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JOYCEAN REBIRTH IN THE "ABJECT" WOMB*

Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN**

Abstract

The land/woman metaphor has always been an effective tool to define Ireland and Irish nationalists aligned their feminized land with patriarchal discourse and created the iconic Mother Ireland in the image of the Virgin Mary. Known for his anti-Revivalist arguments, James Joyce reveals that the cult of Mother Ireland must be demolished to reach the essence of Irish identity hidden in the "abject" maternal body. Therefore, in his struggle against colonialism, Joyce turns his attention to women, believing that Irishness starts with the exploration of a woman's body. Using Kristeva's abjection theory to re-interpret Joyce's position as the "abject" child of Irish literature, this paper aims to analyze the writer's prominent women characters in Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and in Ulysses in parallel to his search for an identity as an Irish writer and his anti-colonial struggle against patriarchy.

Keywords: *James Joyce, Julia Kristeva, Abject, Semiotic chora, Irish mother, Identity.*

ÖTELENMİŞ ANA RAHMİNDE JOYCE'UN YENİDEN DOĞUŞU

Özet

Kadın/vatan mecazı İrlanda'yı tanımlamak için kullanılan etkili bir siyasi araç olmuştur. İrlanda milliyetçileri "kadınlaştırılmış" topraklarını ataerkil söyleme uygun hale getirmiş ve Katolik Bakire Meryem imgesinde bir "Ana İrlanda" ikonu yaratmışlardır. Uyanışçılara karşı geliştirdiği tavrıyla bilinen James Joyce, cinsiyetçi Ana İrlanda kültünün yıkılması gerektiğini, çünkü İrlanda kimliğinin özünün İngilizler tarafından "abject" (iğrenç) kabul edilen anne bedeninde gizli olduğunu söylemiştir. Bu nedenle, sömürgeciliğe karşı geliştirdiği kendi kişisel mücadelesinde, Joyce dikkatini İrlandalı kadınlara yöneltmiş ve İrlandalı kimliğinin İngilizler tarafından küçük düşürülmüş kadın bedeninin keşfiyle mümkün olacağını iddia etmiştir. Bu çalışma, Joyce'un İrlanda edebiyatındaki aykırı duruşunu, Kristeva'nın "abjection" (iğrenme) teorisiyle yorumlamaya çalışacak ve yazarın önemli kadın karakterlerini Dublinliler, Sanatçının Bir Genç Adam Olarak Portresi ve Ulysses eserlerinde Joyce'un kendi kimlik arayışı ve sömürge karşıtı mücadelesiyle ilişkilendirecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *James Joyce, Julia Kristeva, Abject, Semiyotik kora, İrlandalı anne, Kimlik*.

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Introduction

The land/woman metaphor has always been a political tool to define Ireland, and not only the English colonizer but also the Irish Revivalists and the Catholic nationalists of the nineteenth century employed the same gendered discourse to disseminate their nationalist propaganda. The English used the metaphor to justify the white Anglo-Saxon man's colonization in Ireland, associating Ireland with the body while itself with the mind. In reply, Irish nationalists aligned their feminized land with the patriarchal discourse and created the iconic Mother Ireland in the image of the Virgin Mary. Known for his anti-Revivalist arguments, James Joyce (1882-1941) reveals that the cult of Mother Ireland must be demolished to reach the essence of Irish identity that is hidden in the "abject" maternal body. In this context, Julia Kristeva's theory of "abject" with its relation to the mother's body is useful to understand Joyce's position in twentieth-century Irish society. His rejection of the dominant discourse of Irish nationalism, his unconventional portrayals of Irish women and his exploration of a woman's body for an anti-colonial struggle; in other words, his courage to discover the "abject" female nature, make him an "abject" figure in Irish literature. Like Kristeva, Joyce is also aware of the mother's importance in a child's psychosexual development, however, the stereotypical Irish mother, with her passivity, alienation from her own body and lack of emotional-depth cannot fulfill her supportive role for her children's subjectivity. When Joyce's works and his interest in women characters are considered, it can be argued that he fosters distaste with this virgin image and believes that achieving a unique Irish identity free from the colonial influence is possible only through an exploration of the maternal/female body. Therefore, his women characters reveal his gradual return to the semiotic embedded in the maternal "womb" that is abjected due to the cult of virginity. This article aims to analyze Joyce's search for an identity as an Irish writer by focusing on his mouthpiece Stephen's relationship with two stereotypical Irish women – his mother and his beloved Emma – in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and his discovery of Irish subjectivity in the "abject" body of Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* (1922).

Kristevan Analysis of the Mother Ireland Myth

In her work *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), Kristeva claims that woman's body has always been regarded as enigmatic, monstrous and ultimate "abject" by patriarchal societies. In Western philosophy, while male body is regarded as proper, intact and homogeneous, woman's body with its capacity to generate the other is considered heterogeneous, improper and dirty. As she emphasized in "Stabat Mater," Christianity created the figure of "Virgin Mary" to safely include the female body into the paternal sphere. The Virgin Mary is both a mother and a virgin, which gives her a divine status in the eyes of patriarchal authorities as her maternal body stays proper and intact due to her virginity (1985: 133-141). Women, who are not able to achieve this position, are to be abjected in the eyes of men, because they are potential threats to their patriarchal system. However, the figure of Virgin Mary cannot represent the maternal space, which Kristeva associates with the semiotic chora1, since it is not possible to become a mother by staying a virgin. Therefore, she turns into an idealized figure constructed by men; she is a mother estranged from her maternal body. Similarly, Irish nationalists of the nineteenth century made use of the *aisling* tradition based on the myth of sovereignty goddess and created the cult of Mother Ireland that set a role model for Irish women (Quinn, 1995: 181). Considering each Irish woman as a potential mother, womanhood and motherhood were used interchangeably in Irish society. For example, the Irish land was regarded either as a young maiden embodied by Dark Rosaleen or as a mother incarnated in the figure of Mother Ireland in the nationalist arguments. In both cases, harmony between the land and Irish people was interrupted by the intervention of the English colonizer, which caused the degradation of these virgin images. Walter claims that both female sexuality and maternity are "male propriety and harnessed for political purposes" (2013: 319). As a result, all the gendered representations of Ireland including the Mother Ireland, Cathleen ni Houlihan and Dark Rosaleen waiting for "brave" Irish men's self-sacrifice were used as patriarchal propaganda tools since the needy image of Irish womanhood encouraged young Irish men to fight for their land. This highly gendered propaganda resulted in an idealized woman stereotype embodied by Mother Ireland.

As underlined by Ernest Jones in his 1922 essay "The Island of Ireland: A Psycho-Analytical Contribution to Political Psychology," the harmonic union between the Irish mother and the child was disrupted by the Freudian father figure embodied by the English colonizer, so the mother turned into a "lost" object of love symbolizing the pre-colonial dyad. That is, the Irish child is exiled from his mother's body from the very beginning; allegorically, he is alienated from his own culture and is exposed to an imported culture shaped by Catholicism in terms of religion and by English in terms of politics and language. The mother's absence as the lost object during the child's subjectivity process deifies the mother, and thus Irish woman was considered an unreachable figure to whom mythical qualities were attributed. This glorification built on the cult of virginity imprisoned Irish women

into a virgin body; thus, Mother Ireland as well as Irish women could not liberate themselves from white man's gendered discourse. Instead, they were stripped off from their semiotic maternal bodies and became a product of the symbolic realm dominated by the colonizer. In other words, Irish women ended up as agents of Irish patriarchal discourse that would mimic its English counterpart. This restricted woman image has also prevented the formation of a liberal Irish identity in the long run, since identity-formation starts in the womb.

Kristeva points out two realms in a child's psycholinguistic development, as the semiotic (maternal womb) and the symbolic (the law of the father). There is a level of abjection that is situated between the semiotic and the symbolic. Accordingly, the child must explore and then, abject the maternal womb to form his separate self/ identity (Kristeva, 1984: 21-24). Unlike the classical Freudian psychoanalysts, Kristeva believes that the semiotic cannot be excluded from the process of subjectivity as our linguistic skills start in the maternal body. The mother is the first actor in the infant's identity formation process with her semiotic energy2; thus, without the mother's preparatory womb, subjectivity cannot be achieved. From a political perspective, the semiotic realm can be related to the pre-colonial Ireland while the symbolic represents the system of the English colonizer, and the main reason for the failure in creating a liberal Irish identity is that the semiotic essence/the maternal womb of Mother Ireland is excluded from Irish politics as her heterogeneous body is replaced by the homogeneous and sterile body of the Virgin Mary constructed by the symbolic. As argued by Seamus Deane, Joyce believes that "a process of repudiation, the rejection of all previous abortive attempts," is necessary to go beyond narrow-minded Irish nationalism (1985:97). Through his unconventional and experimental writings, Joyce fights against the Mother Ireland image modelled on the Virgin Mary, because the image exemplifies one of these "abortive attempts." As a figure imported from the Roman Catholic world, she neither represents the semiotic chora nor Irish women, which urges Joyce to return to the "abject" maternal womb to discover the essence of Irishness. Considering the land/woman metaphor dominating the Irish nationalist discourse, Joyce's interest in the abject womb can also be interpreted as his support for a diversified, multicultural and heterogeneous understanding of Irish nationalism.

Irish Mothers in Joyce's Works

Joyce's distaste with Mother Ireland's oppressive existence can best be traced in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that concentrates on a young man's exploration of his true identity through art. The protagonist Stephen Dedalus who is "a subject forever in process" mirrors Joyce's own pangs to create his artistic identity, which results in his self-exile from Ireland (Nolan, 2002: 38). Stephen is a character that is haunted by the narrow-minded nationalist discourse of Ireland embodied by his family and other state institutions like the Church and the school. At this juncture, his religious mother Mrs. Dedalus – a typical example for the Irish mother based on the Virgin Mary model – appears as the main symbol of the nationalist discourse; she is a tool of oppression used by the Irish symbolic suffering under English colonialism. Indeed, Joyce does not use the oppressive Irish mother image for the first time, but this stereotype standing for Mother Ireland is commonly employed by him in his earlier short story collection *Dubliners* (1914) where Joyce contradicts the romantic dreams of Irish women with reality while depicting the mundane lives of spinster sisters, unhappy wives and oppressive mothers shaped by the conditions of society. In this context, Joycean "paralysis" is the correct term to define the entrapped status of his women, or allegorically his country.

For instance, the story entitled "Eveline" which concentrates on a young Irish girl's dilemma between her public self and private self also exemplifies the passivity and timidity of Irish women in the face of love. Eveline decides to leave Ireland with her lover Frank, yet as the departure time is approaching, she dives into her childhood memories. Finally, the mother figure looms large in her memories and dominates her thoughts. Her responsibility towards her family as well as her promise to her dying mother to keep the family together haunt and delimit her (Joyce, 2011: 30). At this juncture, her home appears not as a safe haven, but as a place of oppression and fear while the mother figure does not fulfill her supportive role for Eveline's subjectivity, but appears as an agent of the symbolic sphere. Eveline's mother, who is physically absent in the story, cannot present her semiotic womb into Eveline's service and cannot support her subjectivity as being a product of the symbolic. In the end, her memories dominated by her mother suppress her desire and prevent her from action. Frank leaves Ireland, leaving Eveline behind. Eveline, unable to change her fate, becomes the epitome of failure in terms of achieving her own subjectivity.

In another story "A Mother" Joyce depicts a greedy mother Mrs. Kearney who wants to make money and gain respect by using her daughter Kathleen's talent to sing in Irish language. Mrs. Kearney is portrayed as an

example for an unhappy wife who has to give up on her girlhood dreams in order to find a proper place in male-dominated Irish society. In Joyce's own words, she becomes Mrs. Kearney "out of spite" and silences her friends' gossip by "marrying Mr. Kearney" (Joyce, 2011: 126). That is, Mrs. Kearney abides by the rules of society and chooses to become a good wife to a rich husband, rather than pursuing her romantic dreams. In this respect, she is another figure of failure much like Eveline. Yet, Mrs. Kearney is a subtle woman, so she hires an Irish tutor for Kathleen and her sister, believing that Irish language will improve their social status during the fervent days of Irish Revivalism. She wants to satisfy her girlhood ambitions through her daughter Kathleen who has a chance to sing for a concert promoting Irish nationalism. However, she ruins Kathleen's musical career, because she does not let her sing in the last concert unless the committee pays her money. During her argument with Mr. Holohan, Mrs. Kearney loses her ladylike manners in the eyes of Irish men and behaves in a commanding and aggressive way. As a result, Mr. Holohan says to Mrs. Kearney "I thought you were a lady," implying the gendered manners imposed by society (Joyce, 2011: 138). Mr. Holohan's remark implicitly points out the passive mother image in the Irish collective consciousness and its contrast with Mrs. Kearney's assertive personality.

Mrs. Kearney's precipitous reaction also reveals her oppressive influence on her daughter; she never gives Kathleen a chance to make her own decision, so Kathleen could do nothing, but "followed her mother meekly" (Joyce, 2011: 139). It can be claimed that Mrs. Kearney reduces herself to a representative of the oppressive symbolic system. Even though her anger does not fit into the passive portrayal of Mother Ireland, her sacrifice of Kathleen to her own ambition can be compared to Mother Ireland's sacrifice of her children to her own cause. In this respect, Joyce's Mrs. Kearney reflects another face of Mother Ireland as Joyce explicitly subverts the passive image of this mythical mother. Through his subversion, he exposes that there is a selfish, oppressive and cruel mother under the mask of iconic Mother Ireland image. As the examples suggest, the mother image in Joyce's fiction is always constructed within the context of Irish nationalism and the mother characters emerge as the products of Irish patriarchy, which blocks their maternal function in Irish children's subjectivity.

Stephen Dedalus' Search for a Mother

In *A Portrait* where Stephen – Joyce's alter ego – explicitly criticizes Irish nationalism, the image of Irish mother is not different from earlier examples and has a haunting influence on her son. Yet, different from Mrs. Kearney, Mrs. Dedalus does not take an active role in Stephen's life. Rather, the mother has a shadowy existence in *A Portrait* like in the story of "Eveline" and her oppression is felt in all stages of Stephen's development. In his works, Joyce approaches the Irish mother as an allegory of the Irish land and directly links her haunting existence to the cult of Virgin Mary, revealing his distaste with the Catholic Church and its influence on Irish nationalism. As emphasized by Jones in his 1922 essay, the Irish mother stands as the forbidden object of desire for Irish men, and Stephen's mother is not an exception.

When Stephen starts to feel alienation from his family and country, he refers to the Virgin Mary cult dominating Irish people's lives and claims that "the glories of Mary held his soul captive" (Joyce, 2008: 88). Here, the Virgin Mary's impediment influence on Stephen's subjectivity is explicit and her suffocating existence in Stephen's life also mirrors Irish mother's oppression on her child. Like the Virgin Mary, the Irish mother alienated from her own body cannot prepare the necessary background for Stephen's creation of the self, but imprisons him into the colonial past of Ireland by re-producing the Irish patriarchal discourse. As a result, Stephen who cannot abide by the Irish norms of his day ends up as an abject figure, rather than a subject.

While fulfilling her iconic role as Mother Ireland, Mrs. Dedalus cannot contribute to Stephen's process of subjectivity as a figure of flesh and blood. Since journey into subjectivity starts in the semiotic chora according to Kristeva's theory, the lack of a maternal womb stands against Stephen's journey. Mrs. Dedalus' challenges against Stephen's dreams cause Stephen's alienation from his mother. For instance, when Stephen wins prize money and takes his family to a fancy restaurant in order to change his family's way of life, his mother reproaches him for wasting his money. Stephen's disillusionment with his attempt and the emotional gap between his mother and him is explicitly defined: "He had not gone one step nearer the lives he had sought to approach nor bridged the restless shame and rancour that divided him from mother and brother and sister" (Joyce, 2008: 82). As Stephen craves for a new identity free from the agents of the symbolic, his mother's reaction reveals that she is blind to Stephen's dreams, which blocks a possible communication between the two. In another instance, when Mrs. Dedalus does not want him to attend the university, Stephen's feelings towards her mother become apparent: "her mistrust pricked him more keenly than his father's pride and he thought coldly how he had watched the faith which was fading down in his soul aging and strengthening in her eyes" (Joyce, 2008: 138). In other words,

he is getting alienated from the system she represents. Still, he cannot break free from his mother's influence and it even shapes his perception of women. His mother is in the idealized image of Virgin Mary, so women can be categorized as the virgins and the whores in Stephen's mind.

The corporeal bond between Stephen and Mrs. Dedalus turns into a source of shame from the beginning when Stephen's schoolmate makes fun of him for kissing his mother before going to bed. At this juncture, little Stephen starts to question his relationship with his mother: "Was it right to kiss his mother or wrong to kiss his mother? What did that mean, to kiss?" (Joyce 2008: 11). Regardless of the innocence of a childish kiss, any corporeal bond is forbidden between the mother and the child, because the mother is regarded as a remote and idealized object in the Irish symbolic realm. For the first time, Stephen gets acquainted with the incest taboo at school, which is a product of the symbolic, and this taboo alienates him from his mother's corporeality.

Stephen's visit of the medical school is another important moment to observe his Oedipal desire. When he sees the word "foetus" carved on a desk, he feels startled, because he realizes that there are some other young men who also suffer from "a brutish and individual malady of his own mind" (Joyce, 2008: 75). The image of foetus is a direct reference to the pre-Oedipal union with the mother in the womb, and symbolizes Irish men's yearning for the maternal womb; allegorically, the pre-colonial Ireland where the (m)other and the child is united. The womb is a heterogeneous realm where demarcations do not exist and the self constitutes a unity with the (m)other, which overlaps with Joyce's understanding of Irishness that is also "heterogeneous" (Nolan, 2002: 148). Yet, Mrs. Dedalus modelled on the Virgin Mary is prohibited from the very beginning. She cannot satisfy Stephen's desire for a pre-Oedipal union in the womb with her passive and remote stance, so he is searching for the womb that is necessary for the formation of his identity. He is aware of the fact that he needs to confront the abject (m)other in the semiotic chora in order to constitute his self. At this juncture, his suppressed incestuous desire for the mother figure becomes meaningful although the mother he desires is not Mrs. Dedalus mimicking the Virgin Mary.

For Stephen, the iconic Virgin Mary has a monitory image that reminds of the Irish symbolic; therefore, he tries to refrain from her in order to form his own self. His avoidance of this symbolic maternal image stems from his desire for the semiotic maternal body – the first object of love which is later prohibited by the Freudian father. Significantly, the scene when the shrine of the Virgin draws Stephen's eye while he is walking in the street is followed by the scene when "[t]he faint sour stink of rotted cabbages" comes towards him. This sour smell makes him happy and "[h]e smiled to think that it was this disorder, the misrule and confusion of his father's house and the stagnation of vegetable life, which was to win the day in his soul" (Joyce, 2008: 137). Here, "the stink of rotted cabbages" can be associated with the abject. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva conducts an anthropological research on the notion of filth and concludes that the expulsion of filth is necessary for the continuation of society. Accordingly, the loathing of certain food is "the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection" (1982: 2). In this respect, "rotted cabbages" and their "sour stink" cannot be classified as "edible" food in Joyce's narrative, but items to be abjected – just like the woman's body with its menstrual blood. However, Stephen abjects neither the stink nor the woman's body, but fosters fascination with them, namely with the abject, because these two abject images have the capacity to shatter the symbolic embodied by the image of "his father's house."

If Stephen is accepted as Joyce's mouthpiece, it is evident that Joyce is going back to the archaic mother and attempts to discover her semiotic chora during Stephen's confrontation with the abject other. The confrontation does not occur in Stephen's relationship with his mother who is an unreachable figure, but occurs in his sexual experiences with the prostitutes – the abjects in society. Stephen's fornication not only triggers a physical awakening, but also nurtures his intellectual development as he gets beyond religious and social control while meeting desire and satisfaction in his personal journey. Regarding Stephen's explorations of the abject (m)other in different women characters, it can be argued that Joyce is aware of the importance of this abjected maternal figure in the identity-formation process.

Stephen's adultery with the prostitutes goes in parallel to his personal awakening as an artist. As Stephen evolves and develops a critical eye on the restricting influence of nineteenth-century Irish nationalism, he confronts his own "abject other" that challenges the mainstream. This "abject other" emerges through his adultery with a prostitute, which results in a guilty conscience in Stephen:

Often when he had confessed his doubts and scruples, some momentary inattention at prayer, a movement of trivial anger in his soul or a subtle wilfulness in speech or act, he was bidden by his confessor to name some

sin of his past life before absolution was given him. He named it with humility and shame and repented of it once more[…]. A restless feeling of guilt would always be present with him: he would confess and repent and be absolved, confess and repent again and be absolved again, fruitlessly. (Joyce, 2008: 129)

Sex is the greatest taboo in Christianity and this forbidden act triggers his confrontation with the abject other. In other words, it is a way to challenge the symbolic order and it leads to the semiotic chora where the self and the (m)other are merged. The extract reveals that he will continue to commit the same sin again and again even though he repents, because Stephen is "destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world" (2008: 136). Joyce always underlines Stephen's alienation from society and emphasizes his desire to form a separate identity for himself, and his breach of this Christian taboo must be regarded as an act of rebellion in Stephen's personal history.

Since the concepts of womanhood, motherhood and virginity are intertwined in the Irish collective conscious, Stephen's relationship with women revolves around the unreachable image of his mother. Therefore, it is only with the prostitutes Stephen can satisfy his corporeal desires and discover the feminine body. As opposed to the prostitutes with whom Stephen commits corporeal sins, Emma, a young woman for whom Stephen feels strong attachment, exists only as a distant fantasy object for Stephen. Stephen once depicts her as "a figure of the womanhood of her country," which forbids any sexual contact with Emma in his eyes. Besides, he defines this national woman image as "a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness, tarrying awhile, loveless and sinless, […]" (2008: 186). Like Mother Ireland or Dark Rosaleen, Emma is an idealized image constructed within the symbolic and her portrayal reminds of the sonnet ladies who are unreachable and famous for their cruelty towards their lovers. Thus, the over-idealized portrayal of Emma foregrounding her innocence and sexual purity contrasts with Stephen's corporeal desires. When he dreams about Emma, he feels guilty conscience: "The image of Emma appeared before him and, under her eyes, the flood of shame rushed forth anew from his heart. If she knew to what his mind had subjected her or how his brutelike lust had torn and trampled upon her innocence" (2008: 97). As can be inferred, the portrayal of Emma as an idealized Irish woman overlaps with the portrayal of a chaste Irish mother, so Stephen is barred from Emma's body just as in his relationship with his mother's body; allegorically, he is exiled from his motherland.

Turning point in Stephen's development emerges during his lonely walk on the beach when an image of a half-naked girl appears. The girl is in the image of neither the Virgin Mary nor a prostitute, and she is courageous enough to look into Stephen's eyes "without shame or wantonness" (2008: 144). The erotic but innocent beauty of the image as stressed by her "slender bare legs," her "ivory" thighs as well as her "girlish" hair can be considered a challenge against the sharp-cut categories of women as the virgin and the whore. In this respect, the image is different from other women characters in Stephen's life, pointing out his changing perception:

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. ... To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life. A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty… to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory." (2008: 145)

The extract with an emphasis on the word "ecstasy" defines a transgressive moment when Stephen loses himself for the sake of recreation. In this respect, the girl image has the maternal capacity to "recreate life out of life" while changing the definition of life itself. Life is no longer defined over the rigid principles of Christian morality, but it is a combination of paradoxes which includes fall and triumph, error and glory at the same time. It is in a constant generation and negation process like the semiotic chora (Kristeva 1984: 28). Besides, the girl image appeals to Stephen's soul and body, merging two opposed feelings evoked by two women types – the virgin and the whore. Therefore, the image fills him with jouissance.

This girl image can be linked to the Irish woman figure in Davin's story where a half undressed peasant woman possibly carrying a child opens the door and invites the stranger into her cottage (Joyce, 2008: 153). Unlike Mother Ireland modelled on the virgin image, this maternal figure does not exclude femininity and stand as the forbidden object of love. Allegorically, she stands for Ireland's readiness for a change that will break the taboos and free the country from its colonial past. At this juncture, Stephen's artistic identity with its capacity to create is reflected as an extension of this new maternal image, since Joyce associates Stephen with this woman, claiming "as a type of her race and his own, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness" (2008: 154). In other words, both Mother Ireland and Stephen will discover their secret selves despite of the patriarchal discourse imposed by the symbolic.

These women characters revealing Stephen's changing worldview heralds the collapse of the Mother Ireland myth dominating his self. This change is also understood in his relationship with Emma. After starting to keep a diary, which can be interpreted as Stephen's eventual control of his own narrative, he records his talk with her in Grafton Street. As opposed to his original feelings towards her, Stephen shows a surprising nonchalance in their final encounter. It reveals that Stephen gets rid off himself from the influence of Emma's idealized portrayal, namely from the oppressive image of Mother Ireland; and his farewell to Mother Ireland comes after this encounter. In the final scene, Stephen leaves Ireland, saying "Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (2008: 213). His words point out his journey into his self rooted in the unknown lands, in the semiotic chora. Stephen searches for his roots in foreign lands where he will be a foreigner or "the other" by transgressing not only the physical borders but also the border between the I and the (m)other. Indeed, this sense of otherness gives freedom to Stephen who wants to free his soul from the nets of "nationality, language, religion" of his country (2008: 171). Stephen's self-exile and search for the abject mother is finalized in Joyce's another work *Ulysses* (1922) where Stephen returns to Ireland upon his mother's death. So, the novel deals with Stephen's search for a lost maternal figure and love, in a sense. Although Stephen's search proves futile as he cannot meet his desire for Molly Bloom, another Joycean maternal figure, Joyce's search for the self through Stephen's story surely yields results in this avant-garde novel.

Ulysses becomes one of the most important works in Joyce's literary career, because the author discovers his own voice and style as an Irish artist in this particular work, his experimental style reaches a peak in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), though. Through *Ulysses*, Joyce's fiction "become[s] increasingly informed by his sensitivity towards the nature of hybridity, ambivalences, and interpenetrations" (Cheng, 1995: 56). As Joyce's narration oscillates between the first person and the third person narrators, it subverts the basics of novel writing. Jeni Johnson argues that "*Ulysses* looked like a novel, but it also looked like drama, or catechism, or poetry, or music depending on which page one happened to open" (1993: xiiii). Joyce's use of neologisms, parody, interior monologues, symbols and his mixture of fantasy with the realistic details shatter the Eurocentric binaries and the phallogocentric meaning, creating a polyphonic, hybrid, subversive and rebellious "Irish" novel.

Kristeva reads the revolutionary potential of the text with its heterogeneity, subversion of the centre and semiotic eruptions as an example for é*criture feminine* and relates it to Joyce's experimentation with the feminine body. She claims that "it is with Joyce that we shall discover that the feminine body, the maternal body, in its most un-signifiable, un-symbolizable as- pect, shores up, in'the individual, the fantasy of the loss in which he is engulfed or becomes inebriated, for want of the ability to name an object of desire" (1982: 20). In other words, Joyce-the-artist can break his chains only through an exploration of the feminine/maternal body that offers the semiotic energy necessary for artistic creation. In order to achieve his artistic self, Joyce unleashes the corporeal energy of the mother in the character of Molly Bloom who challenges the oppressive mother figure of Joyce's previous fiction by rejecting the Irish symbolic realm.

Unlike the Irish mother stereotype, Molly who is a sexually-active and dominant character explores her own corporeality and utters her desires. In this way, Joyce restores Mother Ireland from a "lost" status, so that he takes Mother Ireland's revenge on muscular nationalism. In parallel to the argument, Kearney defines Molly as "a distinctively Irish woman" (1984:18). It is evident that Molly as an alternative to Mother Ireland frees Joyce from the enslaving influence of the idealised motherland and unleashes his artistic skills. Her adultery also has a significant function in the text. As argued by Lloyd, adultery is condemned by patriarchy, because it results in "the potential multiplication of possibilities for identity" (1993:109). In other words, adulterous acts can produce illegitimate children with hybrid and heterogeneous identities, which is a threat against the rigid identities of the Irish nationalist project. Indeed, Molly with her extraordinary portrayal uniting feminine body with so-called masculine assertiveness exemplifies hybridity in her own body. It is evident that Joyce manages to establish his artistic "self" associated with his *avant-garde* style in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake,* only after his exploration of the semiotic womb through Molly. The power of the semiotic becomes visible through his modernist/post-modernist style based on his stream-of-consciousness technique that is full of word plays, repetitions, allusions, puns etc. in both novels. In addition to the eruption of the semiotic in his linguistic usage, Joyce also gives superiority to the mother figure by ending *Ulysses* with Molly's much-quoted soliloquy projecting her sexual desire:

[…]. I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall […]. I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and

then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes. (Joyce, 1993: 732)

The quotation with a depiction of a love scene and a continual emphasis on the word "yes" expressing female *jouissance* portrays a sexually-active "mother" as opposed to the passive image of Mother Ireland. In her article "Women's Time," Kristeva asserts that female subjectivity uses a different modality of time shaped by "*repetition* and *eternity*" and adds that

there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock, but whose regularity and unison with what is experienced as extrasubjective time, cosmic time, occasion vertiginous visions and unnameable *jouissance*. (1981: 16)

In line with Kristeva's argument, the repetitions draw up a cyclical pattern as well as forming a rhythmic movement in Molly's soliloquy by standing for an active female body; besides, the continual repetitions scattered throughout the soliloquy can be associated with the poly-centred *jouissance* standing "beyond the phallus" (Lacan, 1985: 145). In this respect, her language exemplifies a "polyphonic discourse of desire" (Henke, 2016: 7).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Joyce believes that the "abject" female/maternal body must be included into the nationalist discourse in order to find out the heterogeneity and polyphonic definitions of Irishness, because it is the same body that was defined as "abject" by the English colonizer. In order to create a liberating and unique Irish self in his fiction, Joyce employs different women/maternal figures and tries to show the oppressive and delimiting influence of "Irish motherhood" on the Irish child. While he portrays and subverts the mythical Irish mothers in his earlier works, Joyce also scrutinizes the female nature oppressed by the Irish symbolic. In *Ulysses*, Joyce finally challenges the virgin image of Mother Ireland through Molly and transforms Irish mother into a real woman figure with a semiotic *chora*, which also helps him undermine the patriarchal discourse of his "two masters" that are the English coloniser and the Roman Catholic Church (Joyce, 1993: 20). In this way, Joyce gives birth to his "self" as an Irish artist in the abject womb while his linguistic style shaped by the semiotic eruptions can be regarded as a new discourse to define "Irishness" that is based on the poetic and erotic language of the (m)other.

1 Kristeva uses *chora* in parallel to Plato's discussion over the notion in his *Timaeus*, thus it is associated with the maternal womb. In *Timaeus* discussing the origins of the universe, Timaeus lists "forms", "sensibles" and "the receptacle" as the classes of beings. The *chora* comprising the four elements even before the creation of the universe is a receptacle and exists from the very beginning. Plato explains it as "the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation." This third category is "neither earth nor fire nor air nor water, but an invisible and formless being which receives all things, and in an incomprehensible manner partakes of the intelligible." In the text, Plato directly associates it with the mother. Besides, it is evident that the receptacle is more like a maternal womb with her ability to encompass things.

2In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva argues that the chora has a regulating function because " 'concrete operations' precede the acquisition of language, and organize preverbal semiotic space according to logical categories, which are thereby shown to precede or transcend language" (27).

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