisions resulting from Joyce’s conflation attest to the Foucauldian attacks on the self-evident appearance of discourse and illustrate the fissures, contradictions, and traces of being contrived in a seemingly seamless discourse.

Carol Shloss launches feminist and post-colonial critique within Ireland’s social and political context during the period of Molly’s life. In “Molly’s Resistance to the Union: Marriage and Colonialism in Dublin, 1904,” Shloss aligns the conjugal suppression that Molly, an Irish woman, faced in 1904 with the civil suppression of the Irish under George Wyndham Unionist government in the early 1900s. Like an archaeologist, Shloss brings the readers back to the Irish society in 1904 where questions of autonomy were at issue, with her explicit documentary analyses in respect of historical backgrounds, Anglo-Irish political context, and the Irish marriage laws at that time. She claims that Molly’s acts in “Penelope” externalize her anti-unionist inherency within the limited space which she is confined to physically and politically. More specifically, Shloss indicates that what Molly spent an entire day doing and thinking epitomizes Foucault’s idea of insurrections of
subjected knowledges (116). Making direct reference to Foucauldian terminology, Shloss attempts to render both her argument and Molly’s behavior in the novel “capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion” (Foucault, *PK* 85).

Discovery of these affinities to Foucault’s critical conceptions in the above studies of Joyce encourages me to have a try at approaching Joyce’s *Ulysses*, in which I am particularly interested in the characters’ appearances in the novel and how they are shaped into such appearances, directly with Foucauldian theorizing. Reading *Ulysses* in the light of Foucault, I learn that a lapse of forty years does not estrange the content of James Joyce’s writing and the critical conceptualization of Michel Foucault from each other. Joyce and Foucault have the understanding of discourse, power/knowledge, and individual’s subjectivity in common. Ideas amplified in Foucault’s theoretical formulation have taken shape in *Ulysses* and Joyce’s characterizing personae in accordance with the Irish context; moreover, Joyce seems to have envisioned Foucault’s critical prospect in his novel. Before moving off to the chapters analyzing how Joyce’s characterization fleshes out Foucault’s exploration of discourse, power, and knowledge, I need to brief the framing of Foucault’s critical concepts first in the following discussions.

Foucault had expressed his distrust of the “truthfulness” of the so-called truth since his first publication, *Madness and Civilization*, in 1961. Truth that people believe to be true, for Foucault, is simply a discourse that succeeds in convincing people of its genuineness and legitimacy without being questioned. The appearance with which a truth claims to be the truthful knowledge implies a certain construction of the truth’s status of being undoubtedly true. This construction heavily relies on a form of power that perpetuates the truthfulness of this truth. However neutral a truth is assumed, the neutrality should always be called into question. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault’s

---

2 James Joyce (1882-1941) was older than Michel Foucault (1926-84) by forty years; Joyce’s *Ulysses* was published in 1922, also almost forty years earlier than the year of Foucault’s first work published in 1961.

attack is aimed at the schemed neutrality of any specific discourse, even of the knowledge as scientific as a medical discourse appears to be. Foucault argues that discourse needs to be endued with the power that fakes its coherence. Observing the figuration of madness, Foucault finds that the treatment of the mad changes in different historical periods and contends that madness becomes more and more caught up in discourse alongside the course of civilization (Sheridan 21). The years of 1656 and 1794 marked two watersheds in the history of madness; noticeable transformations in the reception of the madman occurred at these two critical moments. Additionally, the discourse of madness altered its purpose with the above-mentioned shifts.

In the Renaissance, folly and madness were not laden with negative connotations. The mad were largely treated as some wise fools who saw things out of the opaque veils and uttered the unspoken truth with wild and unfettered imaginations. The line between reason and madness was not that clear-cut then. Free communication between them was allowed in the period of the Renaissance, but disappeared in the Age of Reason and afterwards. There emerged a “new Reason” and a “new Madness” in the mid-seventeenth century: new, because “one has come to dominate and exclude the other; in such a relationship neither can remain the same, even if the words do” (Sheridan 17). In 1656, the Hospital General in Paris was founded. At first, it was established for the sake of a social reform policy that was to deal with the unproductive poor population. Noteworthily, those who were labeled as insane at that time were the inmates, too. Madness, for the first time, was perceived “through a condemnation of idleness and in a social immanence guaranteed by the community of labour” (Foucault, MC 58). At the age when reason promised the society infinite progress, madness became a hindrance to the bright future to which human beings believed reason would lead them. Madness was ranked as the social problem, and the mad were viewed the same as the poor, as those incapable of work, and as those unable to integrate with the group (Foucault, MC 64). This marked a decisive
event in the history of insanity; the discourse with respect to madness germinated. It was the discourse of madness by which the mad were regarded as parasites of the society that mired societal progress and jeopardized interests of the social whole. In order to prevent madness from sabotaging its integrity, the society must rule out the madmen, exclude them from the citizenship, and keep them at a distance from other sane people in the society. At that time, discourse of madness advanced the growth of reason and underlay the legitimacy of reason further. It fed the worship of reason, justified the action of eradicating madness, and functioned as the most powerful praise for reason to be the required virtue in terms of human civilization. Moreover, madness had become inextricably associated with unreason since then. The privilege accorded to reason over unreason posited madness in absolute opposition to normality; the discrimination against unreason infamized madness as a deformity in human soul that is beyond redemption. The discourse of madness turned to be at reason’s service to define unreason, to depreciate the insane, and to help reason proliferate. In Foucault’s estimation, discourse is violence: the violence which the discourse of madness inflicted upon the mad in the Age of Reason; the violence whereby the discourse of madness rendered madness inferior to and subject to reason.

In 1794, Philippe Pinel toppled the ancient regime that confined the mad and initiated a new set of benign rules of the asylum. Foucault refers to this transformation as the founding act of the modern humane treatment of mental patients (Sheridan 31). The mad were gathered together inside a benign asylum. Symptoms of unreason were to be remedied, waywardness was resolved little by little, and a madman would be completely reformed as the sane citizen again. Sharing the same ameliorating appearance, Samuel Tuke kept the madmen in the country retreat—another form of “asylum”—until they learned to behave reasonably. As far as Foucault is concerned, the intention to reactivate in Pinel’s asylum and Tuke’s Retreat enlarged the scope of which the discourse of
madness was empowered. These new “humanitarian” treatments of madness were in fact no less controlling than the previous modalities. Flavored with humaneness, generosity, and kindness, the violence of discourse of madness became subtle and even more forceful than ever. The emergence of such benign asylums brought about a therapeutic invention into the madman’s existence. Thereupon, madness was to be “punished inside the asylum”; for a long time to come, madness will still be “imprisoned in a moral world” (Foucault, MC 269). Having undergone transformations in their appearances in 1656 and 1794 respectively, the mad began being pathologized—or, more correctly speaking, psychopathologized—in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. To this day, madness, within such discursive architecture, has well developed into a disease that needs to be treated carefully and medically.

In the introduction to Madness and Civilization, José Barchilon points out that Foucault has chosen to “re-create” the history of madness during the age of reason: the end of the sixteenth century and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (v). Locating the concept of madness in its proper historical and social condition, Foucault attempts to uncover the negative part of the concept that has disappeared under the retroactive influence of present-day understanding of mental illness and psychiatry. According to Barchilon, many historical books about mental disorders simply single out what is positive and directly relevant to the development of modern psychiatry. By contrast, Foucault marshals his evidence to disclose the discursiveness of the madman figure and support his critique of the neutrality of the knowledge that seems to treat madness as a medical and scientific subject. With no black-and-white declaration, Foucault just demonstrates the result of his archaeology of the relation between madness and civilization. This archaeological excavation brings the backstage force formulating the discourse of madness into light. As Karlis Racevskis esteems, the principal effect of Foucault’s thinking has problematized our relation to reality (3).
Foucault continues to problematize the knowledges with which people understand and conjure up their relations to the world in his following works. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969)\(^4\) is Foucault’s excursion into methodology that clarifies and formalizes the results of his earlier studies (Howarth 50). Foucault directs his analysis toward “discourse” in relation to the history of Western thought. Discourse is the building block of every system of thought; any particular knowledge is braced with one or more discourses and has to undergo series of discursive formations. In Foucault’s phrase, everything is a matter of discourse; the perceived truth or reality is the effect of discursive practice. Rather than looking for a deeper meaning underneath discourse or looking for the source of meaning, Foucault aims to analyze the conditions of existence for meaning—the conditions for discourse to seem incontrovertible. This anatomy begins with the theorizing of “statement,” the basic unit of discourse which has a peculiar meaning for Foucault. Statements are not sentences, propositions, utterances, or speech act. Foucault sees statement different from the above linguistic elements because the distinction of being a statement is predicated on the effect that a statement is enunciated or expressed. In this understanding, statement is related to a network of rules establishing what is meaningful, and it is these rules that precondition the status of a statement and the effect of meaning a statement can have. It depends on whether or not a sentence complies with these rules that a grammatically correct one may still lack meaning, or inversely, an incorrect one may still be meaningful. In addition to obeying the network of rules, statement also hinges on the conditions in which it emerges and exists within a field of discourse. For instance, when an airline attendant announces the same instruction in different languages, these different sentences all refer to one particular statement. It is the role of an airline attendant and the context of being in the plane that make the announcement a statement of weight. In sum, Foucault does not mean “the words spoken

or written” in a statement but “the act of speaking or writing them, the context in which they are uttered, the status or position of their author” (Sheridan 99). Placed in given context, a statement would result in the particular effect that simply a sentence and other linguistic units fail to arrive at. Yet again, a sentence would become a statement if located in an associated context. What is more, it is too simple to define a statement by the forms of speech and written words; from a Foucauldian perspective, even a graph without the grammatical elements is a statement.

The discussion of statement adumbrates Foucault’s definition of discourse in his critical conceptualization. According to Foucault, discourse has to be treated “sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements” (AK 80). Sara Mills further expounds the three definitions that Foucault has put in black and white. First, “the general domain of all statements” ranges the most widely. Mills regards this as “all utterances or texts which have meaning and which have some effects in the real world” (7). As for the “individualizable group of statements,” Mills interprets it as “groups of utterances which seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force to them in common” (7). She suggests that this part is talking about “a discourse of” something, e.g. a discourse of femininity, a discourse of nationalism, and so on (7). By the first and second definitions, Foucault deals with the domain of discourse and the structures within discourse. The last definition shows most of Foucault’s argument against the constructed and rule-governed nature of discourse, or, to a broader sense, system of human thought. Mills understands this definition as “the rules and structures which produce particular utterances and texts” (7). Foucault’s concept of the “regulated practice” reveals that something powerful is involved in the production of discourse and in the rules that regulate discursive formations.
It is with the concern about some institutional forces insidiously exercised in discursive practices that Foucault commences his genealogy of power. The archaeology of knowledge and its disclosure of sophisticated machinery operating in discursive formations continue in the deployment of Foucault’s genealogical accounts of modern power, the complexes of power/knowledge, and the self. “The Order of Discourse” (1970) marks a shift of emphasis in Foucault’s theorizing: from the analysis of knowledge at a primarily discursive level to a more directly political consideration for the role of power in discursive and non-discursive practices. In terms of Foucault, the non-discursive practices refer to “institutions, political events, economic and social processes” (Sheridan 105). “In every society,” as Foucault expresses, “the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed, by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its power and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality” (“Order” 52). In other words, the production of discourse is governed by, associated with, and attached to the exercise of power; moreover, discourse is both an instrument and an effect of power. This implies that every construction of discourse is concerned with “internal mechanisms” that keep a specific discourse in existence (Mills 67). Discourse is by no means a transparent or neutral element; quite the contrary, it always reveals its links with power (Foucault, “Order” 52). The institutional powers take on the role of the internal mechanisms: they warrant and exclude discourses, making the permitted discourses circulate and carry out the discursive effects.

Power takes control of almost everything. It is put into effect upon an individual’s body, thoughts, and everyday life. Inclusive of things as trivial as a daily timetable for

---

5 “L’ordre du discours” was Foucault’s inaugural speech at the College de France, given on 2 December 1970. Rupert Swyer’s translation—“The Order of Discourse”—appeared in Social Science Information 10.2 (1971), and was collected in Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader (1981). The translation was added as an appendix to the American Pantheon edition of The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972) and retitled as “The Discourse on Language.” My citation is from the 1981 collection, and the lecture’s title is abbreviated to “Order” in the parenthetical references hereafter.
activities (e.g. rules for rising, prayer, meals, work, recreation, personal hygiene, and so on), as educational as the implantation of a specific discursive truth, and as starkly punitive as a horrible public execution of the termed criminals, everything displays the exertion of power. By what means do the institutional powers manipulate discursive and non-discursive practices in a society like ours? Doctrine, education, commentary on religious or political discourses, disciplinary mechanics, punitive methodology, and normalization, as Foucault answers, are all strategies for power to actualize its discursive effect. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975)\(^6\), Foucault illustrates how power deploys its grasp on individual’s everyday life with the study of the transformation of punishment technologies. He depicts the variation of power’s appearances and spotlights the unshakable control that power keeps in each of its variable forms. Power is more “powerful” when it is hidden from view. The brutal public execution of the criminal was a common form of power by the mid-eighteenth century. In such punitive practices, body was directly the immediate object of punishment. The body of the condemned and the spectacle of the scaffold constituted the torturous and horrifying appearance of power. As Foucault analyzes, the technologies of punishment transform in a short time from repression of the populace through public displays of excessive violence and executions to a more lenient penal system which continues being practiced in the modern era. However, this more lenient penal system entails a greater confinement of the body and a power of more omnipotent effect. Although the body seems to rid of the torture and pain in modern penal system, it is still subject to the penal process, i.e. confined in prison, forced to do physical labour, deprived of sexual activities, and subjected to prison rules and a set of legal controls and regulations. In a sense, such deprivation of the individual’s wealth, rights, and liberty is a residue of the mid-eighteenth-century coercive bodily punishment. The transformation in the way to punish should be ascribed to the

\(^6\) *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* was published in 1975 by Gallimard and translated into English in 1977. My quotations are from Alan Sheridan’s translation, the Pantheon edition (1977).
“humanity” discovered in the criminal by the eighteenth-century reformers (Foucault, DP 74). That the punishment must be “humane” gives rise to the question of measuring the appropriate punishment that a criminal should get according to how much humanity he or she has. The engendered respect for the humanity of the condemned suggests that the power to punish has a tendency towards “a more finely tuned justice” and “a closer penal mapping of the social body” (DP 78). To measure the criminal’s humanity opens up the involvement of the power to decide in the penal system. As a consequence, the power to decide is accorded to the “professionals” over the criminals. The professionals determine the criminal’s conviction and the length of imprisonment, and judge whether the convict can be entitled to apply for parole in terms of the convict’s rectifiability. For Foucault, it is a “calculated economy” of the power to punish beneath the humanization of the penalties (DP 101). In this regard, it may be easier for those in power to bring the legitimate frontier of the power to punish to an extreme than to treat the frontier as an absolute existence. The penal leniency rather intimates power’s insidious but firm hold of those who are punished.

Foucault argues that the techniques of discipline and observation are incorporated in the institution of prison as the paradigmatic form of punishment in modern society. In addition, the penitentiary practice is employed as not only punishment but also the prevention of crime. Judicial and penal process must be characterized by clarity and certainty. The laws on crimes and the punishments need to be clearly articulated in the form of legislation and accessible to the social whole. The power to punish also functions as series of regulations familiar to every individual. Thus, penalty extends its effect from the penitentiary punishment of the convicts to disciplinary surveillance over all individuals in the society. In the light of Foucault, the augment of the scope of penalty-effect is “an effort to adjust the mechanisms of power that frame the everyday lives of individuals; an adaptation and a refinement of the machinery that assumes responsibility
for and places under surveillance their everyday behaviour, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures” (DP 77). An apparatus of corrective penalty is one product of the disciplinary and supervising machinery. The technique of correction turns to be applied not so much by those supervising regulations but by the individual who is “subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him” (Foucault, DP 128-29). It is such technology of micro-penalty that puts individuals under observation at any time and place: the surveillance from without urges them to abide by the laws; from within, keeps them self-monitoring to comply with the imprinted virtue of being law-abiding. However humane the practice of punishment has become, the body is not thereby liberated from the grip of power. Conversely, it is “displaced to a secondary and mediatory position” by the emergence of new technologies of power (Smart 81). Having undergone the phases of punitive torture, humanitarian reform, and penal incarceration, the body is always immediate object of punishment; the convicts are confined to the penitentiary practice and the free individuals are imprisoned by disciplinary power in the social and private realms.

*Discipline and Punish* should not be regarded purely as a study of the liability of penalty; rather, it takes on Foucault’s “genealogy of the present scientifc-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications, and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity” (23). It is reiterated that how a specific mode of subjection is enabled to “give birth to man as an object of knowledge for a discourse” with a “scientific” status (Foucault, DP 24). Power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge; furthermore, power reproduces knowledge and shapes knowledge in accordance with its discreet intentions. Foucault’s genealogical exploration of the linkage between the body and power/knowledge simplifies the individual’s body as an object of knowledge and as an immediate target for the exercise
of power. The exorbitant singularity of power-effect is perpetuated by the normalizing
technologies; through normalization, power stays from being seen. According to Foucault,
the essential dynamics of modern power exerted upon the body is a force which is
“simultaneously individualizing and totalizing” (McNay 121). “This form of power,”
Foucault emphasizes, “applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the
individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes
a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him.
It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects” (“The Subject and Power” 212).
In this regard, such mechanism of power may allow individuals to achieve certain degrees
of self-identification while simultaneously individualizing and normalizing them. For
Foucault, individuals are very likely to be potential agents in the series of self-identifying
processes and recognize their own selfhood when interacting with the dynamics of power.
Put simply, the totalizing and individualizing forces regulate as well as provide
individuals the basis from which resistance can be articulated (McNay 123). Foucault’s
genuine concern for the issue of the self stems from this understanding of the inveterate
individualization/normalization imposed upon individuals’ self-knowledge by power
through discourse. Discourses, for Foucault, are already powers exercised at the level of
daily life, and individual subject is an empty entity, an intersection of discourses (Sarup
78-79). The emergence of individual’s subjectivity rests on the power-effect engendered
in individuals through discursive practices. It implies that an individual does take the role
as a vital component in the formation of a specific discursive knowledge. More than the
locus where the power-effect is exercised through knowledge, an individual can be rather
interactive to the knowledge with which they perceive the world and to the one they
conceive as their self-understanding. This interaction between individuals and discursive
knowledge which power imposes upon them potentiates a resistance or a subversive
gesture towards these discursive impositions.
In a manner of speaking, discourse’s constraining forces that overrule the life of every single individual yield Foucault’s idea of the care of the self. From *Discipline and Punish* to “Technologies of the Self” (1982), Foucault has gradually adjusted his critical attention and conducts self-critique on his earlier theorizing of power and the body. Foucault expresses that his earlier emphasis on the effects of power’s conspicuous and insidious coercion over individuals results in a “one-dimensional account of social agents as ‘docile bodies’ and a correspondingly monolithic account of power” (McNay 134). In “Sexuality and Solitude” (1982), Foucault stresses that a fuller understanding of the modern subject should be not only an analysis of “techniques of domination” but also an analysis of “techniques of the self” (367). He prospects for an alternative ethical standpoint from which individuals can begin to resist the normalizing force of discursive power, a threshold whereupon any individual is able to establish him- or herself as subject vis-à-vis power’s encompassing discursive practices. This anxiety continues in his last two works, *The Use of Pleasure* (1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1984). Taking the perception of morality for example, Foucault finds difference between the moral practice in Ancient Greek times and the discursively rarefied morality embedded in today’s society. The difference lies in the degree of individual’s autonomy and self-determination tolerated in each moral system. In a modern society, morality comprises a set of rules and prohibitions; in Ancient Greek times, moral practice refers to the “real behavior of individuals in relation to the rules and values that are recommended to them” (*UP* 25). Practicing the moral life, the Greeks comply more or less fully with a standard of conduct, obey or resist interdiction and prescription, and respect or disregard a set of values. For

---

7 This article is collected in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (1988), edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton.
Foucault, it is such an interactive manner that may make possible the construction of individual subjectivity within discursive practices. By means of interaction, an individual may be able to form and recognize oneself as “the subject of one’s own actions” (Foucault, CS 85).

Foucault does not finalize the answer to how much interactive capacity and freedom an individual can have in the face of power and its discursive impositions. Yet, the turned optimistic attitude toward the individual as an interactive agent echoes his insistent anxiety to make him/her free from power’s seizure. Exposing the coerciveness of power and discourse, Foucault endeavors to reveal the backstage mechanism perpetuating such coercion. Almost in every monograph, he examines the discursive truth, challenges its status of unquestionable truth, and discloses the arbitrariness and contrivedness of this overarching truth. Though Foucault dose not specifically pinpoint the actual site from which resistance can be launched, his critical interrogation of the legitimacy of power and discourse renders individuals an approach to question the discursive power imposed upon them. For me, they are all signs of Foucault’s urgent concern for the self and individual subjectivity. Rather, his articulation of the fact that discourse is a construct and power is exercised to be powerful implies the possibility of subversive gestures whereby individuals can resist the constantly normalizing power and form in themselves the state of subjectivity independent of discursive impositions.

Steeped in discourses and power, the Irish society in *Ulysses* seems to be a perfect location for power and discursive knowledge to enhance each other. When it comes to the discursive practices that inflict power-effect upon individuals, male Irish citizens as well as Irishwomen are the target whom discourses interpellate. Then, why should I concentrate on the discursive effects externalized through the female characters in *Ulysses*? The reason would become clear if we go back to Dublin’s circumstances in 1904 with Joyce’s depiction. Articulating their subjectivity within the Irish patriarchal
society, Irishmen and Irishwomen are confronted with different kinds of pressure. Compared with the females who are liable to fall victim to the discursive repression, Irishmen are rather the beneficiary of the power-effect of certain discursive practices, and moreover, the accomplice of the discursive power that exploits and controls the relatively powerless women. Even physically and mentally restless in the Irish social context as they are, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom seem to be allowed to settle down gradually in the middle of life and appease their clashes with the Irish society which used to upset them. Taking part in the social life as a young artist of seeming eloquence during his one-day ramble in the city, Stephen eventually finds his way out of the real-life hardship by means of his artistic creations verbally. As for Bloom, the series of depression he has undergone in his life terminates with a figurative reestablishment of the father figure in himself. Bloom’s meander in the 1904’s Dublin is symbolic of a journey through which he recovers from his loss, the loss of his son in particular, bit by bit. At the end of the one-day journey, Bloom returns home, bringing Stephen with him. These two male protagonists are emotionally redeemed from what they had suffered in mind; in a sense, Bloom and Stephen have found redemption they need in each other, mutually.

By contrast, the female characters are far less mobile and active than the male Dubliners in the novel. Even though they do live in Dublin, they do not really participate in the city life of Dublin in 1904. Walking in the street, women inevitably become the gazed objects and the target for the projection of men’s desires. Instead of fluently expressing themselves on their own, most of the female characters are heard in the male-spoken discourses. In view of this double or triple pressure facing Irishwomen than Irishmen, I decide to install my observation of the influence of discourse and power over individual’s subjectivity upon some female characters in *Ulysses*. To my satisfaction, what remains unfinished in Foucault’s critical conceptualization seems to be actualized in Joyce’s writing. Observing the characterization in *Ulysses*, I argue that Joyce seems to
have envisioned a spectrum of individuals’ subjectivities in his portrayal of the female characters. The distinct discursive effects displayed in these female characters, the relatively powerless party in the Irish society, interest me even more than a study of discourse, power, and subjectivity at a universal level does. It is the situation wherein these female characters have to face the dearth of alternatives that accentuates the preciousness of these distinct results of discursive practice—from the overwhelming domination over individual to the potentiality of individual’s subversion of discursive imposition. The spectrum of women’s subjectivities that Joyce presents with his characterization of women in *Ulysses* demonstrates Foucault’s focused concern about the interrelationship between discourse, power, and individual subjectivity. Joyce has shown a similar concern forty years earlier than the time Foucault’s theory comes into being. Through his portrayal of the fictional characters, Joyce seems to prefigure and addresses more directly the possibility that individual is capable of interacting with discourse and power, and even attaining a state of subjectivity that is resistant to and subversive of the discursive impositions.

This spectrum of discursive subjectivities discovered in *Ulysses*’s female characters has made it easier for me to grasp Foucault’s theorizing of discourse, power/knowledge, and subjectivity. In the following chapters, I will demonstrate respectively the different extents of individual subjectivity that comprise the spectrum of female subjectivities. The middle- and working-class Irishwomen will be my primary concern. Those aristocratic women who are relatively powerful by comparison will not be included in my discussion. In Chapter One, the overarching Irish nationalist discourse finds the best position for actualizing its power-effect. It is the body of the powerless Mrs Purefoy, the woman in labor in “Oxen of the Sun” episode. Exploiting the body of the parturient Mrs Purefoy, Irish Nationalism fortifies its discursive effect. Through powerful discursive normalization mechanism, individual’s automatic submission to power and power’s grip
on individual are perpetuated. The long duration of Mrs Purefoy’s birthing course exemplifies Irish nationalist discourse’s extreme exploitation of the parturient body. The devoicing of the birthing cry shows that the powerful discursive mechanism renders the subjectivity of Mrs Purefoy none. It is discourse’s omni-subjection of individual subjectivity through normalization. In Chapter Two, the interactiveness of discursive practices emerges in the performances of Gerty McDowell and the two Ormond barmaids. The subjecting force simultaneously individualizing and normalizing an individual affords these three female characters a certain self-identification. Gerty and two Irish barmaids are rather active identifier in the process of self-identification; yet, the self-identification they have achieved is still enveloped in the discursive effect power expects. Gerty’s obsessive self-identification of the Virgin Mary and internalization of the discursive femininity are made for the gratification of the patriarchal needs and masculine desire. The Ormond barmaids are accorded the self-image which promotes Irish patriotism and secures Irish national identity. They have undergone the normalization of individuality, and the state of their subjectivities is discursively attained in the end. Chapter Three demonstrates the potential for the individual to achieve her own subjectivity free from the numerous discursive impositions. The interactiveness of an individual involved in the discursive practice on this stage indicates a great deal of the sentiment of self-determination and autonomous subjectivity. Molly’s interrogating gestures and protean performance in reaction to the received discourses not only highlight an individual’s capability of being interactive (resistant) to discourses but also expose the inconsistency of discursive power from which individual is able to be rebellious against the discursive practice that attempts to pin her down. With the dialogue between Joyce’s text and Foucault’s critical articulation, I hope my thesis can contribute to the understanding of the characteristics of discourse, power/knowledge, and individual subjectivity and of the interplay among them.
Chapter One

Slaughter of the Mom:

Subjection of the Female Subjectivity

Ireland had been subject to England’s rule since the late twelfth century. Campaigns, especially those identifiably nationalist ones, were waged against the English conquest in order to establish Ireland as an independent Irish state. During the Great Famine between 1845 and 1849, Britain’s delayed response to the disaster only exacerbated the British-Irish conflict. The potato famine caused great bitterness among Irish people against the British government, which was perceived as not lending a hand timely and generously and failing to avert the millions of deaths in Ireland. The indignation was also directed to British political and economic oppressions. For the starving Irish populace, centuries of England’s atrocious governance were to blame for the underlying causes of the Famine. Most Irish people were convinced of an urgent need for political change. They believed that they were capable of constituting a respectable nationality on their own against the British rule. Mass nationalist mobilization invigorated the Irish morale. Concerted campaigns for Home Rule and self-government were launched. In the late nineteenth century, Irish nationalism had become the dominant discourse in Ireland. It conditioned the domestic developments of the country and the citizens’ lives in the country.

An immediate aftermath of the Great Famine is the drastic fall in Irish population. The population statistics shows that Ireland was a country where the birthrate was rising while the population had still fallen by 1919 (Duffy 216). These paradoxical statistic figures render a historical appearance to the issue of childbirth in the nationalistic climate of early-twentieth-century Ireland, and Joyce just captures how prolificacy is fashioned as a norm in the agenda of Irish nationalistic discourse in “Oxen of the Sun” episode. In excavating the historical appearances of a certain discourse and its discursive object,
Foucault points out the symbolic and the causal connections between a specific discursive formation and the non-discursive domain from which it generates (AK 162-65). The “symbolic analysis” penetrates the common significant indication shared between a discourse and the non-discursive factors that materialize this discourse, e.g. the institutions, political events, or the economic practices and processes (Foucault, AK 162). A “causal analysis” is to unearth the role of political changes and economic processes in determining the “consciousness” of their contemporary scientists who are inevitably involved in propagating specific discourses, including the horizon and direction of the scientists’ interest, the system of values, the way the scientists perceive things, and the style of their rationality (AK 163). The establishment of clinical medicine at the end of the eighteenth century is one characteristic example of the symbolic and causal relations between the emergence of the clinical medicine discourse and its contemporary political events, economic phenomena, and institutional changes. According to Foucault, the social dimension of disease came into being at the period when industrial capitalism was beginning to recalculate its manpower requirements; hereupon, the maintenance of health, cure for disease, public assistance for the poor and sick, and the search for pathological causes had become “collective” responsibilities that the state must assume (AK 163). The organizing of clinical medicine discourse and the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century historical process “reflect” and “symbolize” one another (AK 162). The value placed upon the body as a work tool resulted in the efforts to maintain the level of health of the population, the attention paid to therapy and after-care, and the springing up of medical institutions. The need for a large number of workers in the nineteenth-century industrial society caused the medical profession to think and speak of the treatment of diseases in social terms, and provided a rationalized context for the appearance of health as a norm. In this respect, the social and political practices at that time did determine a great degree of the conditions for the emergence and functioning of nineteenth-century medical
discourses. For Foucault, these symbolic and causal connections characterizing discursive formations demonstrate that a particular historical and social context can give place to any definite type of discourse and decide its discursive symbolizations and effects (AK 165). The discursive practice is more or less the expression of the non-discursive one.

Discourse needs to find its recipients. Some recipients propagate the discourse with ulterior motives whereby they keep themselves firm in power; some defer to the discourse, unknowing of the discursive control. The entire deference entails these submissive recipients becoming objects of discursive practices. In terms of Foucault, discourse is not about objects; rather, discourse constitutes its objects. There are three types of rules according to which discursive objects are created: respectively, they are surfaces of emergence, the authorities of delimitation, and grids of specification (Foucault, AK 41-42). The “surfaces of emergence” indicate social and cultural areas in which a particular discursive object makes its appearance (AK 41). An object is entangled within tight social relations; at these surfaces of emergence a particular discourse finds its discursive domain, defines what to talk about, and makes its discursive object manifest, nameable, and describable. The “authorities of delimitation” refer to the authorities recognized by public opinion, the law, the government, and so forth; they are empowered to decide which objects belong to which particular discursive formation, to name the objects, and to establish their status as the discursive objects (AK 42). As for the “grids of specification,” they function as a system of locating the constituted objects: they classify these objects, relating, contrasting, and grouping them into various sorts (AK 42). After being categorized, the objects are fully enveloped in discursive practice; the properties they possess become discursive and part of the discursive practice. Though divided into three types, these forming rules are at work interdependently and interactively. For Foucault, the formation of discursive objects in fact depends on a complex variety of interplays among the three sorts of rules (Gutting 235). The exploration of the regulations
governing discursive formations highlights the discrepancy between a discourse’s dominating appearance and its nature of being rule-bound. The significance of Foucault’s revealing this discrepancy is two-fold. On the one hand, Foucault argues that discourse is arbitrary and manipulative; on the other, he insinuates that the power with which discourse manoeuvres its neutrality is too powerful to be discerned. This seemingly invisible manipulation runs under the legitimacy of a discourse, and individuals are hardly able to run away from its insidious discursive coercion.

Discourse does not simply construct material objects; it also constructs “certain events” and “sequences of events into narratives” which are recognized by a particular culture as “real” or “serious” events (Mills 53). To consolidate its domination of the way individuals apprehend the world, discourse lends solidity and normality to its engendered events and narratives of these events and validates their status of statements. These turned statements are to disseminate the discursive effect and inseparable from the discursive practice. According to Foucault, a discursive formation continually generates new statements. However, the generation of statements is tied to a law and an effect of “rarity” (Foucault, AK 119). Gilles Deleuze interprets this Foucauldian principle of rarity ruling the proliferation of statements as the rarity of signification of those multiplied statements. Rare is not because only few statements can be reproduced in a discourse, but because only few things can be said in the statements inhabiting a same discursive formation.

Statements are essentially rare. Unlike propositions that can be thought of in a number of ways and expressed in terms of another propositions, statements are enunciated to one definite discursive effect. Also, statements are different from phrases that sometimes remain pregnant with everything left unsaid and open to interpretations. They do not harbor latent content and virtual meanings; instead, the content and meanings of statements are subsumed under the particular discourse, disambiguated, and supportive of the discursive practice. One phrase can be opposed to another; the dialectic of phrases
engenders new phrases and interpretations of a phrase. As for a proposition, it is
sometimes abstracted by another and a new proposition is formed on the basis of the
abstracted one. Contradiction and abstraction are the means by which phrases and
propositions are multiplied; yet, the multiplication of statements relies on different
mechanism from the two aforementioned ways. Because of the rarefied nature of
statements’ signification, no “originality” is needed in order to reproduce statements
(Deleuze 3). No new meaning has to be accorded to the reproduced statements.
Everything in the realm of statements is real and “manifestly present”—“All that counts
is what has been formulated at a given moment, including any blanks and gaps” (Deleuze
3). The rarefied signification formulated in the given context guides the distribution and
reproduction of statements. In doing so, this law of rarity reinforces discourse’s
domination. The purpose and interest of the discourse become paramount; various
statements within the discourse’s domain are to achieve this rarefied discursive effect. As
a result of the rarity principle, the power-effect of specific discourses gets anchored in
discursive practices successfully.

Both the social landscape of Ireland in 1904 and the mental landscape of the Irish
people are incitementsto the proliferation of Irish nationalist discourse. Irish nationalist
discourse comprises a huge entity of statements. There pervade numerous Irish
nationalism-inflected statements in Dublin. Some nationalist statements go under the
banner of patriotism. Some speak in line with Catholic terms, for the coupling of religious
and ethnic identity is known as one of the enduring features of Irish nationalism.
Furthermore, some of these Irish nationalist statements come to prescribe the individual
obligations of the Irish people and demand their absolute fulfillment of duty. These
statements are articulated in various ways. Appearing in a variety of forms, they all serve
to consummate the discursive practice and have the rarefied thrust of Irish nationalist
discourse circulated. Beyond question, the discourse of Irish nationalism is powerful. Its
power-effect is actualized in appointing the discursive objects, valorizing the concept, calibrating and standardizing the intention of the statements, and deploying series of discursive practices through which it fortifies the status of a legitimate truth. In the same thought, the entire package of this legitimated truthful knowledge is internalized and embedded in individuals’ mind. The capacity of discourse’s power is embodied in the powerfulness of Irish nationalism that penetrates Irish social whole and emerges as overarching consciousness in Joyce’s “Oxen of the Sun.” Joyce renders a picture that shows how Irish nationalist discourse optimizes its discursive regime in the “Oxen” episode. What is more, this characterization exhibits the exploitation of a female individual at the moment when the implementation of Irish nationalist discursive effect has been achieved to the maximum.

Enda Duffy points out the significance of the role of an Irish mother situated in Ireland’s nationalistic climate at the early twentieth century. In “Interesting States: Birthing and the Nation in ‘Oxen of the Sun’,” he demonstrates that Ireland enrolls Irishwomen for the nationalist campaigns and rationalizes such claim. Duffy argues that some tropes of motherhood have become the nationalistic icon. For example, in the shadow of Mother Eireann’s statue, speeches were made at election time; on her plinth, names of the dead in the Independence War of 1919 to 1921 were written, in Irish (Duffy 210). Tellingly, Patrick Pearse’s poem, “The Mother,” serves to illustrate the mother’s role in terms of patriotism and national interests. Written just before Pearse was about to be executed for rebellion in the 1916 Rising, the poem describes a mother’s anguish over her dead children. “I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge / My two strong sons that I have seen go out / To break their strength and die, they and a few, / In bloody protest for a glorious thing” (qtd. in Duffy 215). Pearse poeticizes the mother’s grief as political and national pride. A mother has sacrificed her own sons for their glorious martyrdom.

11 This poem from which Duffy quotes four lines is collected in Pádraig H. Pearse’s Plays Stories Poems (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1966, p. 333).
This honorable sacrifice involves the mother’s self-restraint; she must “keep her personal sorrow in check for the common good” (Duffy 215). Such imperative associates the interests of Irish nation with the devotion, or more vehemently, sacrifice of an Irish mother. Mother’s tears will be glorified with sons’ blood; both are shed for the independence of the Irish state. The figure of the mother whose children were martyred has been politicized; that this Irish mother dedicated her own flesh and blood to the fight for the country’s dignified nationality becomes a political event and a statement incorporating the spirit of Irish nationalism.

As far as the nationalist and post-famine Ireland is concerned, the sacrifice of her son’s life for the country manifests the mother’s political loyalty, and moreover, the birth of a child is a social act. “Not what goes into the womb but what comes out of it concerns society. The community is invited to receive a new citizen” (Ellis 417). The social significance of birthing resonates with the nationalist claim in Ireland. A newborn baby imports stronger possibility of the establishment and sustainability of Ireland’s nationhood. In this regard, Irishwomen become a good choice of the discursive object for Irish nationalism according to which prolificacy has been valorized as a norm. Joyce’s “Oxen” episode opens with the invocation to the sun-god, the source of fertility, and the triumphant cry of a midwife with which she celebrates the birth of a male child. From the outset, Mrs Purefoy, the Irishwoman in labor in this episode, is enlisted into the national breeding force and taken captive by the discursive practice of Irish nationalism.

The importance of procreation is repeatedly articulated with different appearances of statements observing the discourse of Irish nationalism. Related to a nation’s prosperity, fecundity is an emphatic achievement representative of the splendor of the country. The more solicitude for its “proliferent continuance” a country shows, the greater success this country will be (U 14.15). In addition, the “omnipollent” nature will always favor the country, whose people realize the importance of human reproduction and endeavor to
multiply, with the “incorrupted benefaction” (U 14.16-17). “No nature’s boon can contend against the bounty of increase” (U 14.20-21). Hence, it “behoves every most just citizen to become the exhortator and admonisher of his semblables and to tremble lest what had in the past been by the nation excellently commenced might be in the future not with similar excellence accomplished” (U 14.21-25). Disobedience to the obligation to procreate is condemned as an “odious offence” (U 14.28). This condemnation is simultaneously an admonishment and an order. It commands that an individual Irish promise to be prolific and urge others to do likewise. The procreating function is reiterated in the name of the national prosperity, the continuance of the ancestors’ achievement, the natural benefaction, and the individual’s duty. An act of birthing is laden with profound statements, and these statements altogether function to establish the status of a norm in the birth act. Accordingly, Mrs Purefoy’s lying on the obstetric table is no longer a quotidian scene; on the contrary, it is caught in the discursive practice of Irish nationalism and regarded as a venerable deed through which an Irishwoman dedicates herself to the national cause.

The act of a mother giving birth to a child is normalized as an individual commitment to the good of the country. Additionally, such normalization also prompts the mobilization of communal resources in preparation for welcoming the newcomer compatriot. “Maternity was so far from all accident possibility removed that whatever care the patient in that allhardest of woman hour chiefly required [. . .] was provided” (U 14.45-49). Childbirth is a public work in which the whole Irish society is engaged: both Irishwomen and Irishmen are devoted to the industry of baby-making; obstetricians and midwives are on call in order to deliver the babies successfully; hospitals and all state apparatuses are motivated in readiness for the arrival of new citizens. Every decent and intelligent Irish citizen should understand that it is their duty to increase and multiply. “Except with prolific mothers prosperity at all not to can be” (U 14.51-52). It is a
praiseworthy thing for an individual to honor procreation, worship the mother, and enroll in the mother-to-be. The entire country seems enchanted at the parturient moment, after which the country will have a son to carry on its name. In like normalizing manner, the societal mobilization for the delivery is considered to be the proper and normal measure taken to in support of this important event of national propagation. “To her [the mother-to-be] nothing already then and thenceforward was anyway able to be molestful” (U 14.50-51). Drugs, surgical instruments, and everything pertaining to her case are readied. All citizens are enlisted for assisting her in childbed. This mobilization implies an intensified normalization through which prolificacy is treated as the favored rejoicing as far as an entire Irish state is concerned. Elevating the status of norm of procreation from the discharge of individual’s responsibility to the public task of concern entailing the engagement of the social whole, the discourse of Irish nationalism succeeds in propagandizing the procreating function and rationalizing its exploitation of Irishwomen in its discursive practice. Not only does it dedicate itself to the process of parturition, the entire Irish community also keeps a close watch on the implementation of the duty to breed on every individual Irishwoman. Thus, the normalcy of procreation is reinforced.

Foucault draws on Jeremy Bentham’s “Panopticon” to demonstrate the most vehement and insidious mode of normalization applied by power to implant the elaborately contrived truth into individuals—the truthful knowledges with which they conceive the understandings of life, and to manufacture the state of individuals’ existence in relation to the social body. Panopticon is a circular building enclosing an inspection tower. At the center is a tower furnished with wide windows opening onto the inner side of the ring. The annular part is divided into cells. Each cell has two windows—one is on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the cell sufficient light. Alone and exposed in full light, the occupant of each cell is “perfectly individualized and constantly visible” (Foucault, DP 200). The supervisor in
the tower is able to observe and recognize the inmates immediately and ceaselessly; whereas, the prisoners are under the scrutiny of the observer who remains unseen. “Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor [. . .]. He is seen, but he does not see” (DP 200). Foucault contends that the major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate “a state of conscious and permanent visibility” (DP 201). Such effect, for Foucault, echoes the purpose of the discursive practice of punishment and discipline; both intend to assure the automatic functioning of power. Discipline functions directly onto the body; the employment of disciplinary technologies aims to produce subjected and practiced bodies—the “docile” bodies that submit to power automatically (DP 138). It is also practiced in the present-day prison and supplants the ancient ceremonial torture executed over the criminal. The bodily pain has disappeared in modern penal system; however, the similar coercive violence remains and emerges in the strictly scheduled trainings and regulation of the body. In addition, a detailed political investment is never absent from the production of the docile body. The body turns tractable through the disciplinary practice, and its docility affords power to extort and take advantage of its faculty for the sake of social utility. This attempt to utilize in the art of discipline gets far more overt in the exercise of disciplinary technologies in the penitentiary system. The prison is the site where the coercive power of discipline is performed in the most direct and intense way. The austere regulation, repeated physical labor, unceasing inspection, permanent oversight, and every omni-disciplinary mechanism in the prison are to rectify and educate the inmates. Consequently, the prisoner can return to the society as an example of social norm, automatically obedient and useful to the society. This penal system underscores the binary opposition between the permitted and the forbidden, the normal and the abnormal. Intensive disciplinary practice mainly purposes to correct individuals; more precisely, it “normalizes” (Foucault, DP 183). To be brief, discipline comprises series of normalizing
and internalizing processes, through which the body is trained into a docile and utile one and then individual’s automatic submission is ensured.

To yield an amenable body and perpetuate the spontaneous obedience, the power to normalize needs the mechanism of surveillance to pave the way for its meticulous control over the body. For Foucault, the mutual fortification of discipline and surveillance is brought into full play in the operation of the Panopticon, which demonstrates the scrupulous hold of the body, increases the docility and the utility of the body, and makes possible the automatic subjection of every individual. The mechanism of Panopticon reverses the way the previous dungeon deals with the convicts, that is to say, depriving them of light and hiding them from view. As Foucault expresses, “Visibility is a trap” (DP 200). This practice entraps those who are observed in the perpetual visible status. Moreover, the architectural design of Panopticon presupposes an invisible mechanism coercing by means of observation. With the spatial arrangement and the effect of lighting, Panopticon makes an easy supervision and handling of large numbers of prisoners. An optimal disciplinary apparatus is activated; in a Panopticon, a single observing gaze can see everything and everyone constantly—nothing escapes from the omnipresent and anonymous observation. It conveys a sentiment of an invisible omniscience to the observed. Foucault sees the Panopticon as a metaphor for a modern disciplinary society as ours which shows the strong inclination to observe and normalize. Not only in prisons but in other hierarchical structures like the army, the school, the hospital and the factory, the surveillance mechanisms all resemble Bentham’s Panopticon. Extending to the application of norms of acceptable behavior as well, the pervasive supervision of some individuals by others has formed in the modern society a “carceral continuum” (Foucault, DP 297). It has been made quite clear by today’s codes and legislation that there shall be neither imprisonment outside the law nor the detention decided except by the qualified judicial institution. Yet, Foucault observes that the confinement continues through this
The entire social body is a great carceral continuum; it diffuses penitentiary techniques into the “most innocent” disciplines and oversees the “slightest” irregularity and deviation so as to prevent the threat of anomaly and delinquency (DP 297). In this subtle carceral network, the panoptic surveillance runs unceasingly to supervise, to judge, and to normalize individuals. The social body is turned into a panoptic society. Discreet and minute surveillance works on every individual; what is more, everyone in the network is entrusted with the task of supervising. This Panopticon texture of the society assures the capture of the body and the perpetuation of the forged automatic submission in individuals. In such carceral continuum, no one escapes the supervision of the norm and the seizure of the ubiquitous normalization.

In the “Oxen” episode, Mrs Purefoy’s body is fully utilized. Irish citizens are exhilarated by her parturition. The birthing case has inflamed the worship of fecundity. And, on the body of the parturient the ensuing statements underpinning discursive practice of Irish nationalism are imposed. Shoudering the responsibility to prosper Ireland’s nationhood, Mrs Purefoy has stayed in the National Maternity Hospital for three days since she started experiencing the regular and strong uterine contractions. The extreme physical pain that Mrs Purefoy suffers during this overlong birthing course embodies the voluntary tribute that every Irish parturient pays to her country. However enormous the pain during labor Mrs Purefoy has to endure is, the profit after labor will outweigh the pain. The pleasure of the birthing will not be begrudgingly confined to the mother herself; on the contrary, this joy is to be shared among all citizens and the birthing will bring a great benefit to the entire country. With the birth of Mrs Purefoy’s baby, the prosperity of Irish nation will continue and expand. Therefore, this full three-day labor means profoundly to Ireland. It is an unconventional birth, so difficult and so glorious one. Penetrated with nationalism-inflected descriptions and sense of social responsibility, Mrs Purefoy’s three-day labor is formulated as a nationalistic story. Fecundity, motherhood,
and Ireland’s common good are hence discursively established into indissoluble
interrelationship. The role of a prolific mother is valorized; the generosity of giving birth
to a baby for national cause is a norm deserving the reverence and emulation of every
Irish people.

Not only does Mrs Purefoy’s body yield great utility for the Irish state but it serves
as a disciplinary norm that contributes to the normalization of Irish nationalist discourse.
Her giving birth is an inspiring example to all Irishwomen and the Irish mothers-to-be.
More insidiously, it is the propaganda for the norm of procreating function and obligation.

“The man hearkened to her [the nurse] words [. . .] and he wondered to look on her face
that was a fair face for any man to see but yet was she left after long years a handmaid.
Nine twelve bloodflows chiding her childless” (U 14.118-22, emphasis added). Here, the
nursing woman in the maternity hospital is reprimanded for her nine-year barrenness. The
efficacy of normalization is hypostatized in the imprint of the norm upon individuals,
individuals’ performances of the behavior accepted by the norm, and the check of the
implementation of individuals’ normal behavior. The final one demonstrates the most
coercive part of the power to normalize in Irish nationalist discourse. It indicates the
technology of inspection and supervision adopted over the self and the others. This
technology accentuates the discursive power to correct in the normalization mechanism;
with such corrective effect, a specific discursive practice can produce as many docile
bodies and achieve as much power-effect the discourse expects as possible. From this
perspective, Mrs Purefoy’s body is made more useful in the discursive practice of Irish
nationalism. As a disciplinary norm, it optimizes Ireland’s proliferent continuance and
materializes the status of norm of prolificacy valorized by Irish nationalist discourse.

What comes out of the womb is a matter of concern. “Before born babe bliss had.
Within womb won he worship” (U 14.60). Certainly, the arrival of the baby at the Irish
state is the major evidence that Mrs Purefoy’s body is tremendously utile. It is none the
less that the praise of the baby and that of the parturient’s body are at different levels. The
latter is extolled for its instrumentality; the former, for the sublimity it symbolizes. In
other words, the “laudable fortitude” of Mrs Purefoy is laudable on the grounds of the
“bouncing boy” she was delivered of (U 14.822-23). The emphasis on utility of a docile
body in normalization makes Mrs Purefoy subject to discursive power’s exploitation of
her corporeal functions. Her remarkable endurance throughout the labor has perfectly
showed the material exploitability of her body. Before the baby was born, Mrs Purefoy
was eulogized for her well-bulged belly in which a promise of Ireland’s prosperity resides;
after giving birth to the baby, she remains as a useful body but her baby enters into the
sublime. She is a vehicular existence in the event of parturition, through which a nation’s
glory is born. In the discursive practice, Mrs Purefoy is recognized by her lying-in
body—the maternity faculty. However, motherhood here is rarefied, being reduced to the
role of a parturient and defined as the utility of breeding and propagation. In the
discursive configuration of Irish nationalism, this rarefied maternity is to be utilized to
punctuate the rarefied signification of those nationalism-inflected statements.

Mrs Purefoy’s maternal body is also of use to the discursive statements of
Catholicism. In the post-famine Ireland, discourse of Irish nationalism and the Catholic
religious doctrines go hand in hand in order to normalize and validate the obligation to
procreate. The large-family pattern in pre-famine Irish society is preserved in Mrs
Purefoy’s case. She has borne nine children, including this parturient one. Put in
nationalist terms, Purefoys’ large family can be seen as the outcome of Irish nationalism
discursive practice in which reproduction is high on the agenda. Cast as a Catholic norm,
Mrs Purefoy’s pregnancy is compared to what “God’s angel to Mary quoth” (U 14.76)
and she will “bring forth by God His bounty” (U 14.176). The childbirth glorifies the
providence of God. “[T]he issue so auspicated after an ordeal of such duress now testified
once more to the mercy as well as to the bounty of the Supreme Being” (U 14.877-79).
Mrs Purefoy’s annual gestation and childbearing are in line with the doctrines of Catholicism, according to which sex should be regularized expressly with the intent to procreate and contraception is referred to as a crime against fertility, a sinful abuse of human true nature. “[L]et scholarment and all Malthusiasts go hang” (U 14.1415).

“Copulation without population! No, say I! Herod’s slaughter of the innocents were the truer name” (U 14.1422-23). “In her lay a Godframed Godgiven preformed possibility” (U 14.1413, emphases added). The act of giving birth is the method for the materialization of God’s profound grace. “Mother’s milk, Purefoy, the milk of human kin, milk too of those burgeoning stars overhead rutilant thin rainvapour, [. . .] the honeymilk of Canaan’s land” (U 14.1433-37, emphasis added). Successively, maternal fertility is accorded with the religious symbolization in a series of discursive practices. “Omnis caro ad the venite. No question but her name is puissant who aventried the dear corse of our Agenbuyer, Healer and Herd, our mighty mother and mother most venerable [. . .] won us” (U 14.294-99)\(^\text{12}\). Likened to the status of the Virgin Mary giving human beings the Redeemer, the utility of Mrs Purefoy’s body is magnified to the full. Her pregnancy and parturition are irreversibly interwoven into the network of Catholicism discursive practice. Her body obliged to bring forth the greatest benevolence of God is therefore consigned to the discourse’s omnipotent control. Associating the utilization of the maternal body with the accomplishment of God’s will, doctrines of Catholicism have successfully had the Irish people imbued with the belief in fecundity. Yet again, the normalizing power of discourse will not be demonstrated outright if it does not interpellate and multiply its recipients—the more, the better. “Madam, when comes the storkbird for thee?” (U 14.1405-6)\(^\text{13}\). Having a baby is valued as a norm. It is by means of the normalizing call that a lot more Irishwomen are recruited by the discursive project of reproduction. This

\(^{12}\) Annotated by Gifford and Seidman, “Omnis caro ad the venite” is the Latin for “All flesh will come to thee” (62). In the following, “corse” is the obsolete for body, “Agenbuyer” is the Medieval English for Christ, the Redeemer, and “Herd” means that Christ is the shepherd of God’s flock, the mankind (Gifford 415).

\(^{13}\) In Western tradition, it is sometime jokingly believed that the baby is delivered by the stork.
normalization makes Irishwomen internalize their utilities of procreation and submit to the norm automatically.

Mrs Purefoy’s submissiveness is manifest with the overexploitation of her docile body exerted by the discursive power of both Irish nationalism and Catholicism. Although Irishmen also face the mutual consolidation of Irish nationalist discourse and doctrines of Catholicism, they do benefit from the discursive practice in which Irishwomen, rather than Irishmen, are the target for utilization. “By heaven, Theodore Purefoy, thou hast done a doughty deed and no botch! Thou art, I vow, the remarkablest progenitor barring none in this chaffering allincluding most farraginous chronicle. Astounding! In her lay a Godframed Godgiven preformed possibility which thou hast fructified with thy modicum of man’s work” (U 14.1410-15, emphases added). “Thou sawest thy America, thy lifetask, and didst charge to cover like the transpontine brison” (U 14.1430-31, emphasis added)14. “He [God] knows and will call in His own good time. You too have fought the good fight and played loyally your man’s part. Sir, to you my hand. Well done, thou good and faithful servant!” (U 14.1341-43). “Thou art all their daddies” (U 14.1415-16). Participating in the industry of baby-making wholeheartedly, the husband of Mrs Purefoy is commended for his man’s work that fructifies. Theodore Purefoy serves to animate the utmost utility consisted in the fertile body of Mrs Purefoy. Fulfilling progeniture ceaselessly, the husband’s man work is more acclaimed than the usefulness of the wife’s body. The life task entails exploring, exploiting, and utilizing the new-found land, so as to expand the prosperity of a nation’s name. It is the husband’s act of fructifying that assures the wife’s maternity functions. Among all celebrations of Mrs Purefoy’s childbirth, only the laudation of motherhood is limited to its implementality; the others—inclusive of the baby, the father, the nation’s prosperity, and the grace of God—are all turned sublime. Unlike maternity which is reduced to the bodily faculty,

14 According to Gifford’s annotation (440), “Thou sawest thy America” alludes to John Donne’s “Going to Bed”: “O my America! my new-found-land,” as such the lover addresses his mistresses (line 27).
fatherhood is not only intact and but also reinforced in those discursive statements exalting the event of childbearing. It is a happy accouchement:

All that surgical skill could do was done and the brave woman had manfully helped. She [. . .] was very very happy. [. . .] in the first bloom of her new motherhood, breathing a silent prayer of thanksgiving to One above, the Universal Husband. And as her loving eyes behold her babe she wishes only one blessing more, to have her dear Doady there with her to share her joy, to lay in his arms that mite of God’s clay, the fruit of their lawful embraces. (U 14.1311-22, emphasis added)

It is particularly noteworthy that the importance attached to the role of the husband and the father is the mother’s spontaneous act. After the labor, Mrs Purefoy gives a thanksgiving to God immediately and offers to share her joy with her husband voluntarily. The spontaneous wish expressed by Mrs Purefoy accords the sense of indispensability to the paternal role in human reproduction course; more significantly, it evidences that the automatic submission to power has been forged in Mrs Purefoy as the docile body. Caused by the series of discursive normalizations, this spontaneous obedience thereupon facilitates Irish nationalist discourse to perpetuate its grip on the Irish individuals, Irishwomen in particular.

Mrs Purefoy is a hundred percent submissive to the discursive practice of Irish nationalism, and furthermore her automatic submission is a hundred percent assured. That Mrs Purefoy submits to the discursive power automatically is not merely manifested by her voluntary compliance with the normalization but demonstrated in the nationalist-toned and psalm-like descriptions given to the event of her parturition. In the discursive statements about her birthing act, Mrs Purefoy is basically told instead of recounting her childbearing on her own. The only and the very exception with which we are acquainted with Mrs Purefoy’s personal inclination is at the postpartum she expresses her wish to
have her husband by her side and share the bloom of their parenthood. Yet, such self-articulation is still encompassed in the discursive normalization that headlines the paternal as the predominant partner in family and in the country. It has penetrated the Irish public opinions and social milieu that a mother’s giving birth to a baby signifies that not only the father but the nation begets a son to carry on their names. Accordingly, Mrs Purefoy’s existence is shaped by normalization and utterly exploited for the discursive formation of the concept and the norm of Irish nationalism.

Normalization is indeed a sort of violence that discourse imposes upon individuals. Normalized, Mrs Purefoy has internalized utility as her existence in the Irish society and spontaneous docility as her relation to the Irish social whole. More violently, the discursive statements made by those drunken medical students attempt to supersede the primary act of the birthing scene. Those young men gather carousing in the common room of the maternity hospital; the loud noises of their revelry, rambling chatter, and disrespectful banter seem able to drown out the parturient cry from the maternity ward. The nurses ask them for restraint, but in vain. The birthing scene is flooded with the roistering and discursive debates of these young men; the primary event of childbirth has to proceed offstage. In terms of the Homeric parallel to Joyce’s “Oxen” episode, these ribald and riotous male students are compared to Ulysses’ impious fellows, who killed the sacred oxen of the sun for food. The ribaldry of those drunkards uttered in the maternity hospital can be seen as the sacrilege committed by Ulysses’ followers on the Isle of the Sun. Both the drunkards and the fellows murder the symbol of fertility; yet, their fates diverge greatly. Instead of being followed by retribution for their impious sacrilege, these drunken medical students occupy the pivotal status and site of enunciation in the discursive practice. Their statements about parturition take the place of the actual account of the labor course. Strange to say, the mother and the child are actually rendered invisible, and silenced in the maternity hospital. The silenced maternity thus becomes
rater vulnerable to discursive exploitation. It is caught in the discursive practice of the medical students’ drunken speeches—a net woven for immobilizing the unequal status of power relation between the normalizing and the normalized.

For Stephen, motherhood seems to be a threatening matter to his sense of masculinity and selfhood. It frequently appears as a nightmarish memory haunting him, a vision of his mother’s ghost from which he keeps failing to run away. “Womb of sin. Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten. By them, the man with my voice and my eyes and a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath” (*U 3.44-47*, emphasis added). “Tides myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, [. . .] a winedark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled” (*U 3.393-96*, emphasis added). “Oomb, allwombing tomb” (*U 3.402*). The womb of human sin, the blood giving birth to him and denied by him, and the ghostly mother figure are all that this young man means to discard. Stephen’s intended refusal of maternity seems made possible through his speechifying of parturition. As Duffy suggests, the birthing moment is indeed a moment of “high and rather desperate drama in the representation of masculine identity” (220). The baby is male, the father is emblazoned, and the names of both the heavenly and mundane patriarch are revered. For Stephen, the course of birthing is the issue of the word—the attainment of eternity: “Know all men, he said, time’s ruins build eternity’s mansions. What means this? Desire’s wind blasts the thorn tree but after it becomes from a bramblebush to be a rose upon the rood of time. *Mark me now.* In woman’s womb word is made flesh but in the spirit of the maker all flesh that passes becomes the word that shall not pass away. This is the postcreation” (*U 14.289-95*, emphases added). The body passed away; the word remains. It is the creation after the decay of that one created out of the mother’s blood. It is Stephen’s action of valorizing postcreation. Obstinately rejecting maternal materiality while formulating his theory of eternity as word, Stephen rather
intensifies the sense of instrumentality of a docile maternal body and aggravates the
discursive coercion on the normalized maternity.

Additionally, the tour de force that Joyce creates appears to be an example of
discursive imposition upon Mrs Purefoy as well. In this episode, Joyce tells the story of
the meeting of Bloom and Stephen in the common room of the maternity hospital where
they are drinking and talking with a group of men, while Mrs Purefoy is in labor upstairs.
To portray the decisive encounter of Bloom, the Ulysses of this novel, and Stephen, the
Telemachus of *Ulysses*, Joyce produces a series of parodies of literary styles
corresponding to the natural stages of development in the human embryo and to the
progression of English literary styles\(^\text{15}\). The incident of Mrs Purefoy’s birthing seems to
serve as a subordinate role in this nine-parted male-voiced narration which flamboyantly
demonstrates each of the masters of English prose style. As Duffy underscores, Joyce’s
juxtaposition of the evolution of literary styles in “Oxen” and the gestation process
implies the prospect of “another child (of language, perhaps)” to be born in the episode
symbolically (221). In fact, two births take place in the maternity hospital: one is
processed in the labor ward, and the other is carried out through words. Taking shape in
the stylistics of this episode, the men’s symbolic birth is an entity much more integral
than Mrs Purefoy’s actual birth (Duffy 221). For Ellen Carol Jones, this discrepancy
between literary gestation and real birthing shows that the language of the literary
forefathers is “played out on the body of the mother” and its “linguistic virtuosity
sounded out of her silence” (272). The “Oxen” scholarship has accomplished the
unsurpassed and full-scale examination of the Homeric parallels, the embryological
references, and the literary parodies in this episode. Yet, to identify the manner in which

\(^\text{15}\) Joyce indicated the references to the embryological characteristics and the literary parodies of the “Oxen”
in his letter to Frank Budgen on March 20, 1920. As Joyce outlined, the technique of this episode is a nine-
parted episode without divisions, introduced by a Sallustian-Tacitean prelude and then by way of the
earliest alliterative and monosyllabic English, Anglo-Saxon, Mandeville, Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, the
Elizabethan chronicle style, the solemn passage such as of Milton, the choppy Latin-gossipy bits, the
Buyanesque style, and so on through Defoe-Swift to a jumble of Pidgin English, nigger English, Cockney,
Irish, Bowery slang and broken doggerel (See *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. 1, 139-40).
Joyce writes the “Oxen” and the specific passages on which he draws to construct his parodies is not the primary concern of my thesis. Far from being disrespectful to Joyce’s brilliant technical achievement and the insightful study of Joyce’s parodies, my treatment of these literary parodies is rather to focus on the discursive status of Mrs Purefoy amid a variety of viewpoints delivered in the parodies of these masters’ literary styles. Considering the narration stylistically and skillfully parodied, the formidable wording and monolithic structure adopted suggest a form of discursive force shaping the appearance of childbearing scene. The belief in procreation for the commonwealth’s concern assumes its self-evident legitimacy in such masterful styles of narration. The act of apotheosizing fecundity is discursively executed upon the body of Mrs Purefoy and outweighs her lying-in process in the maternity ward. Put in Foucauldian terms, the aforementioned contentions of Duffy and of Jones both underline the utilization of the normalized body in a particular discursive formation. The more a docile body comes to be exploited, the more forceful power-effect a certain discourse can be. Moreover, Jones’s claim emphasizes that the deluge of the men’s discursive impositions not only deprives the woman in labor of her vocality but also flaunts their discursive effects through her silence and spontaneous submission. Submerged in their oratory, the body of the mother has become the most exploitable and inexhaustible resource subserving these men’s symbolic consummation.

As the sacred ox to the sun god, Mrs Purefoy should have been deified and venerated in awe. Bringing forth the promise of fertility, Mrs Purefoy should have occupied the state of subjectivity especially when she is in labor. In a birthing scene, the lying-in Mrs Purefoy should have had the most attention, recognizability and identification. However, things go completely the other way around in “Oxen of the Sun.” The sacrilege is under way and getting more and more intensified in the discursive practice in this episode. The prolific Mrs Purefoy is equated to motherhood and identified as her maternity. Motherhood is employed as the method for the proliferation of the Irish
nationhood. Accored with national glory, motherhood is instrumentalized insidiously. Moreover, such motherhood rather stands for fecundity which is a valorized norm under the banner of national propagation—the rarefied value leading all discursive statements of Irish nationalism. The significance of motherhood is reduced to the maternity faculty, namely the bodily function in giving birth. Any parturient is a mother-to-be without a doubt; yet, the mother in this episode is merely the parturient in terms of the discursive utility. Worse, the actual course of parturition is drowned out in the deluge of discursive male voices (noises) in the maternity hospital. The account of the birthing is fragmented and reported in snippets; on the contrary, the oratory of those drunken young men is presented in a well-developed way. Not only has the parturient cry been devoiced but also the material part of maternity is despised. The corporeal existence of a mother is rejected; maternity, abandoned in the name of masculine postcreation. In addition to being firmly attached to the discursive effect, maternity is further strangled by those intended discursive statements. This mighty normalizing power and entire discursive normalization mechanism have rendered the subjectivity of Mrs Purefoy none. The matter of subjectivity that concerns Foucault becomes impossible in the case of Mrs Purefoy. Impossibility is because the situation for Mrs Purefoy has gone beyond the case that the discursive self-knowledge of truth oppresses the subjectivity of an individual. It is the one that collective understanding of the discursive truth strangles the individual one. Mrs Purefoy does not utter her own self-understanding of discursive truth, except for the very one in conformity with the collective expectation. The subjecthood of Mrs Purefoy is erased from the normalization of birthing act; in other words, it does not exist in the discursive practice. It is the murder of individual subjectivity, an omni-disappearance of subjectivity in the case of Mrs Purefoy.
Chapter Two

Flaunting Their “Perfect” Femininity:

Individualization/Normalization of Discursive Subjectivities

Joyce gives a picture of male Dublin in *Ulysses*, where mainly male characters talk aloud in the novel. His depiction reflects that the early-twentieth-century Dublin was a city largely penetrated with men’s voices. Overall, two major discourses define the life of the Irish people, circumscribing the way to behave and to think. Politically, Irish nationalism conditions their relation to the entire Irish community; religiously, Catholicism molds their soul. Furthermore, these two discursive powers not only take effect separately but also work hand in hand to shape individuals’ appearances in 1904’s Dublin. With these two discursive practices enhanced mutually, the Irish are securely under their control. Installed in the thought of the Irish people, Irish nationalist discourse and Catholic doctrines govern their daily activities accordingly. More insidiously, this discursive governance intends to fortify the predominant status of the patriarch in the social and political contexts of Ireland. Aiming at an independent Irish state, Irish nationalist discourse, for example, valorizes procreation as a norm together with the help of the doctrines of Catholicism. In the discursive practice, the maternal faculty is treated as the optimal instrument to bring forth the continuance of the (national and familial) father’s name. In the previous chapter, I have argued normalization as discourse’s omni-repressive power that smothers the subjectivity of the prostrate female character like Mrs Purefoy. The discursive normalization not only yields a docile and utile body but also succeeds in perpetuating the body’s utility and automatic submission. Instead of attaining to a state of subjectivity in the birthing scenario, Mrs Purefoy, the Irishwoman in labor, emerges as merely a channel through which a new (male) citizen is delivered to Ireland. What is worse, her motherhood is reduced to the parturient function to serve the
discursive effect of fecundity rarefied in Irish nationalist discourse. Such normalization demonstrates how hopelessly an individual would be manipulated and oppressed by power in the discursive practice.

In addition to oppression, discursive normalization also engages individuals in their self-identification with the normalized discursive effect. Giving rise to such self-identifying process, the employment of normalization mechanisms, thus, further secures the imposition of discourse’s power-effect upon those individuals. In the case of Gerty McDowell who clearly indulges herself in identifying with the discursive statements summoning her in the “Nausicaa” episode, the schemed normalization reveals another trait of discourse’s power-effect embodied in individual’s sense of self. This coming about of Gerty’s selfhood just evidences that individual’s self-identification is an effect of power’s meticulous control. However voluntarily an individual engages in the self-identifying process, the result is to speak for and intensify the discursive effect power attempts. In terms of Foucault, however, it is a too simplified definition to conclude power only as the force to oppress; in other words, power is not only repressive but also productive. “It is a form of power,” emphasizes Foucault, “which makes individuals subjects” (“The Subject and Power” 212). With this productive characteristic, power “applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him” (Foucault, “The Subject and Power” 212). Foucault contends that the normalizing power of discourse on the one hand functions as oppression on the docile body and on the other hand produces the self-image with which individuals turn recognizable and remain manipulated within discursive practices.

It is grounded on this understanding of power’s multidirectional effect that Foucault insists on distinguishing his notion of discourse from the Marxist idea of ideology.
Moreover, he argues that power produces and disseminates particular discourses as truth with which the power-effect reaches into the very grain of individuals’ everyday life. As Madan Sarup points out, Foucault “rejects the concept of ideology” (77). Foucault does maintain the conception of the operation of state apparatuses emphasized in the Althusserian conceptualization of ideology in his own theorizing discourse. His notion of discourse also insinuates that a particular discourse may be upheld and practiced by a group of people or a specific institution with their own interests and that the interested values of this particular system of ideas might have been naturalized and passed on as universality or common sense. However, Foucault’s account of discourse stands at a different perspective from the position where Althusser has his approach mainly governed by his Marxist politics (Howarth 58). In an interview, Foucault makes an explicit statement clarifying the differences between discourse and ideology:

The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to use for three reasons. The first is that, like it or not, *it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth.* [. . .] The second drawback is that the concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position in relation to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, etc. For these three reasons, I think that this is a notion that cannot be used without circumspection. (*PK* 118, emphasis added)

For Althusser, ideology engenders a state of false consciousness: it “represents the *imaginary* relationship of individuals to their *real* conditions of existence” (162, emphases added)\(^\text{16}\). This presupposed distinction between ideology and truth becomes problematic when Foucault analyzes historically how effects of truth are produced within

---

\(^{16}\) The quote is from Althusser’s essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” This article first appeared in the French journal *La Pensee* in 1970. It was translated into English by Ben Brewster and reprinted in 1971 by Monthly Review Press within *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essay*, the collection of Althusser’s articles.
discourses. For Foucault, these discourses in themselves are neither true nor false; it is the discursive practice at a certain historical period that renders them the status of truth. In addition, Althusser’s second thesis on ideology posits that ideology has a “material existence” (165). This thesis indicates that ideology always exists in an apparatus, and this existence is material. It is the emphasis on such material existence and apparatus that further distinguishes Foucault’s notion of discourse and Althusser’s proposition of ideology. Foucault discerns the pervasiveness of discourse and discursive practice even in an individual’s daily unimportant gestures. More than simply practiced within the apparatuses, discourse pervades, extending to everyday life of the individual and penetrating the social whole. The Foucauldian understanding of the pervasion of discursive power accentuates another conspicuous difference in the notion of repression. The Althusserean/ Marxist expression of power concentrates on the central-controlling and institutionalized forms such as RSAs or ISAs that perpetuate the control over the interpellated individuals. Thus, the Marxist practice formulates repression as the sole form of power, whereas Foucault’s concern of power highlights the subtle and diffuse ways through which power is put into practice. Unpacking the conventional notion of power as a purely repressive entity, Foucault does not intend to deny the phenomenon of repression but rather sets forth that repression is not the paradigmatic form of power. Foucault stresses that repression is only one in a multiplicity of positive and negative effects generated through the exercise of power (McNay 91). Power is not unidirectional. It contains negative and positive effects, oppressive and productive forces, and it may simultaneously coerce the object and produce the subjectivity.

The study of power, for Foucault, means neither the emphasis on the superstructure-infrastructure relationship nor the oppression-and-oppressed dichotomy of the power-effect. Instead, he treats power as diffusive power relations pervading the social entity. Moreover, Foucault launches into an analysis of the micro-physics of power, studying the
kind of power that traverses the body in a more calculated, refined, and meticulous way. The power-effect is not only demonstrated in the social and public realm but also inscribed upon individuals. This micro-power is so ubiquitous that it determines individuals’ relationships to the society, and enables the social body to coerce and manipulate individuals. Here, Foucault marks the notion of the effect of tactics and manoeuvres in the play of power. This reiterates that power is capable of approaching individuals without coming to individuals’ notice. The power-effect instilled into individuals may be taken for their own self-knowledge and personal choices. In theory, any person utters anything he or she wants, but actually he or she tends to remain “fairly restricted by societal and personal norms” (Mills 70). That anyone spontaneously feels personal with the choice he or she makes punctuates power’s insidious seizure of an individual. In discursive practice, the technologies of normalization take great effect in the production of individual’s sense of self in relation to those valorized as norms. It is this individualizing and normalizing power that generates a certain self-knowledge in the individual. In addition, such discursively produced self-identification greatly facilitates discourse to attain the power-effect it needs.

In “Nausicaa,” Gerty undergoes a series of discursive powers that simultaneously individualize and normalize her. Such powers engage her in ceaseless discursive practices and manifest the intended discursive effects through the selfhood taking form in Gerty’s identification with those discursive statements. In a more specific account, the discursive normalization mechanics exerted upon Gerty is to call forth her compliance with the discourse of femininity and impel her to act out the discursive femininity accordingly without feeling forced. Femininity is definitely to be regarded as the role of discourse in the patriarch-predominated Irish society at the turn of the twentieth century. It comprises a huge number of discursive statements deriving from materials such as sentimental novels, women’s magazines, pictorials, advertising pictures, public opinions, and most
important, the Catholic doctrines. These statements altogether render the discourse-effected appearance to a young girl like Gerty. Furthermore, Gerty’s accomplishment of the discursive femininity ultimately is to serve the Irishmen-preceded needs and reinforce the dominance of patriarchy in a city like the 1904’s Dublin.

Figuratively speaking, Gerty is showcasing her internalization of the discourse of femininity through her constantly identifying herself with the feminine roles she receives from those various discursive statements. The identification, for Gerty, is a voluntary and actively participated act. “Nausicaa” being opened with the thickness of religious atmosphere, we come to realize that Catholicism is the major discourse encompassing Gerty’s self-knowledge and directing the process of her self-identification. An unmistakable parallel between Gerty and the Virgin Mary is established in this episode. The words and phrases used in describing Gerty—such as “Her figure was slight and graceful” (U 13.83), “The waxen pallor of her face was almost spiritual in its ivorylike purity” (U 13.87-88), and “Her hands were of finely veined alabaster” (U 13.89)—spotlight the implicit correspondence between Gerty’s appearance and the Virgin Mary icon. As for the dress, Gerty wears the blue—“her own colour” (U 13.180); this is certainly the color-attribute of the Virgin Mary as well. It is to be noted that the description of Gerty is put “as much a piece of self-revelation as of objective picturing” (Blamires 129). This way of speaking aptly points to the fact that not only does Gerty identify herself with the image of the Virgin Mary but also she intends to be recognized by such affinity. Additionally, the Catholic Church and the lighthouse near Sandymount shore become the discursive edifices calling for Gerty’s absorption of the Virgin Mary’s virtues. The men’s temperance retreat conducted in the church together with the descriptions of the church building and the lighthouse frame Gerty’s self-identification. “[I]n her pure radiance a beacon ever to the stormtossed heart of man, Mary, star of the sea” initiates Gerty into her emulation of the Virgin Mary’s role of being the merciful
comfortress (U 13.7-8). Discourse of Catholicism, at the very beginning of this episode, has already assigned Gerty her feminine role of a subservient comfortress.

In the church, those tormented by drinking problems gather without distinction of social classes, kneeling down before the immaculate Virgin Mary, reciting the litany of Our Lady of Loreto, and beseeching her to intercede for them. “[C]areworn hearts were there and toilers for their daily bread and many who had erred and wandered, their eyes wet with contrition but for all that bright with hope” (U 13.374-44). Father Hughes explains to them that “the most pious Virgin’s intercessory power” will never abandon those who implore her powerful protection (U 13.378-80). It is the “most edifying spectacle” for Gerty to see (U 13.285). This spectacle reminds her of the traumatic childhood with the memory of her intemperate father and further inspires in her the desire to soothe all suffering hearts. The old familiar words—“holy Mary, holy virgin of virgins”—have occupied Gerty’s soul (U 13.288-89). “Through the open window of the church the fragrant incense was wafted and with it the fragrant names of her [. . .] spiritual vessel, pray for us, honourable vessel, pray for us, vessel of singular devotion, pray for us, mystical rose” (U 13.371-74). Those incessant voices singing in supplication to the most powerful and merciful Virgin Mary in the backdrop of Gerty’s self-identification not only function as the religious indoctrination but also inculcate Gerty with the responsibility to be the guardian angel of her household. She does play the part of a “sterling good daughter” and a “ministering angel” in the house (U 13.325-26). In spite of the problematic alcoholism, she loves her poor father still. Like a second mother, she looks after her mother tenderly when ill. “Everyone thought the world of her for her gentle ways” (U 13.330-31). Gerty is the angel of the house, “Comfortress of the afflicted” (U 13.442), the incarnation of the most merciful Virgin Mary.

The normalized feminine role as a domestic guardian angel is carried into Gerty’s dream marriage life. She pictures herself as a wife of good womanly wise, providing her
husband with the comforts of home and the great feeling of hominess. From the chosen cuisine for daily meals and homemade desserts to the selection of pictures, engravings, and articles of good furniture decorating the drawingroom, Gerty is devoted to building a warm hearth for a home-loving couple. The marriage vow fascinates her: “for riches for poor, in sickness in health, till death us two part, from this to this day forward” (U 13.216-17). Gerty is desperate to be an angelic wife, lovingly protecting her family and comforting her husband. In addition to actively taking on the normalized roles of the angel of the house and the comfortress of the afflicted, Gerty also has faithfully internalized the faith in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary—“the fragrant names of her who was conceived without stain of original sin” (U 13.372-73, emphasis added). This internalization is breathed out through Gerty’s ethicized expression of her longing husband-wife relationship. Contacts between the husband and the wife, so far as Gerty is concerned, are just “a good hearty hug,” a “gaze for a moment deep down into her eyes,” and nothing further than a passionate long kiss (U 13.242). Intentionally, implications of the conjugal intercourse are avoided in Gerty’s fantasy. With the hair slightly flecked with grey and the sweeping moustache carefully trimmed, the man who wins Gerty’s girlish heart is a father figure to Gerty. She would rather like to be his “dear little wifey” (U 13.241). Their relation is like ethical relations between members of a family, like the father and the daughter. This ethicized relationship exempts Gerty from the part of consummation in marriage, and therefore saves her from the violation of the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception by which she abides scrupulously. Absorbed completely into Gerty’s self-knowledge, this article of faith even entails Gerty’s justifying the pleasure in her imaginary intercourse with Bloom afterwards.

The valorized femininity of Catholic discourse successfully has the power-effect sustained through Gerty’s actively identifying herself with those discursive feminine roles. Internalizing these roles, Gerty affords herself not only the self-perceptions but also the
individuality with which people can recognize her. Though unable to escape the power that constitutes her as the normalized object, Gerty is indeed an interactive object in discursive practice. Instead of being inert and utterly oppressed, she actively responds to the discourse of femininity, actualizing the discursive effect and lending herself an identifiable appearance with the very discursive effect. Not only the Catholic doctrines which appoint Gerty the discursive roles in the Irish society but the discursive statements in the sentimental novels, advertisements, women’s magazines, and pictorials shape Gerty’s feminine appearances accepted in the public opinions.

As a beautiful young girl, Gerty is never too busy to pay attention to the methods for making her more beautiful. For instance, the “iron jelloids,” widely advertised as a cure for anemia, betters Gerty’s pale complexion that used to be pale(\textit{U} 13.84). Gerty has the bluest eyes of the Irish blue, the lustrous lashes, and the dark expressive eyebrows that used to be less silkly seductive than they are now. It is “Madame Vera Verity, directress of the Woman Beautiful page of the Princess Novelette” that advises her to try the “eyebrowleine” giving the “haunting expression to the eyes, so becoming in leaders of fashion” (\textit{U}.13 109-13). She also learns from Madame Vera Verity the scientific cure for blush, the tip to increase her height, and the solution to a flat nose that may be the minus to any beautiful face. She cut her hair this morning because Madame Vera Verity had told her it is good to cut the hair at the new moon and by the light of the moon itself. Now her crowning glory nestles about her pretty head “in profusion of luxuriant clusters” (\textit{U} 13.118-19). Gerty also has a good advisor on how to dress. The \textit{Lady’s pictorial} teaches her to “dress simply but with the instinctive taste of a votary of Dame Fashion” (\textit{U} 13.148-49). She is wearing a neat vee-necked blouse of electric blue today. In the handkerchief pocket on the blouse, she keeps a piece of cotton wool scented with her favourite perfume. The navy three-quarter skirt cut to the stride shows off her slim graceful figure to perfection. Beneath her skirt displays a perfect proportion of her
shapely limbs and her well-turned ankle. Her shoes are the newest thing in footwear, with the patent toecaps and one smart buckle over her instep. The stockings are particular, too. They are finespun with high-spliced heels and wide garters on the top. As for the coquettish hat she wears, it is woven from the wide-leaved nigger straw with the egg-blue chenille in the brim and a silk butterfly bow at the side. “[W]hat joy was hers when she tried it on then, smiling at the lovely reflection which the mirror gave back to her! And when she put it on the waterjug to keep the shape she knew that that would take the shine out of some people she knew” (U 13.161-64, emphases added). Even for the underwear, Gerty spends her chief care. She has four sets with pretty stitchery, wearing them for going out. Afraid the washerwomen scorch these beautiful undies, she airs and irons them by herself when she has them back from the laundry. She is told that it is for luck and lovers’ meeting if one puts on a garment inside out when dressing accidentally. She wears the blue set expressly for luck, and she nearly put it on inside out this morning. All this signs a lucky day for her. Gerty is perfectly conscious of her own doing in the series of applications of all the magazine information to her day-to-day life. Following the suggestions in order to beautify herself, Gerty practices actively, and feels absolutely free and personal with those suggestions. She not only identifies with the magazine’s discursive statements about feminine beauty in fashion but also feels sure of herself to fulfill the discursive effect of the most fashionable feminine beauty. Smiling at the lovely reflection that the mirror gives back to her, Gerty knows she looks so lovely that “of a surety God’s fair land of Ireland did not hold her equal” (U 13.121-22). In this self-identifying process, Gerty again achieves a certain state of self-image recognizable in the discursive practice.

The sentimental novels she has read also provide Gerty the scenario for her adolescent self-dramatization. In the richly romanticized strain, Gerty recalls the peck on the end of her nose that Reggy Wylie gave in a hurry, the first awakening of love. It was
at the night of party long ago “when they were alone and he stole an arm round her waist she went white to the very lips. He called her little one in a strangely husky voice and snatched a half kiss (the first!)” (U 13.201-4). This young passionate Reggy also had been always riding the bicycle past Gerty’s window until his father decided to keep him in for the evening studying. Sadly, the young boy’s affection seems to have ceased now. However, for Gerty, it is not the end of the puppy love but “simply a lovers’ quarrel” (U 13.129). “Little recked he perhaps for what she felt, that dull aching void in her heart sometimes, piercing to the core. Yet he was young and perchance he might learn to love her in time” (U 13.136-38). Still at the short-trousered stage, Reggy is too young to understand and believe in love, too young to know to cherish her. Gerty can wait. Willingly, she can endure all bitterness for the sake of love—a “woman’s birthright” (U 13.200)—as what the heroine does in a sentimental love story. Rapt in thought, Gerty pictures her ideal love. The one “who would woo and win Gerty MacDowell must be a man among men” (U 13.207). “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 [. . .] perhaps his hair slightly flecked with grey” (U 13.209-11). This man among men must have not found his ideal yet, and she, Gerty MacDowell, is exactly his ideal for whom he has been waiting so long. Her manly man must “understand” her, “take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the strength of his deep passionate nature and comfort her with a long long kiss” (U 13.212-14). In addition to a strong character, this man must be “tall with broad shoulders (she had always admired tall men for a husband) with glistening white teeth under his carefully trimmed sweeping moustache” (U 13.235-37). One day he will come by her lattice window, “offering a bunch of flowers to his ladylove with oldtime chivalry” like what she has learned from “the picture of halcyon days” (U 13.334-40). “With all the heart of her she longs to be his only, his affianced bride” (U 13.215-16).
The disposition of the heroine in a love story is also an example to Gerty. Teased by her companions about the coolness growing in her relation with the young Reggy, Gerty ignores the sourness in those remarks. She imitates the heroine of *The Lamplighter*, who has a hot temper by nature but always comes into her usual possession of complete self-control rapidly (Gifford and Seidman 384). She is about to retort Edy’s jeers, but “something checked the words on her tongue. Inclination prompted her to speak out: dignity told her to be silent” (*U* 13.124-25). She is silent for a moment, keeping her sad eyes downcast and having the pretty lips pouted; then, she laughs off all the annoyances. Glancing up, Gerty bursts into a “joyous little laugh which had in it all the freshness of a young May morning” (*U* 13.126-27). She will never have her tears shed in front of others. “And yet—and yet! That strained look on her face! A gnawing sorrow is there all the time. Her very soul is in her eyes and she would give worlds to be in the privacy of her own familiar chamber where, giving way to tears, she could have a good cry and relieve her pentup feelings” (*U* 13.188-91). Even to cry, the heroine has taught her not to cry too much but to a perfect degree of crying. Gerty knows how to cry nicely before the mirror—“You are lovely, Gerty, it [the mirror] said” (*U* 13.193-94). Practicing the scenario and implementing characterization of the sentimental love story, Gerty is the leading actress of her own romantic drama. The obsessively dramatized self-revelation shows that Gerty does indulge herself in acting out the discursive femininity. More significantly, it suggests that Gerty might anticipate becoming the part she takes by actively and attentively performing to the script she has. Gerty’s self-identification answers what the discourse of femininity wants the feminine to be. Thus, the acceptable femininity is embodied in Gerty’s thought, behavior, and appearances. Gerty’s self-image, though recognizably individual for her, is still an emphatic demonstration of the identifiable discursive effect.

---

17 The references concerning *The Lamplighter*, written by Maria Cummins (1827-66) in 1854, are provided in the first footnote of “Nausicaa” in *Ulysses Annotated* (Gifford and Seidman 384).
Practices are made for perfection. All the discursive femininity—inclusive of feminine roles, feminine attractions, and feminine temperaments—that Gerty has internalized and keeps practicing are brought into full play at the chance encounter with Bloom. First of all, Gerty’s dream husband finds counterpart in Bloom, “the face that met her gaze there in the twilight, wan and strangely drawn, seemed to her the saddest she had ever seen” (U 13.368-70). “She could see at once by his dark eyes and his pale intellectual face that he was a foreigner, the image of the photo she had of Martin Harvey, the matinee idol, only for the moustache which she preferred [. . .]. He was in deep mourning [. . .] the story of a haunting sorrow was written on his face. [. . .] Here was that of which she had so often dreamed. [. . .] her dreamhusband” (U 13.415-31). Gerty knows on the instant that this strange gentleman is like no one else; he is her ideal, awakening her true love:

*The very heart of the girlwoman* went out to him [. . .]. If he had suffered, more sinned against than sinning, or even, even, if he had been himself a sinner, a wicked man, she cared not. Even if he was a protestant or methodist she could convert him easily if he truly loved her. There were wounds that wanted healing with heartbalm. She was a *womanly woman* not like other flighty girls unfeminine he had known [. . .] she just yearned to know all, to forgive all if she could make him fall in love with her, make him forget the memory of the past. Then mayhap he would embrace her gently, like a real man, crushing her soft body to him, and love her, his ownest girlie, for herself alone. (U 13.430-41, emphases added)

Modeling herself on the heart of the Virgin Mary transpierced by the seven dolours, Gerty is willing to take on easing the mournful expression on the stranger’s face. She will be the refuge for this sorrow-haunted heart, the comfortress to this afflicted man. Hence, he will recognize all admirable femininity in her.
Moreover, the exquisite dressing and make-up win Gerty all attention of the gentleman. “[W]hile she gazed her heart went pitapat. Yes, it was her he was looking at, and there was meaning in his look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul” (U 13.411-13). In the stranger’s gaze, Gerty has found very much in reward for her practicing the knack of increasing feminine attraction in an assiduous manner every day. Taking off her hat for a moment and settling her hair, she can almost see “the swift answering flash of admiration in his eyes that set her tingling in ever nerve” (U 13.513-14). No prettier and daintier head of nut brown tresses can be seen on a girl’s shoulder, except for Gerty’s: “You would have to travel many a long mile before you found a head of hair the like of that” (U 13.512-13). The white-hot gaze of the stranger is the best compliment on her fulfillment of the discursive feminine traits. Eyed upon as a prey to a snake, Gerty’s woman instinct tells her that she has raised the devil in him. “[A] burning scarlet swept from throat to brow till the lovely colour of her [Gerty’s] face became a glorious rose” (U 13.518-20). Knowingly coquettish and shy, she looks even lovelier in her sweet girlish shyness; the telltale blush adds to Gerty’s feminine charm. This man, after all, conforms to the archetype of her ideal man—a manly man with proper manners. Gerty discerns the enormous self-control in his passionate nature: “One moment he had been there, fascinated by a loveliness that made him gaze, and the next moment it was the quiet gravefaced gentleman, self-control expressed in every line of his distinguishedlooking figure” (U 13.540-43). “If ever there was undisguised admiration in a man’s passionate gaze it was there plain to be seen on that man’s face. It is for you, Gertrude McDowell, and you know it” (U 13.564-67, emphasis added). Once again, Gerty is very self-aware of her practicing the discursive knowledge of feminine beauty which she learns from the magazine materials. Moreover, she knows very well that her practice has formed in her an identifiable sense of self and appearance accepted by the others.
Intently watched, Gerty feels the warm flush—a “danger signal” for her—surging and flaming into her cheeks (U 13.366). The exchange of glances is about to stir the desire in this ingénue. In an expressively sentimental tone, Gerty reveals her only shortcoming caused by an accident coming down Dalkey hill long time ago. She used to conceal her lameness—but, “it must end, she felt” (U 13.652). “If she saw that magic lure in his eyes there would be no holding back for her. Love laugh at locksmiths. She would make the great sacrifice. Her every effort would be to share his thoughts. Dearer than the whole world would she be to him and gild his days with happiness” (U 13.652-55, emphasis added). Revealing the physical defect for the sake of love is a great sacrifice, but not the greatest. The physical desire is almost aroused, but not yet.

She loathed that sort of person, the fallen women [...] went with the soldiers and coarse men with no respect for a girl’s honour, degrading the sex [...]. No, no: not that. They would be just good friends like a big brother and sister without all that other [...]. She would try to understand him [...] waiting with little white hands stretched out, with blue appealing eyes. Heart of mine! She would follow, her dream of love, the dictates of her heart that told her he was her all in all, the only man in all the world for her for love was the master guide. Nothing else mattered. Come what might she would be wild, untrammelled, free” (U 13.661-73, emphases added).

With the exaggeration of the strictly platonic relationship, Gerty reinforces her role of the embodiment of the immaculate Virgin Mary. The more Gerty puts exaggerated emphases on her free-minded status, the greater confinement to the normalized feminine role imposed upon her is exposed. Gerty’s self-identification with the Virgin Mary is fairly spontaneous, and however, spontaneously submissive to the internalized norm.

The meeting with the eyes fastened upon her finally sparks off the flame in Gerty’s heart. In the church, the Blessed Sacrament is put back into the tabernacle; in the outside,
the bazaar fireworks are set off. “The eyes that were fastened upon her set her pulses tingling. [. . .] Whitehot passion was in that face, passion silent as the grave, and it had made her his. At last they were left alone without the others to pry and pass remarks” (U 13.689-93, emphasis added). Canon O’Hanlon locks the tabernacle door because the benediction is over. The benediction is over, and the disciplinary surveillance has temporarily ceased. Gerty is left released from the chant in supplication to the immaculate Virgin Mary for the time being. Like the fireworks sparkling in the gathering twilight, Gerty’s sexual sensitivity is alerted. Noticing Bloom’s hands and face are working, Gerty has a “tremour” going over her (U 13.695). No more shyness at all, Gerty keeps leaning back—far enough for her to look up where the fireworks are, and as far as possible for Bloom to reveal to him all her beautifully shaped legs. “She seemed to hear the panting of his heart, his hoarse breathing, because she knew too about the passion of men like that, hotblooded” (U 13.699-701). “[L]ook, there was another” (U 13.715). Now, Gerty’s blue garters chosen expressly for matching the transparent stockings are in an exhibition. “She let him and she saw [. . .] and she was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back that he had a full view high up above her knee where no-one ever” (U 13.726-29, emphasis added). For the first time, Gerty, the Irish ingénue, feels unashamed to expose her shapely legs to a full view. Like those “skirt dancers” behaving immodestly before gentlemen, 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” (U 13.732-35).

Everyone cries “O” at the explosion of the pyrotechnics; the successive “O!” echoes “the cry of a young girls’ love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her, that cry that has rung through the ages” (U 13.735-40). Coinciding with the closure of the benediction, Gerty’s sexual sensitivity is unbuttoned. With the explosions of the rockets one after another, Gerty’s desire erupts. The successive cries are those of Gerty’s pleasure in sexual initiation.
Returning from ecstasy, Gerty rehabilitates her Virgin-Mary self-identification. In the aftermath, she glances at Bloom with a “pathetic little glance of piteous protest, of shy reproach” (*U* 742-43). Like the clemency of the Virgin Mary, an infinite store of mercy is in Gerty’s eyes. Even having erred, sinned, and wandered like him, Bloom still finds “a word of pardon” in such forgiving eyes (*U* 13.749). In addition to forgiving Bloom’s voyeuristic eyes and masturbatory act, Gerty also tenders the Virgin-Mary-like forgiveness to herself and justifies her being sexually gratified previously. She declares herself venial in that to be sexually aroused is not a mortal sin in contrast with fornication and “there was absolution so long as you didn’t do the other thing [intercourse] before being married” (*U* 13.708-9). Two significances should be attached to Gerty’s act of justification. The first one is obvious: the justifying gesture registers the interactiveness of Gerty’s response to discourse as a discursive object. She is an intersection of various discursive statements, and what is more, she is active and capable of making choices among them, with which she identifies herself respectively. The exhibition scenario is an apt example of Gerty’s shift in discursive self-identification back and forth. On the one hand, she plays an ingénue who sacrifices everything for love’s sake at the expense of her physical and spiritual chastity; on the other, she restores her original dedication to the firm belief in the immaculate Virgin Mary, after her desire has been fulfilled. The discursive practice seems negotiable for Gerty, and the discursive effect allows Gerty’s interactiveness. Yet, the other significance of Gerty’s self-justifying act discloses that the interactiveness is always encompassed in the discursive practice. Though Gerty seems temporarily free from discourse’s supervision and arrives at the state of self-gratification, this temporary freedom is actually proffered to Gerty for the fulfillment of the masculine desire. In a word, the active and interactive plays of the discursive femininity carried out by Gerty are to serve Irishmen as the predominant citizens in the early-twentieth-century Dublin.
Such interactive self-identification also occurs in the “Sirens” episode, in which the two Irish barmaids interact with the masculine-oriented discursive statements materialized in the talks among the male patrons, the men’s singing of love songs and patriotic ballads, and devouring gazes of Irishmen in the Ormond bar. As Jules Law remarks, “Both imperial and sexual politics frame the [“Sirens”] chapter” (162). Joyce situates the question of Irish national identity and that of sexual identity at the interface between imperial English spectacle, the viceregal cavalcade ringing by in the street outside, and patriotic Irish songs sung by the bar denizens inside the bar. The two Ormond barmaids are the Irish-Sirens figures. The “Sirens” episode aligns the Irish nationalist politics with the male gaze; the Sirens are both objects and subjects in the discursive spectacularization. Law thus argues that this double role of the Irish Sirens helps “to make visible the articulating function of female sexuality in (straight) male public life” (151).

The “Sirens” episode opens with an introductory overture that informs readers of the contrast between the outdoor viceregal procession and the indoor nationalistic aura brought forth by the men’s singing of Irish patriotic songs. Such juxtaposition points entire episode back to a historically accurate context that reflects these Irish barflies’ anxiety about national identity and masculine sexuality in early twentieth century. As for the Irish Sirens-barmaid s, bronze-haired Miss Douce and gold-haired Miss Kennedy are unambiguous seductive objects of desire for those male patrons in the bar. Situated in the two juxtaposed contexts—British Imperial vs. Irish nationalist, the two barmaids’ identification with either of them becomes a matter of concern. The figure the viceroy’s wife “sitting with his ex, pearl grey and *eau de Nil*” (*U* 11.67) engenders a discursive statement of fashion that engages these two Irish barmaids’ active attempt to imitate the exquisiteness of Lady Dudley’s fashion and bearing: “—Exquisite contrast, miss Kennedy said” (*U* 11.68). Yet, the barmaids’ appreciation for viceregal fashion betokens
a slight disruption of Irishness occurring within this favorite haunt of Dublin’s male citizens. It suggests that they value assimilation over patriotism (Law 159). As Law puts forth, the figure of nation is perpetually “defined by policing the borders of the sexual body” (160). In David Lloyd’s words, nationalism always polices female sexuality with a view to confining women to the domestic sphere (109). By this measure, the two barmaids are to be blamed for disrupting Irishness with their envious compliment on the fashionable style of the viceroy’s wife. Their identification with the imperial ladylikeness sabotages the Irishmen’s sense of Irish nationhood. Hereupon, the two barmaids are turned into both the threatening Sirens-subjects and the sexually unruly Sirens-figured objects. The male bar denizens are desirous to domesticate them and to brand them with their Irish nationalistic and sexual aspiration. Turned into political Sirens, the self-images of these two Irishwomen therefore emerge inseparably from the Irishmen-presiding national and sexual politics.

Viewed as betrayal to Irishness, the mimic imperial ladylikeness does not earn the barmaids Irishmen’s adoration. “—What is it? loud boots unmannerly asked. / —Find out, miss Douce retorted, leaving her spyingpoint. / —Your beau, is it? / A haughty bronze replied: / —I’ll complain to Mrs de Massey on you if I hear any more of your impertinent insolence. / —Imperthnthn thnhthn, bootssnout sniffed rudely, as he retreated” (U 11.94-100, emphases added). The ladylike self-image with which the Irish barmaids attempt to provide themselves and their haughty expressions end in discomfiture in the face of the disapproving snort of the boots whom the barmaids used to treat with indifference in the Ormond Hotel. They fail to be recognized as the discursive image of imperial fashion with which they identify themselves. Their admiration for Lady Dudley is not allowed within Ireland’s nationalistic political context. On the contrary, their being attracted to the domestic discursive figures is especially encouraged. They harken to the patrons thumping out the chords and singing Irish love songs and patriotic ballads while
serving in the bar. Their pensive mood can be elicited by the sentimental lyrics. Additionally, the male voices admiring the endearing figure pull the barmaids in identifying with the Irish feminine graceful bearing. “—When first I saw that form endearing ... [ . . . ] / Braintipped, check touched with flame, they listened feeling that flow endearing flow over skin limbs human heart soul spine. [ . . . ] / —… Sorrow from me seemed to depart. / [ . . . ] Good, good to hear: sorrow from them each seemed to from both depart when first they heard” (U 11.665-78). To counteract her previous admiration for the Imperial fashion—“Ladylike in exquisite contrast” (U 11.106), the endearing figure associated with the gold-haired Mina Kennedy, for instance, is the “rose of Castile” (U 11.331)—allusion to an Irish light opera, The Rose of Castile. Moreover, Mina Kennedy expresses her preference for the Irish folk song, “The Last Rose of Summer”: “Yes, her lips said more loudly, Mr Dollard. He sang the song lovely, murmured Mina. Mr Dollard. And The Last Rose of Summer was a lovely song, Mina loved that song” (U 11.1175-77). This Irish folk song was written by Thomas Moore, whose songs largely showed sympathy for the nationalists. Both the association and folk song sympathize with the sense of Irishness. The Rose of Castile speaks more highly of peasantry than of the identity of the royal family. The famous Irish folk songs of Thomas Moore express the spirit of Irish nationalism. Rendered with such allusive imagery, the two Irish barmaids are converted into the Irish-nationalism-inflected self-identification and answer to the discursive effect as the early-twentieth-century Irishmen expect.

---

18 The Rose of Castile was written by Michael William Balfe (1808-70) in 1857. Annotated by Gifford and Seidman, this light opera is about the failure of a farcical conspiracy that attempts to seize the throne of Castile by purposely confusing the identity of the queen, Elvira (139-40). Elvira disguises herself as a peasant girl to meet the king, Manuel. As for the king, he meets with his queen in the muleteer disguise. The opera ends with the happy reunion of Elvira and Manuel as peasant girl and muleteer, and interestingly, Manuel only has to be the king of Castile in disguise sometimes. The author of this opera, Michael William Balfe, was an astounding composer born in 1808 in Dublin. He wrote 28 operas, and many of which have been performed around the world during the past 170 years.

19 Thomas Moore (1779-1852) was an Irish poet, a good musician, and a skillful writer of songs. His popular Irish Melodies appeared in ten parts—“The Last Rose of Summer” was one song in the fifth part. Moore was born into a poor family in Dublin; he never varnished his poor background. He set his songs mainly to the eighteenth-century Irish tunes. Such folk tunes were very popular and gained sympathy for the Irish nationalists. Best known of them are perhaps “The Last Rose of Summer” and “Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms.”
In addition to the Irish lyrical ballads, the male denizens urge a stronger nationalistic aura in the bar. “—No, Ben, Tom Kernan interfered. The Croppy Boy. Our native Doric” (U 11.991). With the introduction of the prowess of an Irish rebel, the Sirens listen, gazing far away soulfully and lost in their pity for this young patriot. Bespeaking the Irish patriotism and venerable martyrdom, “The Croppy Boy” enframes the self-identification of the two Irish political Sirens rigidly within the patriotic and nationalist framework. These two Sirens have turned tractable so far. They actively call for the singing of Thomas Moore’s famous Irish folk song—“The Last Rose of Summer”—and attentively empathize with the heroic croppy boy dying in defense of his nationalist belief. Abandoning the ladylike exquisiteness which is intolerable for their male compatriots, the two Irish barmaids assume their national duty on the instant and incorporate the utmost Irishmen’s patriotic ethos in their self-identification voluntarily. Fittingly, the two divergent self-identifying gestures of the barmaids demonstrate a patent normalization mechanism in the production of a converted sense of self. Those patriotism-toned statements of Irish nationalist discourse are governing the visibility of these two barmaids’ subjectivities. The subjecthood of theirs must be attained only through their self-identification of the discursive effect of Irish patriotism.

Not only have their threatening political Siren-subjects been tamed by the Irishmen-oriented discursive patriotism but also the two barmaids’ sexually unruly Siren-figures are to be subjugated to the masculine desire. Distinctly, the sultry Siren-barmaid is the target for the projection of Irishmen’s desire. “—Am I awfully sunburnt? / Miss bronze unbloused her neck. / [.] halfstood to see her skin askance in the barmirror gildedlettered” (U 11.114-19). The gigantic bar mirror witnesses the Irish barmaids discursively constructing their sultry self-images. The barmaids look at the mirror from

---

20 According to Gifford and Seidman’s annotation, “The Croppy Boy” is a ballad about the Rebellion of 1798, written by William B. McBurney (293). It tells the story of a young Irish patriot, who goes to a priest to make his confession before joining the rebel, but is tricked into confessing to an English captain in priestly disguise, and then gets executed on the strength of the confession he has made.
time to time, and the male barflies glimpse at the barmaids reflected in that mirror. “Shrill, with deep laughter, after, gold after bronze, they urged each each to peal after peal, ringing in changes, bronzegold, goldbrone, shrilldeep, to laughter after laughter. And then laughed more. [. . .] Exhausted, breathless, their shaken heads they laid, braided and pinnacled by glossycombed. [. . .] All flushed (O!), panting, sweating (O!), all breathless” (U 11.174-79). The mirror captures the picture that the two Irish siren-barmaids are wittingly and unwittingly throwing their youthful and seductive traits. “—O, welcome back, miss Douce. / He held her hand. Enjoyed her holidays? / —Tiptop. / He hoped she had nice weather in Rostrevor. / —Gorgeous, she said. Look at the holy show I am. Lying out on the strand all day. / Bronze whiteness. / —That was exceedingly naughty of you, Mr Dedalus told her and pressed her hand indulgently. Tempting poor simple males” (U 11.198-202). As a barmaid, Miss Douce has accustomed herself to the male (old or young) barflies’ taking liberties with her. Knowingly withdrawing her hand from the intended squeeze of Mr Dedalus, she knows how to flirt with this old barfly lightly.

When the anticipated Blazes Boylan arrives, the barmaids call all their knacks for coquetry into full play. “He touched to fair miss Kennedy a rim of his slanted straw. She smiled on him. But sister bronze outsmiled her, preening for him her [Douce’s] richer hair, a bosom and a rose” (U 11.346-48). Desire is always in the air, flowing back and forth between the ogling male patrons and the coquettish Sirens-barmaids. Miss Douce “reached high to take a flagon, stretching her satin arm, her bust, that all but burst, so high. / —O! O! [. . .] / But easily she seized her prey and led it low in triumph” (U 11.360-63). “Why don’t you grow?” Boylan asks (U 11.364). “Fine goods in small parcels,” answers Miss Douce (U 11.368). Pretending to be unresponsive to those hungry eyes, Miss Douce is more than active to exhibit her feminine attraction and practice her coquettish tricks.

—Please, please.
He [Lenehan] pleaded over returning phrases of avowal.

[. . .]

—Afterwits, miss Douce promised coyly.

—No, now, urged Lenehan. *Sonnez la cloche!* O do! There’s no-one.

She looked quick. Miss Kenn out of earshot, sudden bent. Two kindling faces watched her bend.

[. . .]

—Go on! Do! *Sonnez!*

Bending, she nipped a peak of skirt above her knee. Delayed, taunted them still, bending, suspending, with wilful eyes.

—*Sonnez!*

Smack. She set free sudden in rebound her nipped elastic garter smackwarm against her smackable a woman’s warmhosed thigh.

—*La cloche!* cried gleeful Lenehan. [. . .]

She smirksmirked supercilious (*wept! aren’t men?*), but, lightward gliding, mild she smiled on Boylan. (*U* 11.400-17)

As sudden as lightening, the warm smack of Miss Douce’s catapulting her elastic garter against her thigh gorgonizes these two licentious Irishmen. After that, the supercilious smirk and mild understanding smile manifest Miss Douce’s witting and willing practice in order to gratify the masculine desire. “Wept! aren’t men?” Miss Douce thought to herself, when smirking haughtily at Lenehan’s vulgar desire (*U* 11.416). Smiling mildly, she responds to Boylan’s enthralled eyes.

Whether singing the Irish patriotic lyrics with the male patrons’ voices or flaunting their feminine attraction according to the masculine desire points up to the undeniable interactive agency of these two Siren-barmaids. The two Irish barmaids as discursive objects indeed respond to the male-vocalized discursive statements actively. They
interactively and interchangeably identify themselves with these discursive statements and make their feminine appearances recognizable in the straight male scene. Singing with the patriotic Irishmen, they are deemed the women patriots fortifying the integrity of Irishness. Answering to the greedy eyes of those male barflies, they are admired for their satisfying the masculine desire. The two barmaids are active, vocal, and identifiable. However, their seemingly self-confident performances do not reward them with the utterly autonomous self-identification. The state of subjection of theirs in the self-identifying process is not at least free of the discursive power of Irish nationalism. Remarkably, their appearances as the patriotic Irishwomen secure the spirit of Irish nationalism, and their flirtatious behavior appeases Irishmen’s anxiety for masculine identity.

Miss Douce and Gerty undergo like-minded identifying process in which they improvise on the exhibition of their feminine attraction. These siren-figured women are more active performers than yielded objects at the mercy of the randy Irishmen’s gazes. In the performances of their expressively feminine characteristics, they are actively engaging the gazing males in their own shows and interacting with the male voyeuristic eyes. Gerty keeps leaning back and revealing farther and farther her legs, her stockings, and her garters to Bloom. She tickles and raises the devil in Bloom, and then Bloom ejaculates. Aware that Bloom is masturbating at her, Gerty initiates her sexual experience and attains sheer excitement, too. Sexually aroused and gratified, Gerty finds great pleasure in her performance beyond all doubt. As for Miss Douce, she teases the two kindling faces before her, toying with their anxiety and prolonging the duration of suspending desire. Suddenly, the smack on her thigh is also a smack on these two excited faces. She has successfully made an impression on Boylan whom she desires. Jules Law contends that the Irish Siren-barmaids have made the articulation of female sexuality visible in the male public realm. In fact, I agree with Law on the part of the visibility of
female sexual desire. Yet, I rather take this visibility to be of service to the practice of the male-voiced discourse in Irish social context.

Although the self-motivated work of these female characters entails the awareness of their interactiveness and activity, their active gestures assure the fulfillment of the masculine aspiration and desire. Gerty’s understanding of femininity and internalized self-knowledge of feminine roles underscore the predominance and power accorded to the male Dubliners. Submissive and comforting, Gerty plays the devoted angel in the household, in her imagination of marital life, and in a young girl’s romantic love. The worship of the Virgin Mary is observed to such an extreme that every ideal Irishwoman is kept under the control of the paramount Irish Catholic Church. Exploiting the indoctrination of the normalized femininity, discursive practice of Catholicism becomes enabled to employ the meek Irishwomen as the reinforcement of the patriarchal dominance in the society like Ireland. Additionally, Gerty’s obsessive revelation of her ideal husband indicates her internalization of the dichotomy positing man and woman into permanent binary opposition—a majestic manly man vs. a petite girlish and womanly woman. The meticulous practice of the feminine attraction in the daily life awaits a rare opportunity of putting all her charm into action. Gerty’s exceptional femininity is at work for satisfying the masculine desire and consummating the pleasure that Irishmen can get from her. As regards the visibility of the Siren-barmaids’ self-image, their self-identification is confined to the Irish domestic sphere. Discursive images with which the two barmaids identify themselves are those statements speaking the rarefied effect of Irish nationalism. Discourse’s power-effect shapes the visible individuality of these two Irish barmaids. Their subjectivities resulting from the discursive self-identifying practice are governed by the simultaneously individualizing and normalizing power.

What is more important, I argue that the power intending to rectify recurring in these female characters’ self-identification points out the ubiquity of the normalizing power in
the discursive production of individual subjectivity. However individualized these female characters feel with their self-identification, their individuality is always attached to the discursive norm. In the cases of Gerty and the two Irish barmaids exists a constant rectifying mechanism. They are sometimes supervising and sometimes supervised. For example, Gerty’s disapproving remarks on Cissy’s unfeminine behavior show that Gerty attempts to normalize Cissy as the way she herself has been normalized. Gerty is a worshiper of femininity and feminine attraction. The way Cissy behaves at the Sandymount strand is an annoyance to Gerty. “She [Cissy] jumped up and called them and she ran down the slope past him [Bloom], tossing her hair behind her [. . .]. She ran with long gandery strides it was a wonder she didn’t rip up her skirt at the side that was too tight on her because there was a lot of the tomboy about Cissy Caffrey” (U 13.474-81, emphases added). Emphasizing Cissy’s unfeminine characteristics, Gerty is judgmental, exerting the power intending to rectify over Cissy consciously. Moreover, she considers Cissy unattractive to Bloom, for Cissy is more a tomboy than a feminine girlie. “Cissy Caffrey caught the two twins and she was itching to give them a ringing good clip on the ear but she didn’t because she thought he might be watching but she never made a bigger mistake in all her life because Gerty could see without looking that he never took his eyes off of her” (U 13.492-96, emphases added). Gerty treats Bloom’s eyes as the policing machinery for Cissy and for her own. She is sure that Cissy is as aware of the policing eyes as she is, but unfortunately, Cissy is unattractive to the eyes. Having internalized this policing mechanism, Gerty keeps self-supervising and supervising others. The eyes fixed upon her valorize her feminine attraction; therefore, she feels in the right to criticize Cissy’s bearing. “[T]hat was what he looking at, transparent, and not at her [Cissy’s] insignificant ones that had neither shape nor form (the cheek of her!) because he had eyes in his head to see the difference for himself” (U 13.502-4, emphases added). Bloom’s eyes function as the appraisal of Gerty’s scrupulous practice of improving her feminine
attraction; from this appraisal, Gerty finds herself recognizable on account of her
actualizing the discursive femininity. Instead of Cissy’s carelessness in dressing, Gerty’s
exquisite taste in clothes is the norm deserving Cissy’s emulation. The self-image as an
attractive young lady taking form in Gerty is rather the externalization of discursive effect.
Gerty’s individuality is normalized and in turn normalizing others.

The self-policing mechanism is always at work in Gerty. The self-justification for
her being sexually aroused serves as a pertinent demonstration of Gerty’s self-policing
work. So indoctrinated has Gerty been that she is intensively self-conscious about her
violation of the belief of the immaculate Virgin Mary. Thus, she attempts to excuse her
sexual initiation by saying that she has no physical intercourse except for being
physically aroused. This self-justification is suggestive of the deep-seated normalization
which Gerty has undergone. It reveals her insistent self-identification with the figure of
the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, Gerty’s self-justifying gesture renders her active agency
lame in the end. It is more than an act justifying herself; it is rather an act of denial.
Denying the gratification which her active agency has brought her in the flow of desire,
Gerty restores her role of the incarnation of the immaculate Virgin Mary. In a manner of
speaking, Gerty has surrendered her autonomous subjectivity in exchange for the
valorized and recognizable self-identification. Gerty is active and interactive to the
discursive practice, but all her active participation in the discursive practice only brings
her the state of selfhood which is still the discursive effect.

The rectifying technologies are put into practice straightforwardly in the situation of
the two Irish barmaids. Their disturbing identification with the Imperial fashion is
rectified instantly. The viceregal procession outside the Ormond bar is rapidly supplanted
by the indoor Irish patriotic atmosphere. The threat brought out by the barmaids’
admiration for the British Imperial ladylikeness is quickly surpassed. The self-
identification of the two Irish barmaids is trimmed in order to fit in with the Irish
nationalist context. The masculine-oriented Irish nationality is secured by means of policing the Irishwomen’s identity. The rectifying mechanism and the rectified self-identification of the barmaids are working to consolidate the regime of Irish nationalist discourse. These two rectified barmaids are added to the discursive statements disseminating the patriotic spirit and the nationalist agenda.

Bentham’s Panopticon and Foucault’s carceral continuum find counterpart in the cases of Joyce’s Gerty and two Irish barmaids. Even in these two simple and day-to-day situations, the power to normalize, to supervise, and to rectify are conspicuously exerted over these female characters. Such normalizing power permeates every aspect of social life and kidnap individual’s perception of themselves and their relation to the world. It is due to this mechanism of normalization that Foucault argues for liberation from the insidiously normalizing regimes of the truth and of the self-knowledge. Foucault expects an implicit agency with which any individual no longer needs to turn him- or herself into subject “discursively.” As Foucault asserts, “We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries” (“The Subject and Power” 216). In this regard, the self-forming practices in which Gerty and two Irish barmaids are engaged cannot be considered as the Foucauldian liberation. The active self-identification of theirs is not rebellious enough to throw off the discourse-clad appearances working on them. Their seeming subjectivities are in fact encompassed by the overwhelming discursive normalization. These female characters are individualized and interactively individualizing themselves within normalization.
Chapter Three

Molly, the Soliloquizing Rebel:

Issuing forth the Counter-Discourse and Self-Determined Subjectivity

Molly Bloom does make more appearances than any other female characters do in *Ulysses*. Literally and figuratively speaking, she has the last word in the novel. The account of the one-day life in Dublin, which is a picture of a male Dublin rather than a female one, concludes with a woman’s thinking aloud. No wonder this female character has engendered intense critical debates. The reception of “Penelope” changes with time. As Kathleen McCormick observes, Molly was at first seen as an obscene creature by the early reviewers when *Ulysses* was banned, and then glorified as an earth goddess at the time when Joyce’s reputation as a literary genius was being established (17). McCormick emphasizes that the interpretation of Molly as a symbolic earth mother figure was working to “aestheticize” much of what might have been regarded as obscenity in “Penelope” and to “neutralize” the threat of Molly’s outspoken sexuality; in doing so, Molly could be “accepted by dominant patriarchal discourses” (20). Far from the incipience of feminist ideology in the thirties, the motivation to idealize Molly was rather “linked to the deep-seated need in Western patriarchy to reduce the apparent threat to masculinity engendered by the female body” (McCormick 25). Similarly, Bonnie Kime Scott argues that such symbolic interpretation of Molly primarily as an earth goddess is a “reduction and oversimplification” of both Molly and the various mythic figures to whom she is compared (*Joyce and Feminism* 158). Foregrounding merely the symbolic fertility in the comparison of Molly to the mythic figures unfurls the disregard of the fact that these women, such as Gea Tellus and Penelope, are strongly sexual and play powerful social roles in a manner, who are not easily to be pinned down to the dominant patriarchal notions.
It was since the period as the feminists entered the critical scene that the readings of Molly began turning into multiplicity. Feminist critics suggest that the earlier receptions of Molly, both extolling the symbolic fertility and impugning her concupiscence, need to be traced to some general cultural assumptions which encode the patriarchal prospects of the nature and roles of women. Some of them determine that Molly’s performance is sympathetic to feminist concerns. She is a heroine defying the contour of a virtuous woman that satisfies the patriarchal codes of the dutiful wife and loving mother, and she trumps the male-centered streams of consciousness and sexuality in the novel. A number of critics have argued for this position with specific reference to Molly. In addition to the demonstration that Molly is capable of resisting the forces of patriarchy, some critics have elaborated on Joyce’s use of language that frees Molly and the language itself from patriarchal authority. For instance, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva value Joyce’s writing for dissolving sexual difference and Molly’s language of flow and overflow for being an example of “écriture féminine.”

Yet, not every feminist Joyce criticism necessarily holds the point that Joyce’s depiction of Molly renders its feminist critical stances. Diana Henderson argues that the structure that organizes “Penelope” is the “male authorial fist” (521). Criticizing the ways in which Joyce’s female characters are assigned to archetypal and stereotyped roles, Marilyn French protests that Molly is “a distorted ‘surrealistic’ version of woman”—she is “the mythic, the archetypal other. Not only for Bloom but for the rest of Dublin, she is the woman as the object of desire” (259). In a similar vein, Marcia Holly considers “Penelope” to be “sensually inadequate” because Molly’s sensuality “exists not for herself but for the men to whom she reacts” and because Molly represents “only male fantasy of sensuality, not what a truly sensual woman is or might be” (41). The portrayal of Molly in *Ulysses* is viewed as an awkward and distorted image, here, that underscores the stereotypes accrued from men’s biased fantasy of women’s sexuality.
These divergent critical assessments of “Penelope” interest me in one contentious issue, that is, whether Molly’s subjectivity is completely contained within the dominant patriarchal discourses of her historical and social formation, or her thoughts, actions, and desires are to some extent resistant to and even subvert them. Instead of taking up for either result that the scholarship of Feminist Joyce criticisms has illuminated, I decide to relate this issue to the Foucauldian conception of discourse and power, examining to what extent that discursive practices result in Molly’s behavior and that Molly’s action shapes her subjectivity. With an attempt to find a parallel between the coming into being of Molly’s subjectivity and the discursive practice which displays inconsistent dominance of power, I expect my analysis would add a new dimension to the issue of Molly’s subjectivity that never seems possible to be drawn to a conclusion or a closure.

The term subject has two meanings, as Foucault understands: one is being subject to someone or something else by control and the other is being tied to one’s own identity by certain self-knowledge (“The Subject and Power” 212). This dual conception suggests that being subject is related with a form of power that subjugates individuals and produces degrees of subject for individuals. It is through this mechanism which involves apparently ambivalent techniques of subjugation and individualization that the subjecthood takes shape in an individual. Hence, the self-knowledge that marks one’s own identity must be more or less a discursive effect. Faced with the power-masterminded discursive practice that shapes almost every aspect of mental and physical existence, the possibility of individual’s resistance seems rare and the efficacy of human agency is even pessimistically denied. In view of the pressure of subjection, Foucault predicates that the pressing task before contemporary individual subjects is to “refuse what we are” instead of just discovering what we are: “We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political ‘double bind,’ which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures” (“The
Subject and Power” 216). There is still irreducible tension between his emphases on the ubiquity of domination and on the possibility of resistance, though Foucault makes the aforecited declaration. However, the final stage of Foucault’s intellectual activities foreshadows a project in support of the struggle for at least a modicum of human agency in the formation of an individual’s subjectivity. As Steven Best and Douglas Kellner note in Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations, Foucault did gesture towards “a positive reconstruction of subjectivity in a posthumanist problematic” and this move occurred in his works, various essays, and interviews since the 1980s (59). Although it was not provided in black and white, the conception of individual as a potential free agent in the construction of his or her own subjectivity is no less remarkable a subject matter considered along with Foucault’s critical articulations about discourse, power and knowledge.

A discernible shift in emphasis can be traced in Foucault’s entire conceptual formulation. His conception of discourse develops from archaeological anatomies to genealogical accounts. Since the 1970s, Foucault has taken up the investigation into the history of human thought as a genealogist. The distinct focal points of research cannot obscure his theoretical contribution in the 1960s. As a matter of fact, Foucault has never abandoned his archaeological diagnostic of discourse, and his genealogy advances the attack on the constraints that particular domains of knowledge have imposed upon individual subjectivities. He once clarifies in one lecture at the Collège de France that the archaeological researches might be regarded as “elements” of genealogy: “Archaeology is the method specific to the analysis of local discursivities, and genealogy is the tactic which, once it has described these local discursivities, brings into play the desubjugated knowledges that have been released from them” (Foucault, “Society” 10-11)21. In other

---

21 The complete title of the parenthetical citation should be “Society Must Be Defended”: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76, the inaugural English publication of Foucault’s courses at the Collège de France since 1970. These weekly public lectures and seminars began to be published in French in 1977, and six volumes have appeared so far. There have been three sets of lectures translated into English.
words, the result of Foucault’s archaeology demonstrates that discourse is constructed by the rules of formation, and his genealogical accounts examine the complex interrelatedness between discourse and exercise of power. Whatever transformation in the approach by which Foucault formulates his late theoretical constructs, the focal points reiterated in his conceptualization are coherently discourse/knowledge, power, and individuals/subjectivities.

It is the insistent concern in his works about individual’s subjectivity elicited from the discursive practice whose power is not always dominant that convinces me of Foucault’s prospect of truths that will make us free. Foucault should not be understood as a pessimist who simply believes that individuals find no way out of the manipulation of power. As early as he studied the issue of madness in the archaeological phase, Foucault had made an attempt to uncover the mechanism that demarcates the domain of reason and represses the discursively engendered sense of insanity. Reminding of power’s omnipresence persistently, Foucault’s endeavor is twofold: to show how a particular knowledge has constrained human freedom and to provide the individual resource for transgressing the restraining grids and overcoming discursive dominations.

The introduction of power relation punctuates Foucault’s distrust of power’s domination which is assumed to be peremptory and seamlessly encompassing. In addition to proposing that power is not only repressive but also productive, Foucault also treats power as an intricate network of relations. He explains power’s omnipresence in society in terms of the generation of power relations in manifold social bodies. Power belongs to no particular party and is not anchored in any certain position. Conversely, it is dispersed in multiple power relations, flowing from one site to another. Theorizing power relations, Foucault refutes the implication of duality between oppressors and the oppressed in the exercise of power:

respectively as “Society Must Be Defended” (1997), Abnormal (1999), and The Hermeneutics of the Subject (2001).
One doesn’t have here a power which is wholly in the hands of one person who can exercise it alone and totally over the others. It is a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised. [. . .] Power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns. (PK 156)

Power is not monopolized by any individual; a fixed point from which power emanates does not exist. That no one is in possession of power potentiates anyone to temporarily occupy a position that is preponderant owing to power. However, the effect of supremacy simply rests on a moving substrate—that is, power relations which are vulnerable to change and inversion. The characteristic of being unstable suggests constant confrontations between adversaries in every probable power relation. The interactiveness of confrontation in power relations deconstructs the notion that presumes power is an overall domination. It is also the understanding of this long-standing confrontation that affirms a perpetual struggle in power relations and allows the chance that an individual is able to be relatively free from and subversive of discursive constraints. As Foucault espouses the productivity of power, “it traverses and produces things” (PK 119). Power produces the effect of repression, strategies to control; it, moreover, produces means of resistance and subversion.

Power’s characters are crystallized in Foucault’s conceptualization of power relations. Power, far from being a unidirectional form, is capable of subjugation, repression, production, and invention. It is dispersive and capillary at work in power relations. Capillarity of power is the operation at stake that Foucault understands the way power takes part in various power relations permeating the social whole. To answer what happens when power is exercised, Foucault lays stress on an engendered knowledge and the tightly interdependent relationship between knowledge and the power that produces it.
Multiple relations of power traverse, characterize, and constitute the social body; they are indissociable from a discourse of truth, and they can neither be established nor function unless a true discourse is produced, accumulated, put into circulation, and set to work. Power cannot be exercised unless a certain economy of discourses of truth functions in, on the basis of, and thanks to, that power. (Foucault, “Society” 24)

Any specific knowledge is produced by power, and power needs to produce the knowledge in order to take effect. There exists numerous production of knowledge in the network of power relations. These knowledges are to be released and diffused so that power gets hidden from view and ballasts its seizure even more. The interdependence between knowledge and power brought up here harks back to the diagnosis of discourse that Foucault undertook in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Discourse is viewed as knowledge’s synonym and element. The synonymity lies in the interrelationship between discourse and power that resembles the interdependent mode of the production of knowledge by power. Discourse is the building block in the domain of any particular knowledge; it is the discursiveness of a discourse that paves the way for power to function in the produced knowledge. This mutual enhancement of discourse and power is embodied in countless discursive practices that profoundly influence individuals’ thoughts and behavior.

The existence of discourse has to follow a set of rules of formation, and the appearance of a certain discourse depends on some key shifts in history. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault traces the development of the discourse of madness and unmasks distinct treatments of madness at different historical stages. Riveted upon the scientific and medical knowledge, Foucault’s findings are of stronger evidence to foreclose the neutrality of any specific discourse however disinterested or objective a discourse appears to be. With a view to problematizing the notion of discourse as a self-evident unity,
Foucault insists that discourse is a construct and lays out the contrivedness of discourse with both his archaeological and genealogical methodologies. The formation of discourse must entail practices that obey certain rules which are irreducible to any other and a supportive mechanism that keeps discourse in existence (Foucault, AK 138-139). This indicates discourse’s dependence on a deep-seated set of discursive regularities, namely a discursive formation. As against the seemingly objective veracity of discourse, Foucault argues that certain discursive rules enable subjects to produce objects, statements, concepts, and strategies—together they constitute discourses. Discourses are thus “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, AK 49).

As Foucault enumerates, there are four sets of “rules of formation” simultaneously at work in the discursive formation: the formation of objects, the formation of enunciative modalities, the formation of concepts, and the formation of strategies (AK 40).

Listed in the first place of Foucault’s conception of discursive formations, “the formation of objects” directly points up the constitutive role of discursive practices in determining and forming objects within discourse from the outset. To define these “objects,” Foucault’s focus is not what they are but “the body of rules that enable them to form as objects” (AK 48). More precisely, Foucault seeks to account for the creation of objects in terms of the regulations by which the conditions of the “historical appearance” of these objects are constituted (AK 48). The second set of formation rules largely relates to the speaking subjects in discourses and the modalities in which subjects are accorded the right to speak. Foucault’s discussion comprises his emphases on the status of the speaking subjects, the institutional sites from which they speak, and the subject positions whereby discourses acquire the legitimacy (AK 50-53). The elucidation of the idiosyncratic property that makes statement “the atom of discourse” is indispensable to the understanding of the enunciative modalities (Foucault, AK 80). The statement must be treated as an “event” that occurs in a particular time and place. As Foucault explains:
At a certain scale of micro-history, one may consider that an affirmation like “species evolve” forms the same statement in Darwin and in Simpson; at a finer level, and considering more limited fields of use (“neo-Darwinism” as opposed to the Darwinian system itself), we are presented with different statements. The constancy of the statement, the preservation of its identity through the unique events of the enunciations, its duplication through the identity of the forms, constitute the function of the field of use in which it is placed. (AK 104)

It is this “field of use” that distinguishes a statement from other grammatical and linguistic units in the system of language. Stressing the need of given contexts in the production of discourses, Foucault advances that the social subjects are never able to produce discourses autonomously. Rather, “subjects are the function and effect of discourse” (Howarth 53). The position of the subject can even be assigned (Foucault, AK 95). The rules that govern the formation of concepts deal with “the organization of the field of statements where they appeared and circulated” (Foucault, AK 56). Reiterating the notion that the definition of a certain concept varies with time, Foucault, here, delves into the architecture how different descriptions of a concept are linked together. It is “a set of rules for arranging statements in series, an obligatory set of schemata of dependence, of order, and of successions, in which the recurrent elements that may have value as concepts were distributed” (Foucault, AK 57, emphases added). The act of arrangement of this regulation hints the course of manipulation in which statements are formulated elsewhere and taken up in a discourse, and acknowledged to be truthful. For Foucault, concepts are neither constituted by a transcendental subjectivity nor the result of a gradual accumulation of empirical knowledge (Howarth 54). These three sets of formation rules regulating the production of discourse all highlight a constituting force and “a whole adjacent field” where discourses are operating (Foucault, AK 97). As for the last one, the set of rules in forming the discursive strategies lays bare the possibility of
generating statements of two incompatible kinds within the same discourse. Foucault conceptualizes it as “the possible points for diffraction of discourse” consisting of “points of incompatibility” and “points of equivalence” (AK 65). Two contradictory objects, enunciative modalities, or concepts may appear in the same discursive formation and be formed in the same way and on the basis of the same rules. Situated at the same level, the conditions of their appearance are identical; instead of being incoherent, they form as alternative.

The possible coexistence of the contradictory is indicative of double-faced significance. With the pervasion of power relations in all adjacent fields, it is difficult to maintain the state of equilibrium between the coexistent discursive constructs. As Foucault states, “everyone doesn’t occupy the same position; certain positions preponderate and permit an effect of supremacy to be produced” (PK 156). The occupancy of the power to delimit enables a particular discourse to justify itself as normalcy and empowers it to relegate the coexistent other as the abnormal. Repressive forces such as exclusion and prohibition begin being deployed to fortify the truth-effect that power endorses, and to ward off some dangers that may capsize its legitimacy as truth. The confrontation between reason and madness serves as a perfect illustration of one dimension of that dual implication. The other significance of the coexistence of incompatibilities in a same discursive practice illuminates the possibility of resistance and strategies to subvert.

The evolution of power’s stratagem to control, as Foucault explores, demonstrates the increment in the penetration of power and the extent to which power-effect can be carried out. Power evolves from the macro form to the micro one, i.e. from the monarch’s coercion to the disciplinary forces. The monarch’s power functions hand in hand with the legislative power so as to form “an obedient subject” (Foucault, HS 85). This power-as-law emerges in the juridico-political discourses, and the power-effect has to be actualized
by individual’s recognition and obedience to it. By contrast, the disciplinary power aims to produce a docile body. It is centered on the body as a “machine,” optimizing the capabilities of the body, extorting the body’s force, and eventually increasing the docility of the body (Foucault, *HS* 139). This machinery insinuates that power takes greater effect when it is hidden from view. The disciplinary power even takes on an insidious form of governing as the routine exercise of the body; it can fulfill the penetration of power throughout the domains which are relatively impenetrable by the aforesaid power-as-law.

In today’s society, the body has become the domain on which power is exerted. Seeing that the mechanism of power has reached every individual and even fully grasped the body, Foucault is getting more and more attentive to the sense of individual’s self within the immense power relations. The concern for the self grows intense in his later study of power and knowledge. In terms of Foucault, the self-defining process is “a matter of forming and recognizing oneself as the subject of one’s own actions [. . .] through a relation [. . .] fulfilled in the sovereignty that one exercises over oneself” (*CS* 85). The self is defined purely in relation to oneself. Foucault affirms that individuals are relatively free to interpret the norms in their own style, instead of conforming exactly to these norms. However ambiguous his position for the conceits of human agency is, the final Foucault does embrace the understanding of the activeness of a human subject in the process of self-definition. Human beings are very likely to become active agents who are capable of reacting to and interacting with many impositions of power and discourses.

Although Foucault remains equivocal of this idea in his publication, I still think it a prospective Foucauldian perception that human agency may take shape in the interrelated interaction of knowledge, power, and self. In an interview entitled as “Truth, Power, Self” (1982)\(^\text{22}\), Foucault articulates that his role is to “show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been

---

\(^\text{22}\) This interview took place in October 25, 1982, and is collected in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (1988), 9-15.
built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed” (Martin 10). Such declaration suggests that the freedom of any individual is to be unmasked from the seemingly unchallengeable existence of power and knowledge and that resistance or even subversion of those powerful dominations is worth a fight. Seen in this light, Molly’s subjectivity formed in her dialectical thoughts and actions implies, for me, the potential human agency of individuals. Sharing likeminded insight with Foucault, Molly in Joyce’s *Ulysses* fleshes out what Foucault will unearth about the rule-governed nature of discursive practices and the contrivedness of any particular discourse. Moreover, many of her subversive gestures can make clear what is implicit in Foucault’s conceptualizing of the possibility for an individual as a free agent in the construction of subjectivity even faced with a great deal of discursive dominations.

As Foucault presumes, this mechanism of power that involves ambivalent techniques of subjugation and individualization should generate subjecthood in different individuals to distinct extents. I have demonstrated in Chapter Two how the discursive process in which the self-images of Gerty and the Ormond barmaid are forged conforms to the mechanism of individualization/normalization—power’s mechanics of producing the self-identification for an individual and controlling the individual’s sense of self obscurely at the same time. Gerty’s concept of being an ideal woman is constituted by religious and Irish patriarchal-oriented discourses. It seems that she has attained the individual identity of her own, whereas the presumable individuality of hers is fully enveloped in the process of normalization. Similarly, the two barmaid surrender their individual identities to Ireland’s grand nationalistic rhetoric. Their self-images are incorporated into the men’s vocals singing Irish patriotic ballads, and their gestures respond to the surge of those men’s desire. In comparison with Gerty and the barmaid, Molly is rather capable of achieving the status of subjectivity without actualizing the subjection-effect; she is relatively independent of the dominations of discourse.
Entering the mind of Molly in “Penelope,” we are confronted with a woman criticizing the surroundings and happenings instantly. There pervades evidence of combat between discourses and Molly’s critical understanding of each of them in this episode. The valorized status of these discursive knowledges is being questioned all the while by Molly’s thinking. To begin with, Molly is critical of her husband’s dramatizing his ailments so as to catch women’s attention and arouse the emotive care presumed to be a female tendency. “Yes because theyre so weak and puling when theyre sick they want a woman to get well if his nose bleeds youd think it was O tragic and that dyinglooking [. . .] when he sprained his foot” (U 18.22-25). Critical as she can be of Bloom, Molly is even harsher with the women who answer the call for the eruption of sympathy and gladly accept the assignment to being a tenderhearted creature. “Miss Stack bringing him flowers the worst old ones she could find at the bottom of the basket anything at all to get into a mans bedroom with her old maids voice trying to imagine he was dying on account of her to never see thy face again” (U 18.26-29). These complaints carry the critical attitude that Molly has towards the ostensibly neutral attribute of females’ caring nature. She questions the need of being a compassionate woman. “As soon as one questions that unity [of a certain discursive grouping].” Foucault emphasizes, “it loses its self-evidence; it indicates itself, constructs itself, only on the basis of a complex field of discourse” (AK 23). Such compassion Miss Stack has for Bloom, in the eyes of Molly, is one expedient that Stack adopts for going inside a man’s sickbed. Being a comfortress is this old maid’s ruse to capture male attention rather than her behaving herself to the virtue assumed as womanly. Molly’s criticism shows that she understands such knowledge of manness and womanness well enough to pinpoint and refute the arbitrary discursiveness of those seemingly natural and tacitly normal statements. The critique of Miss Stack’s self-interested kindness to others, men especially, points to that discourse in itself is a construct, which is free to be appropriated so that its specific discursive effect is
empowered. The meaning of any specific idea or discourse is never atemporal and fails to be traced back to a universally valid form of rationality. The concept of a discourse does not possess a pre-discursive existence but rather is constituted by the discursive framework in which it is implicated. Molly’s criticisms stemmed from everything about men and women advantage me to explore the possibility of a female subjectivity subversive of the ubiquitous discursive practices, which are employed to dominate most women. That Molly, as a woman in Ireland, questions the identities the Irish society attempts to confine her and impose upon her meets with Foucault’s expectation of the subject who is able to resist discourse’s simultaneously empowering and subjugating forces in modern power structures. With this encouraging demonstration of Foucauldian conception, I feel more confidence to locate the subjectivity taking form in Molly at the site in the spectrum which indicates that she not only interacts with discursive practices but also undermines the discursive impositions in the making of her subjectivity.

Upon first encounter, we come to realize that Molly’s knowledge of womanness differs considerably from the contents of that idealized by Gerty. In addition to the discrepancy in their attitudes towards being the role of comfortress, Molly’s recurrent thinking of her active sex life devastatingly challenges the pose of sexual coyness that Gerty believes as feminine modesty. The sexual aggressiveness of Molly contrasts sharply with the religiously and socially sanctioned inertia of women’s sexuality that every “virtuous” and “chaste” female should internalize. Molly is very aware of how female sexuality is discursively tabooed in religious and social mores. As far as the religious doctrine is concerned, sexual activities are validated in terms of their reproductive functions; unless it happens to be expressly the intent of procreation, the case of Mrs Purefoy for example, women should follow the immaculate Virgin Mary as Gerty does. In this regard, Molly behaves the other way around: not only is she a highly-sexed woman but also a woman knowledgeable about contraception. While making out
with Mulvey in her youth, she prudently rejected his thorough exploration of her body. “He wanted to touch mine with his for a moment but I wouldn’t let him [. . .] for fear you never know consumption or leave me with a child embarazada” (U 18.800-2). Neither did she abstain from sex nor do it for human reproduction; Molly not only enjoyed the intimacy but also took a cagy act of self-protection at the flush of desire then. As for “Mina Purefoys husband [. . .] filling her up with a child or twins once a year as regular as the clock,” Molly feels sorry for such annual gestation that Mrs Purefoy has to put up with (U 18.159-61). She also criticizes that men will not be “satisfied till they have us [women] swollen out like elephants” (U 18.165-66).

A woman’s body as well as sexual intercourse is the discursive taboo in the church. “I hate that confession when I used to go to Father Corrigan,” Molly recalls the confession scene (U 18.106-7). “He touched me father,” says Molly, and Father Corrigan asks, “what harm if he did where” (U 18.107-8, emphasis mine). “I said on the canal bank like a fool but whereabouts on your person my child on the leg behind high up was it yes rather high up was it where you sit down yes” (U 18.108-10, emphases mine). “O Lord couldn’t he say bottom right out and have done with it what has that got to do with” (U 18.110-11). Molly’s critical and penetrative vision is leveled at the verbal evasion in the solemn tones of the male priest. Herewith the absurdity of this confession scenario is doubly exposed. Having to confess one’s sexual lapses to a priest seems to be deep-seated in Western religious beliefs. However, the priest’s dodging the sexed parts of female body during confession not only adumbrates the discursiveness of the religious rendition of women’s body as taboo, but also accentuates the contradiction between the discursively internalized compulsion to confess and the evasiveness of the priest about the confession he hears and the absolution he should give. In a word, Father Corrigan’s elusive speech here is contradictory to the principle of honesty, the discursive implicate of confession. Molly’s verbal explicitness referring to sex affords her the distance to view
the religious discourse critically, and the critical voice of her mind talking keeps her from the knowledge that always attempts to normalize her subjectivity. While the old Bishop is speaking his long preach about woman’s “higher functions” off the altar, Molly contrasts the sermon with the fact that girls now are “riding the bicycle and wearing peak caps and the new woman bloomers” (U 18.837-39).

More than fed up with the priest’s sexual evasiveness, Molly even desires a touch by Father Corrigan’s “nice fat hand the palm always moist” and fantasizes the desire under “his horsecollar” (U 18.114-15). She feels tempted to be embraced by Father Corrigan or any man in vestments. “The smell of incense off him [Fr. Corrigan] like the pope besides theres no danger with a priest if youre married hes too careful about himself then give something to H H the pope for a penance” (U 18.119-21, emphases mine). A priest will know how to be redeemed from sin better than anyone else, if he sins against the law that condemns sex as sinful. Apparently, the discursive practice has lost its control over the ways Molly perceives the world, not to mention the content she understands and interrogates. The imagery of religion here—including the priest, the vestments, the smell of incense, the pope, and the ritual of contrition—fails to conduct the discursive effect of being religious; on the contrary, the above religious images altogether serve to ignite Molly’s sensual fantasy. It suggests that this discursive taboo reveals its shaky force of constraint easily as soon as being challenged. As her confession finished, Molly wondered whether Father Corrigan sneaked a look at her during the confession. With this thought, Molly again snipes at the priest’s verbal avoidance and potential voyeuristic interest in the female body, both of which are illustrating the self-contradictoriness of the discursive practice that taboos woman’s sex and body within the church.

Interpolating the sexed thoughts in religious discourse is not a single way that Molly positions herself against the discursive domination of the patriarchal church. She also attacks it with her resentment at the piety of old women. Molly remembers the old maid,
Mrs Rubio, in her Gibraltar days without pleasure for the old woman’s religiosity—“she was near 80 or a 100 her face a mass of wrinkles with all her religion domineering” (U 18.753-54). Likewise, she denounces Mrs Riordan’s leaving all her money for “masses for herself and her soul” (U 18.5-6).23 Devout Catholic as she is, Mrs Riordan is the greatest miser in Molly’s eyes. “God help the world if all the women were her sort down on bathingsuits and lownecks” (U 18.9-10). Mrs Riordan’s disapproval of sexy dress also implies hypocrisy for Molly. “Of course nobody wanted her to wear them I suppose she was pious because no man would look at her twice I hope Ill never be like her” (U 18.10-12). Viewing these old women’s devotion to church as the consequence of their lack of sex appeal, Molly defies the religious institution once again. Encompassed by the discursive dominance as she is, Molly still saves herself a capable human agency with which she develops the subjecthood of her own.

The defiance to the discursive doctrine of Catholicism intensifies with respect to Molly’s doings in that she is having adulterous relations with Boylan. She might be the least woman of fidelity in Dublin that Joyce depicts in Ulysses. Molly’s vigorous extramarital sex with Boylan has nothing in common at all with Penelope’s straining to safeguard herself from the suitors during the twenty-year absence of her husband. Darcy O’Brien castigates Molly for her concupiscent behavior, viewing her as “a thirty-shilling whore” at heart (211). Violently, Robert Martin Adams vilifies her as a “slut, a sloven, and a voracious sexual animal [. . .] a frightening venture into the unconsciousness of evil” (166). Robert Richardson, likewise, maligns that she is “howling like a bitch in heat” (184). And Hugh Kenner treats her as an embodiment of evil and destruction whose power has “darkened the intellect and blunted the moral sense of all Dublin” (262). Nevertheless, having an extramarital affair within the orbit of Molly’s concerns is a means rather than a sin against the religious and moral law. To Molly, it is functional in

23 Annotated by Gifford and Seidman, it is not uncommon for devout Catholics to leave their money after they passed away for the masses to relieve their sufferings and shorten the stay in purgatory (610).
three ways—in sexuality, novelty, and publicity. The details of Boylan’s virile performance in bed repeatedly possess Molly’s remembrance of her thriving sexual experiences: “with that tremendous big red brute of a thing he has [. . .] like iron or some kind of a thick crowbar standing all the time [. . .] I never in all my life felt anyone had one the size of that to make you feel full up” (U 18.144-50). The restless desire moves in her with the memory of the furious sex with Boylan this afternoon: “I feel all fire insider me [. . .] when he made me spend the 2nd time tickling me behind with his finger I was coming for 5 minutes with my legs round him I had to hug him after” (U 18.585-88). Compared with her marital sex of no satisfaction, Molly feels gratitude to have Boylan who gives her what she “badly wanted to put some heart up into me youve no chances at all in this place like you used long ago” (U 18.733-34). “God knows hes [Boylan] a change in a way not to be always and ever wearing the same old hat” (U 18.83-84). The relationship with Boylan both makes Molly have her long-felt need satisfied and brings novelty and new excitement to the life of which most part is sheer boredom to her. When picturing herself running off with Boylan, for instance—“suppose I never came back what would they say eloped with him that gets you on the stage” (U 18.373-74)—Molly forms a causal connection between sexual scandal and career success. In addition, her knowledge of Bloom’s bringing Stephen home and showing him her photo results in the fantasy of an erotic liaison with a young intellectual like Stephen. “Ill make him feel all over him till he half faints under me then hell write about me lover and mistress publicly too with our 2 photographs in all the papers when he becomes famous” (U 18.1363-66, emphasis mine). Molly cares neither she and Boylan nor she and Stephen become the objects of public scandals. She transforms the notoriety of being an unapologetic adulteress and a professional seductress into the materials for publicity, the means to gain celebrity. She rearranges series of concepts that have formed the judgment-effect of the discourse of adultery, and turns them about to her own favor. As a matter of fact, Molly
benefits threefold from her extramarital affairs that are deemed immoral according to the discourses of religious and social norms.

In addition to enacting the role of an adulteress, Molly is rather critical of the public opinion which particularly men hold against adultery. Marriage would be a pack of lies for Molly as she surveys in the stories that Bloom has made up. Its sincerity may not last longer than the few minutes when a couple made their marriage vows at the altar. Molly criticizes Menton’s flirtatiousness not long after marriage (U 18.38-42). The most impressive accusation she brings against the men’s hypocrisy takes place in the recollection of the night Michael Gunn invited her and Bloom to a play in a box at Gaiety. “I wont forget that wife of Scarli in a hurry supposed to be a fast play about adultery that idiot in the gallery hissing the woman adulteress he shouted I suppose he went and had a woman in the next lane running round all the back ways after to make up for it” (U 18.1117-21, emphases mine)24. Molly also recalls witnessing one of her acquaintances, a fine gentleman in silk hat, visit a prostitute: “I knew him by his gaiters and the walk and when I turned round a minute after just to see there was a woman after coming out of it too some filthy prostitute then he goes home to his wife after that” (U 18.1422-25, emphasis mine). Given that infidelity is a sin inscribed in the religious and moral discourse, it must be the one men and women sin against on a par. It is none the less certain that the representation of an adulteress and that of an adulterer are different. Observing the characterization of the adulterous wife in the play, the male audience’s revilement, and men’s clandestine conjugal infidelity, Molly protests that the seemingly catholic moral precept, a supposed-to-be neutral commandment—Thou shalt not commit adultery—is actually discursively targeted at women. Statements such as the

24 The play The Wife of Scarli (1897) referred here, according to Gifford and Seidman’s annotation (626), is a three-act play about the husband, Scarli, gets so furious at the liaison between his wife, Emma, and his deputy that he orders Emma out of the house. The reason for the wife’s extramarital affair is the unattractiveness of the husband. But the wife, Emma, thinks of the child and finally determines to sacrifice love for maternal duty. The play ends in reconciliation. It was first performed in Dublin on October 22, 1897, and seen as daring for its rationalizing Emma’s adultery by making Scarli unattractive; yet, it was not so daring to recuperate Emma to the maternal duty.
reprimanding remark of that male audience and the reconciliation of the adulterous wife
to matrimonial and familial obligations in the play’s finale both sound hypocritical to
Molly. The factual incidents of women’s extramarital liaison are probably outnumbered
by that of men’s non-spousal coitus. However, it is more often than not the case of a
recovered adulterous wife that is theatricalized in order to admonish women not to
commit adultery. This discursive efficacy brought about by the play *The Wife of Scarli*
does not succeed in converting Molly into a discourse-identified faithful wife after all;
furthermore, Molly’s witness to a husband’s unfaithfulness invalidates the male-oriented
abhorrence towards the wife’s adulterousness valorized in the climate of opinion.

Contending with the rendering of adultery in the religious discipline and social
mores, Molly attaches the version of her own interpretation to the act of committing
adultery. Firstly, she thinks of herself as a good bargain in the marriage market that
Bloom has got: “of course hed never find another woman like me to put up with him the
way” (*U* 18.232-33). She then argues for her “moderate” adultery by making mention of
the hearsay that Mrs Maybrick poisoned her husband for being in love with some other
man; by comparison, her extramarital affair is far less dreadful. Molly assumes her
infidelity in married life is tolerable on account of the relatively less drastic version of
liaison of hers; moreover, she ascribes the extramarital sexual behavior to the natural
inclination for physicality of the humankind. In this case, she takes Bloom’s presumable
hitting on some women for granted and specifies that “1 woman is not enough for them”
(*U* 18.60). “Those men,” says Molly, “have to make to the ends of the world and back its
the least they might get a squeeze or two at a woman while they can” (*U* 18.853-55).
While this may seem a stratagem of sophistry that Molly adopts to naturalize the act of
extramarital sex and justify that of her own, fundamentally, such discursive strategy bears
a certain resemblance to the way religious discourse and public opinion normalize
adultery. Both suggest the mutability and manipulability of a statement and disclose the
manipulative course in which the discursive effect is bestowed and endorsed. The manipulation Molly has employed as self-justification reinforces Foucault’s contention that discourse is a construct.

In the production of her version of adultery, Molly also maintains the interrogating and critical position on which she proposes to articulate and assert the importance of her sexuality and pleasure. Molly does prioritize her sensual gratification, and consequently, her priority brings into question the necessity of forging premarital or non-marital intimacies while her reception of adultery is in the making:

why cant you kiss a man without going and marrying him first you sometimes love to wildly when you feel that way so nice all over you you cant help yourself I wish some man or other would take me sometime when hes there and kiss me in his arms theres nothing like a kiss long and hot down to your soul almost paralyses you. (U 18.102-6)

The above question had obviously been answered by Molly’s deeds: during men’s courtships of her when young, she took great pleasure in all bodily contact with her suitors; as married, she values the satisfactory sex beyond all things. Since she is not satisfied with her sex life in wedlock, Molly rather indulges in the fervent sex with Boylan, from which she clearly finds gratifying physical relief. Women’s sensual and sexual satisfaction is articulated in Molly’s complaints about the unpleasant conjugality:

what else were we given all those desires for Id like to know I cant help it if Im young still can I its a wonder Im not an old shrivelled hag before my time living with him [Bloom] so cold never embracing me [. . .] still of course a woman wants to be embraced 20 times a day almost to make her look young no matter by who so long as to be in love or loved by somebody. (U 18.1397-1409, emphasis mine)
Naturalized again, the primacy of bodily needs is justified with the sense of every human being’s given desires, the one that is firmly rooted in the body. Molly’s previous scoff at the funny story that an old and jealous husband has to unbuckle the chastity belt his wife wears with an oyster knife (U 18.484-87)²⁵ has turned to her strong displeasure with the curbs on the sexual contentment of a woman as a human being. The chains fastened upon pleasure in sex expose that sexual satisfaction is rendered sinful not only outside of wedlock but even in wedlock. Amid this heckling, Molly points towards human being’s given sexual desires and impulses upon which her interrogation goes to the core of the discursively sanctioned abstention and subverts it therefrom. “Men again all over they can pick and choose what they please a married woman or a fast widow or a girl for their different tastes like those houses round behind Irish street no but were to be always chained up” (U 18.1388-90). It is free for men to make choice among dozens of women of any kind; conversely, women of all kinds are to surrender the choice of not being chained. Molly sniffs at this double standard for men and women respectively to “fulfill” the given desires. She further rejects the Irish patriarchal domination that attempts to pin down her physicality that definitely takes precedence over the chastity of a young maid and the temperance in sexual activities of a married woman²⁶. Not only does Molly despise the aforementioned husband’s jealousy—“no damn fear once I start [an affair] I tell you for their stupid husbands jealousy […] can he undo it hes coronardo [cuckolded] anyway whatever he does” (U 18.1391-95), she imputes her extramarital affair to the drowsy sex in her marriage. To Molly, committing adultery is one solution to the frigidity in conjugality she suffers; moreover, it functions as her twofold gesture: dissenting from the normalized womanly indifference to sexual pleasure and asserting female sexuality.

²⁵ Gifford and Seidman annotate that the anecdote about the chastity belt and oyster knife Molly recalls is an apocryphal story whose basis may be a factual reference to Mr. Langtry’s well-known jealousy of his young and beautiful wife (615).

²⁶ The scene that Molly mentions as “those houses round behind Irish street” (U 18.1390), in accordance with the annotation of Gifford and Seidman, is not a spot in Dublin but the Irish Town in Gibraltar (630). Though it did not take place in Dublin, the scene was in fact about Irishmen imposing restraints on female sexuality. I, therefore, specify that Molly rejects the Irish patriarchal domination.
Molly’s realization of desires and impulses and her assertion of satiating them by all means, including committing adultery, indicate that the discursive statements fail to impose upon her the effects power of discourse expects. And again, she strategically manipulates the discursive statements on her own terms. The theatricalized admonition against adultery and valorization of maternity were played that night as Molly was discomforted by her menstruation. “I smiled the best I could all in a swamp leaning forward as if I was interested having to sit it out then to the last tag” (U 18.1116-17, emphases mine). In the recollection of her menstrual discomfort during the play, Molly associates the situation that she was swamped in menstrual blood with the women’s business “what between clothes and cooking and children” (U 18.1130). The juxtaposition of the unpleasant menstruation and the last tag reconciling the wife of Scarli to a dutiful mother highlights Molly’s resistance to the normalizing power of the play’s ending. What is more, the male audience’s exclamation of revulsion at the play’s adulterous wife recurs as the accusation that Molly brings against Bloom of driving her to be an adulteress:

Ill let him know if thats what he wanted that his wife is fucked yes and damn well fucked too [. . .] unless I made him stand there and put him into me Ive a mind to tell him every scrap and make him do it out in front of me serve him right its all his own fault if I am an adulteress as the thing in the gallery said. (U 18.1510-17)

Certainly, the normalization of suppression and negation of feminine carnality puts Molly on the defensive. She reframes the man’s chiding attitude toward the extra-conjugal coitus to her advantage, usurping the position of speaking subject and redirecting the discursive statement into her challenge against the dull sex life she has in marriage. Molly’s contemplation varies on the theme of her primacy of the gratification of desires. Answering the question she raises about the human’s given impulses and desires, Molly
invokes the name of God to back up her assertion of female carnal reality. “O much about it [making love] if thats all the harm ever we [women] did [. . .] God knows its not much doesn’t everybody only they hide it I suppose that what a woman is supposed to be there for or He [God] wouldn’t have made us the way He did so attractive to men” (U 18.1517-20). The site from which the speaking subject speaks, the modality by which a statement is made, matters here. Plausibly, Molly has her statement sustained on the grounds of an acknowledged discourse that God is the Creator of all things. The invocation of God, the Creator, carries the performativity of Molly’s self-interested assertion forthwith, and furthermore, lets out the appropriability of any specific discourse, even of a common tenet of religious faith.

In the light of the late Foucault, Molly is responsive, or more pertinently speaking, interactive and resistant to discourse and the discursive practice surrounding her. To articulate her version of adultery and, more plainly, assertion of all her pleasure in sex, Molly does make quite a few rebellious gestures onto the scripts that continue to write limited discursive roles for her. The discursive power flows in the relations between Molly and the discourse imposed upon her. The unremitting confrontation between adversaries in Foucauldian power relations finds counterpart in Molly’s resistant tactics to formulate her own knowledge. For example, while adultery is formulated as a sin in the public opinion, Molly counters this discourse with her act of manipulation. Having discerned the discursiveness of those statements that speak the immorality of adultery and discovered that the discourse of adultery is a contrived formation, Molly thus employs the same discursive practice that is equally capable of the production of a discourse of adultery of her version. She brings forth evidence of men’s clandestine intrigues with other women than their own wives in response to the outcry of a male audience and the morality of the play about adultery. The factual descriptions of men’s extramarital liaison upset the legitimacy of the critique of adultery targeted on the adulteress only. Molly also
dislocates the man’s hiss against the play’s adulteress out of the context and appropriates it to account for the rationality of her committing adultery. Such gestures altogether render the reproachfulness of the judgment about the adulteress ineffectual. This demonstration indicates that individuals are in fact allowed to interact with all kinds of power mechanisms. They can participate in power relations, and may change the relations instead of being the dominated simply. As Foucault interprets, “the subject of the statement should not be regarded as identical with the author of the formulation—either in substance, or in function. He is not in fact the cause, origin, or starting-point of the phenomenon of the written or spoken articulation of a sentence [. . .]. It is a particular, vacant place that may in fact be filled by different individuals” (AK 95, emphasis added). This permanent vacancy for a speaking subject in any particular discursive formation always invites distinct discourses and their counter-discourses simultaneously.

Any entire discursive formation is never to be adamant. Resistance or counter-discourses may arise at the very point where power relations are at their most rigid and intense mode, e.g. an oppressive domination (McNay 101). Foucault thinks of discourse as lame when it attempts to be an unmitigated domination. “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (HS 101). In like manner, a counter-discourse would operate as the repressive discursive formation has done. Take a whole series of discourses on homosexuality for example. The literature on the species and subspecies of homosexuality is the accomplice of the normalizing power of heterosexuality; it connives with the violence under which homosexuality is termed as perverse and abnormal, and even makes possible the advance of social controls into this perversity. Yet, the series of discursive formation of homosexuality also makes possible the formation of a “reverse” discourse which is often in the same vocabulary and categories “by which it was medically disqualified” (HS 101). There is always another discourse that runs counter to
the power-effected discourse. For Foucault, discourses are “tactical elements” working in
the field of force relations; different and even contradictory discourses can exist within
the same strategy, and moreover, they can circulate “without changing their form” from
one strategy to another opposing strategy (HS 101-2). In this phase, Foucault does
reiterate his archaeological perspective that discourse is a rule-governed construct, and
advances that the constituting role of discursive practice is of equal service in the
formation of counter-discourses. That discourse is constituted and vulnerable to
manipulations in nature bares the loophole in discursive practices. However seamless on
the surface a discursive formation is, there are always breaches in every power-effected
discourse; wherein resistance, subversion, and even an individual’s free subjectivity are
very likely to be produced. The productivity of power comprehends not only knowledge
and the effect of repression and domination but also counter-knowledge and the
construction of subjectivity in which individuals are potential free agents and resistant to
manifold discursive impositions.

In addition to articulating the discursive statements of her own version counter to
that of the general understanding in Irish society, Molly carries on producing counter-
discourses by giving her own rendition of the roles for which discourses have prepared
scripts. Thanks to the viewpoint of Molly in performance provided by Cheryl Herr and
Kimberly J. Devlin in the polylogue on “Penelope,” my argument is valid that Molly is
engaged in a series of interplays with the discourses encompassing her. In the role-
playing, Molly rarely complies with the discursive effect of those received ideas; what is
more important, those alterations more or less result in Molly’s subjectivity that is critical
and independent of discursive impositions of the original texts she recalls. In “‘Penelope’
as Period Piece,” Herr suggests that “Penelope” is the episode “men ventriloquized
through female bodies the patterns and ideas that they wanted to find” (72). Concepts of
the construction and instability of gender are resonant in Devlin’s “Pretending in
‘Penelope’: Masquerade, Mimicry, and Molly Bloom.” Reframing the distinction between the “flaunting” and “flouting” of Molly’s performance, Devlin argues that Molly “weaves and unweaves” the ideological and cultural clichés she has internalized (83). She finds in Joyce’s writing of Molly the forging of “a female voice that exposes, in gestures of travestic imitation, the engendered linguistic performances of her culture” (Devlin 100). The both aforecited contentions declare the playability and play-acting in the content of Molly’s mind talking. As side theoretical materials in support of the examination of Molly’s performances as counter-discourses, it is useful to recall some arguments that deal with the conceptions of parody and mimicry. Parody, in accordance with Peter Brooker’s definition in A Concise Glossary of Cultural Theory, is “founded on the imitation of another object or text”—namely, it “incorporates” part of the parodied into itself (159). As Margaret Rose explains in Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-Modern, “most parody worthy of the name is ambivalent towards its target. This ambivalence may entail not only a mixture of criticism and sympathy for the parodied text, but also the creative expansion of it into something new” (51). In this light, most of Molly’s doings in role-playing flesh out the above two definitions of parody. She does incorporate the received discourses in her performances, but she also applies these received ideas to her own terms, giving her rendition of them and interrogating the original versions. Complete sympathy with the texts she recalls is supplanted by somehow altered representations of the original. With the intentional alterations, Molly carries out the production of counter-discourses that enables her to speak her subjectivity.

Compared with Bloom of atheism, Molly is a “religious” woman; yet I rather treat her religiousness as a performing act, an act of parody. Molly’s memories of sheer gratified sex are constantly larded with her exclamations such as “O Lord,” “God,” or “Mary” which are particularly dictions of religion. A telling example can be found in the exhausting sex of this afternoon when Molly was making love to Boylan. “Yes because I
felt lovely and tired myself,” reviews Molly, “and fell asleep as sound as a top moment I popped straight into bed till that thunder woke me up God be merciful to us I thought the heavens were coming down about us to punish us when I blessed myself and said a Hail Mary” (U 18.132-36, emphases mine). The thunder, if it was the divine voice that Molly casually associated, by no means succeeds in announcing punishment; the repentant phrasing—for instance, “God be merciful to us”—is never an act of penitence as it seems in the case of Molly. The parodicality of Molly’s being religious is amplified by the contrariety of her voracious appetite for sex plus the adulterous sexual relations and the Virgin Mary to whom she refers. That Molly replied the thunder with a hurried “Hail Mary” expresses none of god-fearing sincerity. The signs of faith occur to Molly especially as she is under her own concupiscence. As often as not her thought drifts to her desire and to the religious back and forth. Molly’s religiousness, on the surface, answers to society’s and religion’s expectation of female devotion to the patriarchal church; but as a matter of fact, it is a simulacrum of piety that parodies the specific discursive effect of religious doctrines.

As for the strategy of mimicry, Luce Irigaray puts forth in The Sex Which is Not One that mimicry is “a time-honored tactic among oppressed groups, who often appear to acquiesce in the oppressor’s ideas about it, thus producing a double meaning: the same language or act simultaneously confirms the oppressor’s stereotypes of the oppressed and offers a dissenting and empowering view for those in the know” (76). In Female Impersonation, Carole-Anne Tyler draws a distinction between female masquerade that mainly consists in the flaunting of the cultural signifiers of womanliness and female mimicry that may result from a sort of flouting of those signifiers. As Tyler points out, “miming the feminine, playfully repeating it, produces knowledge about it: that it is a role and not a nature, and an exploitative role at that” (22-23). Tyler emphasizes that mimicry is an act of undoing by doing:
The mimic as performance artist denaturalizes ideology by questioning the terms in which she is produced and circulated as commodity in patriarchal culture, calling attention to the conventions that encode her as woman, representing representation and so unmasking through a conscious masking (mimicry) the masquerade of (woman’s) nature, what is supposed to precede cultural construction. She “does” ideology in order to undo it. (23)

Thus, the female masquerade is likely to yield a “potentially oppressive gender identity,” but female mimicry is able to produce a potentially “playful” one (Devlin 80). The argumentation about the slight but critical difference between the two terms affords me better understanding to clear up what in Molly’s performances demonstrates the act of female mimicry.

Molly often conceptualizes human behavior and interpersonal relationship on the basis of her intimate knowledge of gender traits. Most of Molly’s performances in which she has confidence in her womanly traits and flaunts them always uncover the constructedness of the culturally-defined womanliness, and further flout it. Being a teenage flirt par excellence, she was adept in feigning uninterestedness towards men’s courtships. For example, recalling the culmination of the sexual scenario with Mulvey, Molly thinks to herself, “how did we finish it off yes O yes I pulled him off into my handkerchief pretending not to be excited [. . .] I wouldnt let him touch me inside my petticoat [. . .] I tormented the life out of him” (U 18.809-13, emphasis mine). Another instance is her response to the amorous letter Bloom wrote her in the courting days: “he wrote me that letter with all those words in it [. . .] after when we met asking me have I offended you [. . .] and if I knew what it meant of course I had to say no for form sake dont understand you I said” (U 18.318-25, emphasis mine). In both cases, Molly was simply “acting properly” to the role of a coy girl. The intent to tickle the suitors and to arouse their stronger desires of her dissembled coyness is getting clear in the further
revelation. Molly was mimicking such conventional gestures of feminine coyness at that time. What looks like the proper behavior of a female here is really an intentional manipulation of a particular discursively determined femininity. Alternately flaunting and flouting the notion of femininity, say, girlish coyness, Molly does play both the dupe and the deconstructor of her received ideas about what constitutes womanliness.

Molly believes her ample breasts are her vantage. Whenever eyed, she can detect for sure whereabouts she catches the men’s attention; it is her large breasts that stand for the permanent attraction of hers for the opposite sex. She knew pretty well that Lenehan took advantage of her, jostling against her “fine pair” in the carriage over the Featherbed Mountain (U 10.559; 18.426-28). She was aware of the dirty eyes of Mayor Val Dillon, too, when she was in the dress that fit her “like a glove, shoulders and hips” (U 8.168; 18.428-30). When supplicating Mr Cuffe for saving Bloom’s employment, she felt certain that her magnificent chest did make an impression on him: “I could see him looking very hard at my chest when he stood up to open the door for me [. . .]. I know my chest was out that way at the door” (U 18.529-33). Molly appreciates the pair of her plump breasts surely, “what are all those veins and things curious the way its made 2 the same in case of twins theyre supposed to represent beauty placed up there like those statues in the museum one of them pretending to hide it with her hand are they so beautiful of course” (U 18.538-42, emphases mine). Things behind the aestheticized female nude are brought to light in Molly’s performance. “When he said I could pose for a picture naked to some rich fellow in Holles street,” Molly recollects Bloom’s suggestion that she seek employment as an artist’s model, “would I be like that bath of the nymph with my hair down yes only shes younger or Im a little like that dirty bitch in that Spanish photo he has” (U 18.560-64)27. Visualizing herself as an idealized and aestheticized form of female

27 Gifford and Seidman note that the source of “the bath of the nymph” is unknown (78). It first appears in the text of “Calypso” episode, referring to a photo hung over the Blooms’ bed—“The Bath of the Nymph over the bed. Given away with the Easter number of Photo Bits: splendid masterpiece in art colours. [. . .] Naked nymphs: Greece” (U 4.369-73). The Spanish photo mentioned here is one of the two erotic photos
nudity at first, Molly subsequently pictures herself as a specific pornographic tableau. The double identification that Molly enacts in the travestic imitation of *The Bath of the Nymph* proclaims her trenchant understanding that men’s insatiable desire for female nakedness is registered whether in the artistic painting and statue or in pornography. She is shrewdly aware of how much the bare female breasts can elicit heightened sexual desires from men. Associating *The Bath of the Nymph*, which refines men’s sexual penchant for female body artistically, with Bloom’s pornography that speaks the lustful desires of men straightforwardly, Molly intuits that the sexed part of women’s body is discursively desexualized in the name of aesthetics as well as in the name of God. “The woman [breasts] is beauty of course thats admitted” (*U* 18.559-60, emphasis mine). The admitted beauty of women’s breasts is always supposed to be represented with a gesture of pretending to hide. Additionally, likening herself to the painted object engages Molly in “the patriarchal practice of female objectification”; that is to say, she imitates exerting the female objectification and reification upon herself as a woman (Devlin 86). In Molly’s mimicry discloses the fact that men can easily objectify and stow away their sexual desires through any specific discursive practice whereas women’s carnal reality is widely repressed and everywhere disavowed. The travesty that Molly’s thoughts create here functions as a crosscurrent, a counter-discourse, within the discursive practice that insidiously disapproves the female sexual frankness like hers and any possibly positive image of female sexual desire.

The assumed roles Molly impersonates in her monologue are often byproducts of her identifications with specific texts available to her in particular backdrops of her memories. Devlin argues for Molly’s capacity for subverting the quintessence of femininity, regarding Molly’s monologue as “a concatenation of roles” that “undermines” the conventional notion of womanliness when displaying it (82). She treats Molly’s faulty

---

Bloom keeps in the first drawer: “2 erotic photocards showing a) buccal coition between nude senorita (rere presentation, superior position) and nude torero (fore presentation, inferior position)” (*U* 17.1809-11).
remembrance of the lyrics of a popular ballad as a masterstroke whereby Molly transforms “the feminine I/eye” from an “aesthetic object” into a “seeing subject” (Devlin 85). In the imagination of her adulterous dalliance with Stephen, Molly recollects the lyrical scene in “In Old Madrid”—“I suppose he [Stephen] wont find many like me where softly sighs of love the light guitar [. . .] two glancing eyes a lattice hid Ill sing that for him theyre my eyes [. . .] two eyes as darkly bright as loves own star aren’t those beautiful words as loves young star” (U 18.1334-41, emphasis mine)28. That Molly revises the song, turning the “sparkling eyes” of the female persona in the actual lyrics into “glancing eyes” in her inaccurate memory of them, as Devlin contends, is a significant gesture of restoring “sight”—however oblique—to women, both to the female persona in the ballad and to Molly herself (85). In addition to Devlin’s contention that follows the feminist claim, Molly’s response to the discourse in thoughts and actions here thrills me in particular. There seems to be a warehouse where sundry texts—such as historical hearsay, theatrical performances, fictions and anecdotes, reports in newspapers, advertisement, paintings, photos, and popular songs—are stored available for Molly to recall, to appropriate and to interact within her stream of consciousness. A ballad like “In Old Madrid” as well as the painting The Bath of the Nymph is a statement that serves to impose specific discursive effects upon Molly when she identifies with it. Yet Molly is not a passive recipient but an active identifier responsive to the both discursive statements mentioned above. Similar to the revealing gesture she makes as associating the pristine nymph with the dirty bitch, mistaking the lyrics is a deliberate slip of recollection. “Ill sing that for him theyre my eyes,” Molly in fact intends Stephen to know her by her

28 According to the annotation of Gifford and Seidman, “In Old Madrid” is a song with the lyrics by G. Clifton and music by Henry Trottere (Trotter); the lyrics are: “Long years ago in old Madrid / Where softly sighs of love the light guitar, / Two sparkling eyes a lattice hid. / Two eyes as darkly bright as love’s own star / There on a casement ledge when day was o’er, / A tiny hand lightly laid. / A face looked out, as from the river shore, / There stole a tender serenade. / Rang the lover’s happy song, / Light and low from shore to shore, / But ah, the river flowed along / Between them evermore, / Come my love, the stars are shining, / Time is flying, love is sighing, / Come, for thee a heart is pining, / Here alone I wait for thee” (303, emphasis mine). It is the first four lines of the lyrics that Molly prepares to sing to Stephen. But Molly remembers the lyrics by mistake and then renders the version of her own.
The discursive identification with the song is partial: Molly identifies her imaginary love affair with Stephen with the lyrical atmosphere provided in the song’s words, but she modifies the song’s scenario that the female persona is sighing, pining, and waiting and produces a “glancing” agency in the love story of her own. It is Molly’s act of altering the received texts in order to make her intended impression on Stephen that manifests Molly’s subjectivity and makes it distinguishable from an unquestioning discourse-occasioned identification. Not subsumed in the song’s scenario, Molly’s subjectivity rejects the totalizing force of the discourse conveyed in the lyrics instead. It is also this gesture of rejection in response to discourse’s imposition that reiterates the difference between the discursive effect showed in Molly’s self-knowledge and the self-identification of Gerty and two Ormond barmaids. Occupied in the concatenation of roles in her mind thinking, Molly stages herself as the roles she recalls, dramatizes them reflexively, and interacts dialectically with the ideas received from the discursive texts almost every time. Her repeated interrogation during the process of impersonation in consequence amounts to a proof that discourse is constructed, labile, assumable, and rejectable. It is also because of the repeated interrogation that Molly can be treated as a free agent in forming her subjectivity.

The intentional slip of recollection also emerges in several examples of Molly’s mistakes in spelling words and in recalling names scattered in the novel. Some critics think of Molly’s faulty performance in literacy as her inferiority, lack of intellect, and rank her less intelligent than the male protagonists; some regard the illiterateness as a part of Molly’s charm and find her poor use of language amusing. However, I intend to read Molly’s mistaking words into a signal that discourse has loosened its grip and has to consign both the discursive meaning and discursive effect of words to Molly, since the mistaken lyrics of “In Old Madrid” is in fact her manipulation with deliberation. Molly has an aversion to the difficult words people use in written or spoken language as well.
When asking Bloom the word “metempsychosis” that has baffled her, she becomes even more perplexed by Bloom’s explanation. “—Metempsychosis, he said, frowning. It’s Greek: from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls” (U 4.341-42). “—O, rocks! she said. Tell us in plain words” (U 4.343). As a matter of fact, Molly mispronounces metempsychosis in “Met him pike hoses” and turns a deaf ear to Bloom’s explanation for the mythical doctrine from Greek that the soul after death will be reborn in another body (U 8.112). “I asked him about [. . .] that word [. . .] and he came out with some jawbreakers about the incarnation he never can explain a thing simply the way a body can understand” (U 18.565-67). Such indifference perhaps evidences the argument that Joyce does portray Molly according to the “preconceived ideas of the way a woman thinks and behaves”—such as being naïve, illogical, flighty, mindless or simpleminded, and of the quintessential femininity (Unkeless 165). But, many of the cases where Molly downplays the importance of words, for me, even more pertinently attest to the shakiness of discourse’s dominance and the potential for an individual to be uncooperative within mechanisms of discursive practices. Take the situation that Molly belittles some atheistic rigmarole about nonexistence of God for another example:

as for them saying theres no God I wounldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning why dont they go and create something I often asked him [Bloom] atheists or whatever they call themselves go and wash the cobbles off themselves first then they go howling for the priest and they dying and why why because theyre afraid of hell on account of their bad conscience ah yes I know them well who was the first person in the universe before there was anybody that made it all who ah that they dont know neither do I so there you

29 Elaine Unkeless in her essay, “The Conventional Molly Bloom,” argues for her position that Joyce’s treatment of Molly in “Penelope” is largely based on his attitudes towards her as a woman. Anatomizing Molly’s behavior, Unkeless elucidates that Joyce confines Molly’s character to a conventional mold and concludes Molly’s ideas, though some are highly praised for the revolutionist tendency, remain unexecuted.
are they might as well try to stop the sun from rising tomorrow. (U 18.1563-71, emphases mine)

In Molly’s reaction to the discourse of atheism exposes the absence of a compliant receiver. The role of such a compliant receiver is to have the discursive effect conformed, and the compliance is to facilitate the discourse to be circulated. Without the receiver, a constituent of the rules forming discourse’s enunciative modalities, a particular discursive formation will be left incomplete after all. Withholding her consent to the talking of the atheists, Molly, instead, takes issue with them over the theme of the world’s creator, a question hard to be solved that faces the atheists. The verbal noncompliance, a strategy Molly employs to interact with the atheistic statements, eventually makes the discursive practice of atheism annulled. The discursive voice coils and is met by recoil: although the atheists are the speaking subjects who seem to control the discourse of atheism, the discursive practice of their statements engenders likewise the resistance within when it attempts to co-opt the heckling Molly. The position of a speaking subject should always be a vacancy. Hence, the site where the atheists occupy in order to speak is easily usurped by another engendered speaking subject like Molly. Molly’s interrogating agency here unearths the rigid rules of formation that govern discursive practices, and again marks her subjectivity in the course of formulating a counter-discourse.

The concatenation of Molly’s role-playing and her verbal incompliance and subversion can be treated as the act of practicing the individual subjectivity. In her interaction with those received texts, Molly’s performances embody the self-determination of an individual and the autonomous subjectivity in the face of discursive practices. The idea that individuals are (potentially) active agents leads Foucault to extending his archaeology into the time of Antiquity in his final works. Some scarce finding in the ancient moral thought seems to be a counterpart of Foucault’s prospect of the individual as a self-determined subjectivity. In the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, the
moral practice “takes the form, not of a tightening of the code that defined prohibited acts, but of an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constituted oneself as the subject of one’s acts” (Foucault, CS 41). Rather than the intention to perpetuate the morality-effect, this form of moral life attaches more importance to the relation between the individual and the moral system. The moral rules and values are rather treated as recommendation, and individual’s self-determination and autonomy are tolerated in the practice of morality in day-to-day life. It is the real behavior of individuals in relation to these rules and values that matters in such moral practice. Moreover, it is the concept of relation that has the significance of both parties in the relation validated. The situation in which the recommendation and individual’s real behavior coexist asserts the subjectivity of individual in practicing those moral rules. To Foucault, this finding assures his insistent urge for the care of the self and the concern for individual subjectivity, in a manner of speaking. Such ideal status of an individual as the interactive agent in relation to those surrounding discourses, for Foucault, remains yet to be put into practice in real life. Nevertheless, Joyce’s characterization of Molly demonstrates the practicability of this interactiveness. Molly does not give way to every discursive prescription that expects spontaneous submission from her; on the contrary, her thought and behavior in response to these discursive practices yield certain counter-discourses whereby she storms the arbitrariness of the imposing ones and speak her self-determined subjectivity.

Frankly speaking, my arguments so far stand for the Foucauldian potential for an individual subject as Molly to resist, to subvert, and to be a free agent facing the normalizing and individualizing discursive practices. It may be an anticlimax if I refer to the reality in 1904’s Dublin that constrains Molly in this part. Yet, in terms of Foucault, the self does not emerge in the society naturally; rather, it is constituted through “a game of truth, relations of power, and forms of relations to oneself and to others” (Ethics 117)\textsuperscript{30}.

\textsuperscript{30} This quote is from “Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations: An Interview with Michel Foucault,” an interview conducted by Paul Rabinow in May, 1984, just before Foucault’s death. It is translated by Lydia
The social factors can never be left out because they conspicuously influence the exercise of power, the production of knowledge, and the pervasion of power relations in the society. Therefore, rather than being disappointing, the analysis of the context for Molly in 1904’s Irish society is significant for me to understand the profundity of both Foucault’s and Joyce’s insights into the conditions of human beings. Speaking of the social context in Molly’s times, I am deeply indebted to the knowledge of the social and political parameters of Molly’s life in 1904’s Dublin proffered by Carol Shloss in her essay, “Molly’s Resistance to the Union: Marriage and Colonialism in Dublin, 1904.”

In the light of the matters of legal concern for women in her times, the situation of marriage where Molly was positioned was indeed a stalemate. On the judicial and legal level, Molly was scarcely an autonomous and free agent within the institution of marriage. She would not have been allowed to get a separation order even in cases of matrimonial violence. Had she divorced Bloom, she would not have the custody of Milly. If Bloom had died, she would not have been appointed guardian of Milly unless Bloom had specified it as his wish. Had Bloom died intestate, she would not have been given neither the guardianship of her own child nor the claim to even a minimum share in the husband’s estate. The home at 7 Eccles Street did not belong to her, nor did the money she earned by singing in the concert. She had no right to hold any property in her name, to say nothing of investing money by herself.

This explanation for the unequal status in marriage of an Irishwoman epitomizes the disadvantages at which Molly was put in the 1904’s Irish social context. More significantly, it also manifests the distinct dearth of choices confronting Molly if she had wanted to assert herself more effectively in the world. In view of this predicament, Molly

---

31 In this essay, Shloss proffers a detailed account of the conjugal suppression that Molly might have faced in 1904, including historical backgrounds, Anglo-Irish political context, and the Irish marriage laws during the period of Molly’s life. I am deeply indebted to Shloss’s explanation. My discussions in the following part concerning Molly’s matrimonial obligations stipulated in the laws are largely based on her analyses (See Shloss 113-14).
seems to be justified in her lethargy and concentration on nothing but her relations with men. To Molly, pursuing the satiation of her bodily needs seems to be an alternative for her to be at least active within the condition limited in choice. Overhauling Molly’s rambling thoughts and reflections, I undertake an examination of the interaction between Molly and those discursive practices that are writing limited cultural and social roles for her. Among the countering tactics Molly employs, some do function as the subversive practices through which she articulates the unquenched autonomy and asserts her subjectivity. However, there also exist some of Molly’s interactions with discourses reflecting that she does carry out the desired discursive effect. The submission of Molly to certain received discursive impositions should be taken into as serious consideration as her vehement reactions against the discourse she has received. Since it is the status of powerlessness that entrenches Molly’s life in 1904’s Dublin, the result that shows Molly’s conformity with the discursive effect does reinforce the social material as the situation of stalemate that faces every Irishwoman.

As the episode presents, most of Molly’s actions and her outpouring of words are associated directly or indirectly with sex. In other words, it is the relation with Boylan that occupies Molly wholly on the day of June 16th, 1904. Thus, Molly’s retrospection of her interaction with Boylan would serve as a reservoir for me to indicate the part in which she performs to the received discourse. Although Molly does express her grievance against men’s being the predominant partners in the course of sexual activities, part of her is obsessed with Boylan’s feeling about her during the sex—“I wonder was he satisfied with me [. . .].I wonder is he awake thinking of me or dreaming am I in it” (U 18.121-25). She looks forward to Boylan’s return partly for her own sexual pleasure and partly because she indeed gains the feeling of importance from this affair—a confidence she can win by her romantic life. It is indicative that Molly is still dependent on Boylan’s approval in their relation, even though she braves the social mores which strongly negates
the act of adultery. The objection to male predominance in intercourse imparts Molly’s rebellious assertion of female sexuality and her accurate understanding of the inequity between men and women even in bed. However, such understanding also leads to her acquiescence to the convention that men care for their own pleasure only while having sex with women. From this perspective, Molly’s knowing sleights by means of which she ingratiates herself with Boylan—for instance, “I wonder was I too heavy sitting on his knee I made him sit on the easychair purposely” (U 18.1137-38) and “I hope my breath was sweet after those kissing comfits” (U 18.1140-41)—all demonstrate her submission to the greatest satisfaction that Boylan can reap out of the love-making with her. Molly knows pretty well that her body, her thighs and breasts are of immense attraction to men, and she is very clever at making them even more attractive. Every step that she takes to beautify herself is a display of Molly’s self-identification in consonance with the conventionality simplifying that men’s sexual gratification is discursively emphatic. Even the “daring” thought expressing her desire to be a man is predicated on Molly’s understanding of this conventionality that man is always a predominant partner in sexual relationships. Molly’s thought and behavior regarding her relations with men can be treated as an act of role-playing, too. But this time, she acts as a generous provider of men’s pleasure instead of being resistant to their demands and desires. It is a performance in which Molly seamlessly corresponds to the discursive effect, a discursive practice intended for her compliance with the received knowledge of conventionality.

Molly’s complying performances in her relation with men may underpin some feminist critique of Molly’s stereotyped actions and Joyce’s conventional delineation. However, I do feel reluctant to accept such pan-negative reception which tends to deny Molly’s subjectivity in her actions and thoughts. Were Molly a born revolutionist, it would attenuate her glamour and lessen the importance that several Joyce critics have found in her. It is within Ireland’s social condition limited in choices for Irishwomen that
the value of Molly’s potential for rebellion is redoubled. Likewise, it is because of the awareness of constraints imposed upon human’s self-knowledge and freedom that Foucauldian perception of the care for the self becomes worthwhile. Overstating the practicability of any revolution may imply a certain degree of naivety of those insidious restraints in real world. Were the power relations adamant once and for all, there would never be any chance of revolution and even of resistance for any individual. There exists a persistent urge to struggle with limited conditions for human beings throughout Foucault’s work. In fact, Foucault triumphs in some ways, such as unmasking the discursive mechanics deployed in every domain of knowledge, penetrating the insidious mechanisms with which power takes greater effect, and postulating the possibility of resistance in view of the constructedness of discourse and the vulnerability to change of power relations. These results are concerned with Foucauldian conceptualization of self. It is based on the interplay between discourse, knowledge, power, and individual as self that subjectivity, the self-knowledge, is generated. Joyce’s characterization of Molly in “Penelope” enters resonance with the Foucauldian mode of interplay, and moreover, fleshes out the attacks that Foucault develops in archaeological and genealogical phases respectively. The formation of Molly’s subjectivity does disambiguate the potential for an individual as a free agent confronted with multiple discursive impositions, in a manner of speaking. For me, where Foucault remains ambiguous of an individual’s subjectivity independent of discursive dominations does take shape in Molly’s subjectivity for most of time.
Conclusion

If only death is the closure overhanging the existence of human beings, discourses thus reign over individuals during their lifetime before nature takes its course. Power does firmly seize individuals’ existence through discourses and the entailing discursive practices. With power-effect, a discourse is endorsed as truth, valorized as norm, and internalized as what individuals perceive as the self-understanding and self-status in relation to all that surround them. Conspicuously or insidiously, power anchors individuals’ existence in accordance with its deployment and perpetuates individuals’ spontaneous subjection to it. Knowingly and unknowingly, individuals articulate the discursive power-effect as their knowledge of the world. Individuals may be kept imprisoned in their discursively conceived understanding of themselves, the knowledge assumed to be their own, till death puts the conclusion to their life. As Friedrich Nietzsche stresses in “On the Use and Abuse of History for Life” (1874), “Your knowledge does not perfect nature, it only destroys your own nature” (108). Toward the end of his life, Foucault even states quite categorically that he is a Nietzschean. Sharing the like-minded conception of society and power with Nietzsche, Foucault rather insists on a struggle for a state of liberation from the power-imposed knowledge that is destructive to the attainment of individual subjectivity.

In the analysis of power’s domination, Foucault primarily views knowledge as a mechanism of domination implicated in the strategies and practices by which power is exercised over the body. Knowledge is produced by discourse; as a discursive formation, knowledge and truth are joined together. The truth-effect of a discursive knowledge points to the mechanism of which power and knowledge directly imply each other. Put

---

32 “On the Use and Abuse of History for Life” (1874) is the second part of Nietzsche’s The Untimely Meditations (1873-76) which is comprised of four parts. Translated into English by R. J. Hollingdale in 1983, four essays are collected and edited together under the English title, Untimely Meditations, published by Cambridge University Press in 1997.
briefly, power is knowledge and vice versa. Incorporated through knowledge, power shapes individuals’ life. Conceptualizing the mode of micro-power, Foucault pinpoints that the body becomes the place where power/knowledge “implants itself and produces its effects” (“Society” 28). The coercive-but-insidious appearance of micro-power takes form in the disciplinary techniques and surveillance machinery employed as modern society’s control over individuals. The social entity becomes a huge carceral continuum constraining individuals through ubiquitous normalization. However, presenting such awareness of the immensity of power’s domination does not denote Foucault’s pessimism towards individual’s capability of dealing with the power to normalize in discursive individualization and the immense normalization. Quite the contrary, Foucault embraces an aspiration to equip individuals with the understanding and methods for establishing in themselves the subjectivities of their own. His persistently launching critical interrogation into the neutrality of discourses/knowledge and challenging the legitimacy of power and of its preponderance are by no means a pessimist’s gesturers. Instead, they register the intent to problematize throughout Foucault’s conceptualization of his critical thoughts. For Foucault, to problematize is an optimal means by which individuals bring themselves an opportunity for asserting their own subjectivity. Problematizing the established understating of truth can be a profitable gesture through which individuals may liberate themselves from the discursively perpetuated norms and knowledge. Problematized, the legitimacy and neutrality of a certain discourse or power are called into question. Revealing that discourse is a construct with seemingly coherent truthfulness, Foucault does not intend to center his argument around the situation that the constituted overrule our existence, but rather, he underlines the interaction and interactive manners in which individuals can counter the discursive impositions with the same technologies employed by those imposing discourses. Instead of being utterly dominated, individuals are also capable of interacting with the power exerted upon them; instead of merely
dominating, the power-effect is productive, too, and produces things other than coercion or constraining forces. “Power functions,” stresses Foucault, “Power is exercised through networks and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power” (“Society” 29). Individuals should not merely be treated as the inert or consenting targets of power; in other words, they can interact with the power which passes through them.

This sentiment of an interactive engagement of the individual in discursive practices underpins that Foucault’s critical concern is consistently expressed for the care of the self, the subjectivity of individual. With interactive gestures, individuals can achieve the status of individuality though some may remain somewhere in normalization; through an even more rebellious interaction, individuals are enabled to resist the normalizing discursive practice and further render the intended discursive effect ineffectual. Such interactions can be regarded as movements in which individuals bring all Foucault’s critical interrogation and challenges and what he has problematized into full play. That individuals function as free and interactive agents in discursive practices betokens the capacity of individuals for making possible their independent subjectivities. Foucault seems eager to set forth a model of individuals as the potentially free agents, capable of interacting with the discursive practices and formulating their autonomous subjectivity in the world. “This modernity,” as Foucault writes, “does not ‘liberate man in his own being’; it compels him to face the task of producing himself” (“What Is Enlightenment?” 42). The modern world surrounding individual subjects does not provide them with the truth about the self; on the contrary, it encompasses the individual with the regulatory institutions and discourses that produce the sense of self for the individual, and with a series of practices that make up the truth. Thus, for Foucault, the subject is not a substance, but “It is a form” (Ethics 290). It is the form to be cultivated by the

---

33 This quote is from “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as A Practice of Freedom,” an interview conducted by H. Becker, R. Fornet-Betancourt, and A. Gomez-Muller in 1984.
individual him/herself in accordance with the social contexts and particular mores.

Working on the self, the modern individual subject may coincide with an interactive moral subject which Foucault observes in the moral practice of the Antiquity. Foucault seems insistent on proposing a move, an active engagement of the existence of the self in modern life, in his final intellectual activities. Although power/knowledge and discursive contexts still limit the possibilities of subjectivity, Foucault keeps urging the individual to take part in the construction of the subjectivity, and to reinvent the self as a subject better fitted in life. In his later phase, Foucault strongly emphasizes the interactive gesture of an individual in the making of his or her self-determined subjectivity.

In the spectrum of discursive subjectivities showed in Joyce’s female characterization in *Ulysses*, I do see the aforementioned interactiveness of individual’s response to the discursive practice and actions in the production of the subjectivity. Moreover, I argue that Joyce also fleshes out other traits of power/knowledge/self of Foucault’s theorizing. In depicting the gesture of slaughtering the mother in “Oxen” episode, Joyce materializes what Foucault refers to us the coercive modality of power and discourse. Exploited and even overexploited, Mrs Purefoy has not been accorded a slightest amount of self-knowledge, not to mention any state of subjectivity. Her voice of the self is drowned out, her activity is rendered invisible, and the signification of her body is overused and then discarded. Silenced and erased, Mrs Purefoy demonstrates the extreme and overt powerfulness of Irish nationalist discourse in exploiting the existence of Irishwomen in the Irish society and in depriving Irishwomen of their existence as human subject. “Nausicaa” exemplifies the insidious appearance of discursive power, hidden but even more powerful. Gerty meticulously puts her received discursive statements into practice, attaches her self-knowledge firmly to the received knowledge, undergoes the self-identifying process, and helps the power-effect perpetuate its hold on her in the end. Her obsessively self-identifying with the Virgin Mary reinforces the
normalization of Catholic doctrines; her assiduously practicing femininity and the role of an exceptionally attractive Irish ingénue serve to fortify the Irish patriarchal predominance. As for “Sirens,” the two Irish barmaids are converted into the self-identification of political correctness. Moreover, they embrace such self-images with delight. Their active identifying gestures enhance the discursive practice and its power-effect. The converted patriotism of these two Irish barmaids answers to the Irishmen-oriented call. The invited flaunting of the feminine attraction satiates the masculine-directed flow of desire in the bar. Subjectivity of this kind comes under the individualizing-normalizing forces of discursive power. It is the one of normalized individuality located in the spectrum of discursive subjectivities. In Molly finds the Foucauldian prospect of an independent subjectivity taking form in the individual. Additionally, Foucault’s admiration for the interactive mode of the moral practice in Ancient Greek time seems to resound. Molly’s action and thought in response to the intended discursive impositions not only highlight Molly’s interactiveness but her rebellious gestures towards them. The Greeks’ interactive behavior to the moral rules and values may not be as resistant and subversive as Molly’s interactiveness is; yet, these two interactive manners do assert the subjectivity emerging in the individual which is able to be independent of discursive impositions. In those gestures with which Molly rejects the normalizing discursive effect, Molly achieves the status of an independent subjectivity. More than independent, Molly is rather critical and subversive of the effect discourse intended for her. What Foucault is to theorize about the contrivedness of discursive truth and the arbitrary legitimacy of power-effect imposed upon individuals seem to have been pre-demonstrated in Joyce’s characterization of Molly’s soliloquy and mind talking. Molly’s subjectivity epitomizes the individual subjectivity remaining critical and self-determined in the face of the normalizing power and knowledge. Moreover, she can be viewed as the result that Foucault expects through his series of problematizing gestures.
From the omni-subjection of an individual to the individuality within normalization and to the coming forth of the individual’s subjectivity, my discussions of Mrs Purefoy, of Gerty and the two Irish barmaids, and of Molly comprise a spectrum showing distinct power-effect demonstrated respectively in these women through discursive practice. Locating these female characters in such a spectrum of subjectivities, I do not intend to stereotype the result of discursive practice imposed upon these women. Rather, I see the spectrum as a multiplicity of subjectivities taking shape in distinct individuals confronted with discourse and power. In our real life, individuals’ subjectivities are somewhere in between the spectrum of discursive subjectivities envisioned in Joyce’s characterization. The enormous pressure facing today’s people in the forming of subjectivity is definitely the normalizing power, the imposing discursive knowledge as truth, and the power-effect which shapes individuals’ life without being discerned. “Your knowledge does not perfect nature, it only destroys your own nature.” What Nietzsche inspires Foucault is a war-like and ceaseless struggle from the destruction of imposed self-knowledge. His statement is reiterated in Foucault’s insistent problematization. That Foucault espouses the Nietzschean perception of knowledge registers two-faced concern in Foucault’s theorizing. For one thing, Foucault’s problematization of power discloses that power is even more powerful when it is hidden from view. For the other, Foucault does suggest that every individual keeps struggling for the liberation from the normalization mechanism through which power overtly and insidiously imposes its power-effect through discourse and discursive practice. The unquestioned and unquestionable power/knowledge may be the greatest danger to the individual subjectivity. It is like to affect even the most unimportant decision or gesture to make in the life of an individual. It may be the imperceptible seizure of the individual—discreet but powerful in shaping individual’s appearance. The powerfulness of power/knowledge is not confined to the effect of repression or the drastic damage to some concrete materials. Rather, the most
powerful effect of power/knowledge resides in the individual existence in the world: powerful enough to decide the way an individual accounts for his/her existence. In such situation, an individual would be gradually free from the knowledge that destroys his or her own subjectivity only when being equipped with the tactics to problematize and to challenge. It must be in a form of constant struggle that individuals engage themselves in the task to live out the imposing knowledge destructive to their existence and to find their position in the living world.
Works Cited


