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Servants in the Cracked Lookingglass —Slaveys, Ireland, and Joyce

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Abstract

A close reading of *Ulysses* reveals that a large number of ignored, if not invisible, working women are incorporated and represented in the text. Their obscurity in the text reflects their marginalization in the work market and in Irish society. In spite of this, Irish women in 1904 were far more active and productive economically than was previously thought. Re-viewing the Joycean text in this light, this paper attempts to investigate a group of working women hinted at in the Joycean text: slaveys. One of the major employments for women in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland, domestic service had undergone tremendous change. Whether as a respectable and favorable job in the nineteenth century, or as an inferior and unacceptable form of work in the twentieth century, domestic service had allowed many Irish women to support themselves and their families; their contributions, however, were little recognized. The shadowy

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representation of Joyce's slaveys exemplifies the active but disregarded participation of women in Irish society and economy. The term "servant" was not merely a metaphor for colonial subjugation, but a social reality, an indispensable part of Irish life and history; the shade of the servant could be surely glimpsed in Joyce's cracked lookingglass. In his reconstruction of Irish colonial history with Stephen, Bloom, and Molly as spokespersons, Joyce represents—simultaneously but probably unintentionally—an obscure and fragmented history of working women in Ireland.

Key Words: James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Ireland, paid work, domestic servants

I. Preface

It has been a critical platitude to state that the history of Ireland has predominantly been a history of men: women have long been regarded as an attachment to the male, having no standing and voice of their own. Not until the early twentieth century did the historiography on women begin to take shape. However, as Mary O'Dowd observes, "[t]he interest was mainly in 'notable' or 'notorious' women rather than 'ordinary' women": only certain categories of women—aristocratic women, religious women, women writers, and rebellious women—were selected for study (2005: 2). In the late 1970s, when second-wave feminism rose in Ireland, researchers gradually turned their attention to the lives of ordinary women, who, as revealed in archives, were by no means passive and powerless subjects, but active participants in the history which they have made and shared with their male counterparts. By the 1990s, the economic history of Irish women began to receive research interest. With the unfolding of their working lives, women's contribution to the national economy has been brought to light (Whelan, 2000: 9-10).

A. Working Women and Gendered Jobs

Women's working lives, as generally admitted, were severely circumscribed by gender. In the preface to *Women and Paid Work in Ireland, 1500-1930*, Bernadette Whelan declares that "work was a gendered activity" (2000:12). In her study of the history of European women's work, Deborah Simonton makes a similar remark: "[W]omen's work, its types, locations and structures are gendered" (1998: 2). Maria Luddy, in *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918*, also maintains that "[g]ender expectations placed limits on the type of work women could engage in" (1995: 160). The fact of work as a gendered activity seemed natural enough in a male-dominated society, in which the phenomena of "women's

marginalisation in the public world of employment” and “[t]he general underevaluation of women’s work” were simply more than common (Hill, 2003: 243). Myrtle Hill comments on the phenomena:

[D]espite the reality of women’s experience, female employment was viewed by society at large as a temporary condition, preceding marriage, or supplementing the earnings of a husband. Their work was regarded as unskilled, and the large pool of available labour also served to keep wages low and jobs insecure. (2003: 48)

The hostility of society toward working women manifested itself not only in the marginalization of women and the under-evaluation of their work; women—particularly married women—who had a paid job tended to be downgraded. As Mary E. Daly points out, “[A]n income-earning wife was probably only acceptable among the lower reaches of the working class and among farm labourers” up till the end of the nineteenth century (2001: 195). A household with working women in it, in other words, indicated the impoverished circumstances of the family rather than the aspiration for a more comfortable life. Ironically, natural disasters and man-made calamities—e.g., famines and colonization—had made Ireland a poverty-stricken land; “economic insufficiency [*sic*],” contends Mark Osteen, was “the rule” for Irish people in general (1995: 4), which had impelled unnumbered women to hunt for a paid job in reality despite possible infamy. Their wages, however meager, helped sustain their families in times of crises. For these women, family survival was the major, if not the only, concern; they worked out of desperate financial need.¹ Once the family passed through the crises, they ceased working and resumed their obligations at home. Daly continues her comment: “The majority

¹ Kimberly J. Devlin’s observation of death in the Dignams and the Dedaluses in *Ulysses* echoes the importance of income-earning females for families in destitution: “[W]hen families end up economically ‘on the rocks,’ they often rely on a bedrock of low-paying female labor” (1999: 85).

of women worked out of necessity rather than as a means of self-fulfilment. The majority were transitory rather than permanent members of the labour force, working in their youth, or in times of need and returning to home life if circumstances improved" (2001: 195). It was such social attitudes toward working women and women working that shaped the types and patterns of women's paid work.

Many factors determined women's work patterns in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland,² and the influence of industrialization and urbanization had opened up more work opportunities for women, and yet Irish women were marginalized into certain trades and occupations in spite of the factors and influence (Whelan, 2000: 11).³ Three traditional areas of employment were dominant until the early twentieth century: agricultural work, textile work, and domestic service (Luddy, 1995: 157; Whelan, 2000: 10). Women's work was gendered as a result of social ideology. Nevertheless, women's employment played an essential part in the household economy despite the fact that their participation was generally disregarded and their contribution ignored.⁴ To a certain degree, this neglected contribution of the female workforce is reflected in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

B. James Joyce and Working Women

A close reading of *Ulysses* reveals the fact that a large number of ignored, if not invisible, working women are incorporated and represented in the text. In "Telemachus," the milkwoman serves

² These factors include: "Societal expectations, education, class, family networks, professional organisations, the availability of apprenticeships, mechanisation and geographical location" (Luddy, 2000: 44).

³ As Whelan notes, only the women "from wealthier backgrounds with access to education" were likely to benefit from improved work opportunities such as white-collar jobs (2000: 11-12).

⁴ Luddy attributes the under-evaluation of women in the Irish workforce partly to the way in which work was officially recorded through the collection of census data (2000: 45-46).

Stephen Dedalus, Buck Mulligan, and Haines with milk. In “Calypso,” Leopold Bloom sees the domestic servant girl next door buying sausages at the butcher’s. Miss Dunne, Blazes Boylan’s secretary, clicks on the keyboard the date “16 June 1904”—one of the most important dates in literature—in “The Wandering Rocks.” Also in this episode, Boylan buys fruit from a shop girl and toys with her. The barmaids Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy serve and flirt with the barflies in “Sirens.” In “Oxen of the Sun,” Nurse Callan chides the medical students for their improper behavior in the hospital. Molly Bloom is an amateur singer, who plans to participate in a singing tour organized by Boylan. The Blooms’ daughter, Milly, is apprenticed to a photographer in Mullingar and learning the art of photography. Except for Molly, many of the working women are given only a glimpse in passing, unable to catch critical attention. Their obscurity in the text somewhat reflects their marginalization in the work market. It is noteworthy that the working women in Joyce’s text are not limited to the three major categories of the agricultural, the textile, and the domestic; the jobs Joyce’s working women engage in are far more various and diverse. Taking into consideration the fact that Dublin was—and is still—the capital city and commercial center of Ireland, it seems reasonable to assume that female Dubliners enjoyed more job opportunities, though the phenomena of marginalization and under-evaluation persisted nonetheless. Irish women in 1904, as Joyce’s text implicitly reveals, were far more economically active and productive than previously thought; they stepped out of the house and entered the territory of employment to earn daily bread for themselves or families.

Undeniably, none of Joyce’s income-earning women *at work* is sufficiently sketched, not even Molly, while men’s work experiences, in comparison, are depicted at length, as when Stephen teaches, Bloom canvasses, or Mr. Nannetti busies himself in his *Freeman’s Journal* office. Bonnie Kime Scott detected this textual reticence a quarter of a century ago. In her pioneering feminist study of Joyce, *Joyce and Feminism*, Scott praises “the

authenticity and insight of Joyce's depictions of women in the realistic range," and is "comforted by Joyce's impartial selection of targets"—both men and women—for critique, but regrets that "woman in the workplace," together with "a mother amid a brood of small children" and "the intellectual or creative woman," is "only hinted at in his realistic fiction" (1984: 203).⁵ This textual lack "gets at [Scott's] vulnerable places"; she "feel[s] mocked" (1984: 203). Although Scott expresses her regret in a playful tone, the textual lack she observes is genuine nevertheless. Scott does not explain this textual reticence, though. A decade and a half later, Kimberly J. Devlin offers a convincing explanation of this Joycean puzzle. Suggesting that May and the Dedalus daughters may have run an unofficial laundry service at home to help support the family, Devlin concludes that Joyce's textual relegation of female labor to the shade reflects the marginalization of female work in Irish culture *and* his implicit recognition of this economic power: "Joyce's works may imitate cultural praxis insofar as they tend to marginalize female work . . . yet he records simultaneously the palpable economic effects of this problematic patriarchal devaluation" (1999: 85). As a follow-up of and supplement to Scott's and Devlin's researches, this paper attempts to investigate a group of working women hinted at in the Joycean text but overlooked by many Joyceans—domestic servants, or slaveys.

Joyce is no stranger to slaveys. In the happy years of his childhood, Joyce and his siblings were "tended in a nursery and surrounded by servants and nursemaids," as Scott notes (1984: 58). Joyce's companion for life, Nora Barnacle, worked as a chambermaid at Finn's Hotel before the couple met and eloped.⁶ Domestic servants also play a part in the life of Joyce's main

⁵ Joyce is familiar with women in these categories. Four of his sisters worked in clerical positions. "A mother amid a brood of small children" was a common picture in turn-of-the-century Ireland. "Intellectual or creative women" could be found among Joyce's literary and publishing circles. For Joyce's working sisters and his contact with intellectual women, see Scott (1984: 61, 85-115).

⁶ For details of Nora's work as a chambermaid, see Brenda Maddox (1988: 39-40).

characters. A Spanish housekeeper, Mrs. Rubio, took care of Molly in Gibraltar following the absence of Lunita Laredo, Molly's mother. The Blooms hire servants, too: first Mary Driscoll and then Mrs. Fleming. For decades, however, the term "servant" has been regarded only as a metaphor in Joyce studies: Stephen sees himself the servant of three masters—the imperial British state, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Irish nationalist movement—and considers "[t]he cracked lookingglass of a servant" to be "a symbol of Irish art" (Joyce, 1986: 6, 17), suggesting the subjugated position of himself and Ireland as the colonized. Such a postcolonial reading of the term "servant" as a metaphor has been dominant for long, but the visage of the servant as a living being is still behind the veil, unseen and unrecognized. If a servant's cracked lookingglass symbolizes the subjugation, distortion, and fragmentation of Irish art, what is the reflection, or refraction, of the servant like in the broken mirror which represents a chapter of Irish history? Domestic service, indeed, had been a part of reality in Irish life and for Joyce's main characters, but a portrait of the woman as a servant has scarcely been painted. An aim of this paper is thus to paint and present a realistic picture of domestic servants as hinted at in *Ulysses*, or, to borrow from Devlin, to bring to light the "visible shades," that is, servants, by reconstructing the "shades of visibility" (1999: 67) in the Joycean text and in historical researches. This picture does much to inform us about these laboring women, whose stories miniature the struggle and transformation Ireland underwent, and whose work history parallels the obscured, peripherized, yet-to-be-reconstructed colonial history of Ireland—as suggested by their shadowy and marginalized presence in the Joycean text. To have a clearer glimpse of the servant's visage in the cracked lookingglass, a comprehensive historical survey is significant and necessary. The following research will firstly examine the predominance of domestic service as an employment for women in nineteenth-century Ireland, focusing on the factors that rendered service popular—though some of the "attractions" could be double-edged.

The discussion will turn to the negative aspects, including poor prospects, of the job next. And then, the weapons servants possessed and the decline and transformation domestic service underwent will be explored. Interestingly, while historical documents indicate both the positive and negative aspects of domestic service, Joyce's scanty textual representation of servants lean partially toward the negative. This partiality seems worth pondering.

II. Domestic Service in Ireland

The excitement of Leopold Bloom's day begins with his encounter with the next-door servant girl at the butcher's:

He stood by the nextdoor girl at the counter. Would she buy it [the kidney] too, calling the items from a slip in her hand? Chapped: washingsoda. And a pound and a half of Danny's sausages. His eyes rested on her vigorous hips. . . . Strong pair of arms. Whacking a carpet on the clothline. She does whack it, by George. The way her crooked skirt swings at each whack. (Joyce, 1986: 48)

Obviously, Bloom regards the girl as a sex object, but his observation of the girl at work also betrays the commonness of slaveys in many Irish households in his time. "By 1911," states Luddy, "one working woman in three was in service" (2000: 52).⁷ Although service was not limited to urban homes only, the fact that urban households could better afford it bestowed upon it its urban

⁷ Mona Hearn also offers useful statistics to show the predominance of service: "Domestic service was the major employment for women in Ireland in the nineteenth century; in 1881, 48 percent of employed women were in the domestic class. Between 1881 and 1911 . . . there was a steady decrease in the number of indoor servants in each successive census In that year [1911] domestic service was surpassed by manufacturing industry, but it was still the second largest employer of women" (2001: 215). The reasons for the decline of domestic service will be discussed later.

attribute. The large numbers of domestic servants in towns and cities illustrated sufficiently “its economic significance and predominance as an urban occupation” (Simonton, 1998: 97). The presence of domestic servants in the house, therefore, was more than usual in the capital city Dublin. According to Mona Hearn, 98 percent of the upper class, 71 percent of the middle class, and 23 percent of the lower middle class in Dublin hired servants in 1911 (cited in Hill, 2003: 248). The high percentage of having servants at home bespoke the significance of domestic service as a major employment for women in Ireland. It is noteworthy that even 23 percent of the lower middle class hired servants. Hill offers an explanation: “[F]or many lower down the social scale the presence of one servant was sufficient to ensure an air of respectability” (2003: 17). This insistence upon respectability might evince the influence of Victorian bourgeois ideology, which held the maintenance of appearances in great esteem.⁸ Considering the large number of slaveys in Dublin, it seems unsurprising that one of Bloom’s earliest encounters on 16 June 1904 is a servant girl. The lower-middle-class Blooms, in actual fact, hired the maidservant Mary Driscoll for some time, who was later dismissed by Molly because of certain charges against her. Mrs. Fleming succeeds Mary in the position, helping Molly with housework. The predominance of domestic service as an occupation for Irish women, as indicated by statistics and suggested by Joycean textual representation, was evident.

Not every woman was welcome to take part in domestic service: most of the participants were rural, young, and single. “Agricultural distress, structural change and rural overpopulation

⁸ Interestingly, the proportion of domestic servants in the female labor force in England was not as high as that in Ireland. By 1911, while one working woman among three in Ireland entered the field of service, in England only a quarter of the female labor force was in service. For the figure of domestic servants as a proportion of the female labor force in Europe, see Simonton (1998: 201). The reason for the extremely large number of servants in Ireland as compared with England will be discussed later.

could have been the impetus for girls to migrate” (Simonton, 1998: 100), hence the rural backgrounds of the majority of servants. Employers, for their part, preferred to hire young women owing to their presumed innocence (Simonton, 1998: 99). That young women were stronger, cheaper, and more easily trained in new routines also rendered them preferable (Luddy, 2000: 52). In point of fact, married women stood low in employers’ favor not merely because they were thought to be more sophisticated and less manageable, but because they were too busy engaging in their own family obligations to work in another household, let alone live in it. The tendency to downgrade an income-earning wife also made it unusual to see married women in service. It is interesting to note that Nora Barnacle serves as such an example, who moved from rural Galway to urban Dublin and found a job as a servant girl at Finn’s Hotel before she met Joyce and left Ireland with him.

A. The Popularity of Domestic Service

Nora Barnacle’s experiences of migrating to the city, working there as a servant, and finding herself a spouse were not atypical for many domestic servants at the turn of the twentieth century, though the reasons as to why domestic service appealed to women are worth investigating. The primary attraction of domestic service lay in its accordance with social ideology. Hearn asserts that domestic service was “an inevitable part of life for many thousands of girls,” who engaged in it because it was “acceptable to the ideology of the time which considered the home, albeit someone else’s home, the natural place for a girl or woman” (2001: 215). This emphasis on the familial frame agreed with the Victorian ideology of the domestic angel—the prevailing cultural image of nineteenth-century womanhood. Women were assigned to the domestic realm of the house, devoting themselves to the construction of an ideal home.⁹ The fact that domestic service

⁹ For a study of Joyce’s representation and deconstruction of Victorian domesticity,

“preserved the familial context of work” (Simonton, 1998: 101) became its uppermost attraction to thousands of Irish parents and girls.

As a matter of fact, domestic service was considered to be a “respectable” job by many among the lower reaches of the working class, at least before the late nineteenth century. Luddy avers that the lower classes regarded service as “a ‘respectable’ occupation” which provided good training for a young woman before she entered into wedlock and set up her own family (1995: 226, 2000: 52). For those who worked in a “good place” like a “big house” (a large household or country estate) or got the post as a lady’s maid, what was gained was not merely a job, but a certain status in society. As O’Dowd explains, the position of lady’s maid “could bring social promotion as well as better wages” to girls lower on the social scale, enabling the girls to enjoy certain respectability (2005: 134). In “Eumaeus,” that one of Corley’s remote relatives might have worked in a big house becomes something for him to be proud of:

Rumour had it (though not proved) that she [Corley’s grandmother] descended from the house of the lords Talbot de Malahide in whose mansion . . . her mother or aunt or some relative . . . had enjoyed the distinction of being in service in the washkitchen. This therefore was the reason why the still comparatively young though dissolute man . . . was spoken of by some with facetious proclivities as Lord John Corley. (Joyce, 1986: 504)

In spite of the irony and sarcasm in the narrator’s tone, one thing is indisputable: to work in the big house was respectable, so respectable that even a remote descendant could boast of it—even though the ancestress worked as a washerwoman rather than lady’s maid.

Not every girl could find a position in a big house, and the

see Schwarze (2002).

big house could be selective about servants. But in general, domestic service was a favorable job on account of wages and the provision of board and lodging. Wages varied according to factors such as the income level of the employer, the age and experience of the servant, the number of staff employed, the location, supply and demand, etc., but as Hearn points out, except among the lowest class of domestic workers, the wages of servants “compared very favourably” with the wages of, say, clerks, shop assistants, and factory employees (2001: 216-217, 220). When board and lodging were taken into consideration, the job seemed even more satisfactory to parents because the provision of room and board “freed parents of the need to provide for another person in the household” (Luddy, 2000: 52). What satisfied parents even more was that employers were supposed to be responsible for the supervision and care of the servants, maintaining an effective monitorship over their behavior (Luddy, 1995: 226). Owing to this, parents could be more or less reassured when their daughter stayed with, and worked for, another family. Undeniably, domestic service was a hard work; servants had very little free time. Yet on the positive side, all personal expenses could be spared, and wages could therefore be sent home to support other family members, or saved up for setting up one’s own home (Hill, 2003: 44-45). On account of these merits, domestic service was a favorable job for girls and parents alike.

In *Ulysses*, the background of Mary Driscoll is not mentioned; it is uncertain whether her parents are happy to be freed from the burden of a daughter in the household. And yet it is certain that the Blooms provided her with meals and a room when they hired her, and Molly was annoyed about Bloom “ruining servants then proposing that she could eat at our table on Christmas day” (Joyce, 1986: 609), for servants should dine alone in the kitchen, not with the master and mistress in the dining room. So far as Molly is concerned, Mary Driscoll “was too well off” staying with the Blooms, and Mary “knew” it (609). When she says “well off,” Molly probably means that the wages she and Bloom paid, along

with the board and lodging they provided, were comparatively good for a girl in employment.

Another factor contributing to the popularity of domestic service as an occupation for women was that it offered young women opportunities to bid farewell to the country and gain access to city life. As mentioned earlier, the overwhelming majority of domestic servants came from rural backgrounds. For these rural girls, service in urban areas was likely to improve their social position—if they worked in “good places.” More importantly, it initiated them into urban life, possibly allowing them to escape from the poverty and hardship of rural life they led before (Hearn, 2001: 216). For some country girls, to find themselves “working in a large and noisy city” might be “a major jolt,” as Deidre Beddoe argues (1998: 94); nevertheless, the advantages of working in the city were still attractive enough, whether in terms of wider horizons, a chance to see new things, advance in the world, or higher wages (Simonton, 1998: 101). Rather than the familiar but unexciting rural life, many girls would choose the seeming excitement of urban life that was fresh to them.¹⁰

The fact that domestic service was generally regarded as a prelude to marriage also made it a favorable job for Irish girls. In spite of the low marriage rates after the Great Famine, to set up one’s family was seen in Ireland as an inevitable end for women, reflecting the prevailing social ideology that saw marriage as women’s destiny.¹¹ Service was rarely taken as a permanent career, but rather a transitional stage for the preparation of marriage. As mentioned previously, domestic service provided good training for girls to build up their own home: girls bettered their housekeeping skills by working in a familial context. Others went into service for the saving of a dowry. It is true that while rural girls migrated to

¹⁰ In Nora Barnacle’s case, she left Galway for Dublin to flee from domestic violence from her uncle. See Ellmann (1982: 158-159).

¹¹ Such aspiration for marriage could be seen in many of Joyce’s female Dubliners, for example, Maria in “Clay” and Gerty MacDowell in *Ulysses*.

urban areas, “many intended a permanent move to town”; however, “others went to amass a dowry, in order to return home to marry someone with land” (Simonton, 1998: 99). Sometimes a couple migrated to town together, him entering into trade and her into service, marrying when they saved enough to set up their own home (Simonton, 1998: 99). Whether they intended to train themselves for domestic tasks or to save up for a dowry, domestic service functioned as a preferable option for many Irish girls to prepare for their marriage.

Apart from the above-mentioned factors that contributed to the predominance of domestic service, a decisive factor was practical and realistic: women had rather few options in the work market. Luddy remarks clearly: “It seems likely that many Irish women engaged in domestic service due to the lack of other employment opportunities” (1995: 226). Hearn also pronounces that “[t]he lack of alternative employment in Ireland was a crucial factor in limiting career choice for these girls; in fact the usual choice facing them was domestic service or emigration” (2001: 216). There were other job opportunities, certainly, such as textile work and agricultural work, but regional variation affected job opportunities available to women. For example, it was less likely to find an agricultural work in towns and cities: probably the only woman who engages in agricultural work in *Ulysses* is the milkwoman. The lack of a strong industrial base also made it difficult for women to find work (Ó Gráda, 1994: 241-242). Up until the turn of the twentieth century, “Ireland remained primarily an agricultural nation with a narrow industrial base” (Osteen, 1995: 3), and Dublin an impoverished city with little demand for unskilled workers and wanting in labor-intensive industries (Brady, 2004: 11-12). Unlike their counterparts in London or Belfast, who had a good chance to find a job in one of the numerous factories located there, female Dubliners had little such chance by comparison.¹² Furthermore, white-collar jobs did

¹² Compared with women in Dublin, women in Belfast had a better chance, as the

not emerge until the end of the nineteenth century, and were extremely limited. As a consequence, the proportion of domestic servants was high in urban areas in which there were only traditional occupations for women, and in Dublin in particular, the number of servants was markedly high: for every 1,000 people, 50 were engaged in service (Hearn, 2001: 216). That Dublin had a larger proportion of servants than London did not suggest that the middle-class Dubliners were better-off than their English counterparts; rather, it indicated the low price of service and the lack of alternatives.¹³

B. The Difficulties of Domestic Service

However dominant domestic service was as an employment for Irish women, it was arduous work. Servants were vulnerable to intimidation and exploitation by their employers; they could and did face a number of difficulties. Beddoe summarizes the nature of the work: “The work itself varied enormously according to the type of household, the character of the employer and the number of servants kept. But generally it was characterized by low status, low wages and long hours of strenuous repetitive tasks, unregulated by any protective legislation” (1998: 94). Domestic service had long been a common and popular job for Irish girls—even a “respectable” one for some—but its “respectability” lay simply in its preservation of the familial context of work, its provision of domestic training for girls before marriage, and the prospect of working in a “good place”—all of which seemed unavailable to farm laborers or textile workers; hence its “respectability.” Therefore, the dominance of service did not signify that it was an easy job or a promising career, but rather the

latter city was much more industrialized than the former owing to British policies. See Brady (2004: 11).

¹³ Women’s wages in Ireland were 20 to 25 percent lower than that in England. See Osteen (1995: 4-5).

want of options in the work market and the vulnerability of women in service. Many women took such work simply out of desperate financial need.

The first difficulty domestic servants faced was the severe conditions of the work itself. Long hours and hard work characterized the job. Simonton remarks that servants “worked long, hard hours, since a day could begin at 5 a.m. and not finish before 10 or 11 p.m.” To employers, “a sixteen-hour day was not unreasonable” (1998: 105). During the sixteen-hour day, time to servants themselves was scarce, not to mention days off (Simonton, 1998: 105). Not only did servants work long hours, but they had to endure the heavy work load. Most domestic servants in Ireland lived in single-servant households and worked for families of modest financial resources. These “general servants,” as they were usually titled, took charge of “all the work in the house” (Luddy, 2000: 52).¹⁴ It is imaginable that their work could be demanding, and the conditions under which they lived would not be too satisfactory (Luddy, 2000: 52).

In “Calypso,” when seeing the next-door servant girl at the butcher’s, Bloom observes the girl’s “[s]odachapped hands,” “[c]rusted toenails,” and “[b]rown scapulars in tatters” (Joyce, 1986: 49), which suggest the exhausting work the girl engages in and the toilsome life she leads. Later in the episode, Bloom stands in the yard to listen to the girl: “No sound. Perhaps hanging clothes out to dry. The maid was in the garden” (55). The time in “Calypso” is around eight o’clock in the morning, and the nameless servant girl has already done cooking, grocery shopping,

¹⁴ According to Hearn, a general servant’s daily chores included “lighting and tending the coal range in the kitchen, fires in the living rooms and perhaps the bedrooms; carrying hot water for shaving and bathing to the bedrooms and emptying slops; trimming and lighting the oil lamps; cleaning the steel knives with bath-brick” (2001: 216). Aside from these, the servant had to prepare meals, wash dishes, mind the children, scrub floors, passages, and steps, thoroughly clean each room once a week, iron clothes, do the weekly wash, etc. (Hearn, 2001: 216).

and laundry. The line “the maid was in the garden,” according to Don Gifford, is after a nursery rhyme:

The king was in his counting-house
 Counting out his money;
 The queen was in the parlor,
 Eating bread and honey.
 The maid was in the garden, hanging out the clothes.
 There came a little blackbird,
 And snapped off her nose. (Gifford & Seidman, 1988: 80)

Underneath the black humor of the nursery rhyme is a realistic portrait of the servant’s hardship. While the well-being of the employers relies on the hard work of their servants, the servants may encounter threats, injustice, or intimidation as symbolized by the blackbird. In “Circe,” the duties a servant is expected to perform are given in greater detail. In one of the hallucinatory scenes in the brothel, in which Bloom is transformed into “a maid of all work” (Joyce, 1986: 440), or a general servant, Bello tells Bloom the chores he has to do: “By day you will souse and bat our smelling underclothes also when we ladies are unwell, and swab out our latrines with dress pinned up and a dishclout [*sic*] tied to your tail”; “You will make the beds, get my tub ready, empty the pisspots in the different rooms . . . Ah, and rinse the seven of them well . . . You will dance attendance or I’ll lecture you on your misdeeds . . . You’ll be taught the error of your ways” (439). Despite the sadism insinuated in these commands, Bello’s utterances indicate clearly what is expected of a servant: to engage in *all* the chores in the household, however trivial or demanding they may be. Bello’s words also suggest that servants are required to perform their duties well, otherwise punishment—verbal or physical—may be inevitable. Physical punishment might be infrequent in actuality, but verbal abuse was by no means unusual.

In addition to the hardship of the work itself, servant girls’ mental status was worth concern. Beddoe regards domestic service as “a lonely, isolating and bewildering experience” (1998: 94).

Indeed, servant girls stayed away from home, working probably sixteen hours a day in someone else's household and having few friends or acquaintances of their own; they could feel lonely and uneasy. Hearn enumerates the general situations servants encountered: a break with home, new environment, and different social class (2001: 215-216). Away from family and friends, these girls had to depend on "the good will and protection of their employers" (Simonton, 1998: 106). If employers failed to show good will and provide protection, the girls would be helpless and vulnerable in the new environment and different social class. For the majority of employers, however, servants were servants after all, who had to obey and follow orders, suppress their own thoughts and feelings, and "unite their interest with those of the family" (Simonton, 1998: 108). In other words, servants were expected to be selfless and devoted; their loneliness, uneasiness, and helplessness were not the employers' major concerns. Seen in this light, the sadism in Bello's utterances does not seem ungrounded, which mirrors the subjected status of servants and the superior position of employers in a parodic but realistic way.

As mentioned earlier, domestic service was characterized by low status: to be in accordance with the Victorian bourgeois ideology of working in a familial context might be preferable, but the work of service implied an inevitable sense of low status or even servitude. In fact, it was usually servitude—not the hardship of the work—that domestic servants felt unbearable, as many of them were accustomed to laborious work (Simonton, 1998: 110). Servants lived under the employers' roof, and were provided with board and lodging, as well as protection and supervision; nevertheless, this could be a double-edged benefit. However good-willed and protective employers might be, the subordination and inferiority of servanthood remained in so far as servants lived in a dependant and subordinate position in the house of people who were not merely strangers, but of a higher social class (Luddy, 2000: 53). The sense of subordination and inferiority thus seemed ineluctable and inherent in domestic service. Beddoe's comment

indicates the required condition of servitude: “Service demanded of these girls and women an attitude of deference, an acceptance of a fixed and lowly place in the social order, externalized by a servant’s uniform and by the practice of disregarding the servant’s first name and bestowing a more suitable one on them” (1998: 94). Their hard work was taken for granted, their servitude demanded; they belonged to a subjected group, and were expected to accept their subjection. In his brief encounter with the next-door girl, Bloom recalls her employer’s name, “Woods” (Joyce, 1986: 48), while the servant girl remains textually nameless. The anonymity of the slavey may have been a deliberate textual void, which, together with Bello’s words to Bloom, reveals the servitude domestic servants endure.

Unsurprisingly, the low status of servants was accompanied by their low wages: although theirs might appear more favorable in comparison with the wages available in other industries, especially when board and lodging were taken into consideration, the actual pay was meager.¹⁵ Additionally, women’s wages were markedly less than that of their male counterparts: unlike men, women were seldom seen as the family’s breadwinner. Instead, their wages simply supplemented the earnings of the men in the family, hence it was unnecessary to pay them much, and the result was their low wages. Besides that, not all servants received money directly. As Simonton explains, some employers might pay servants’ earnings to their peasant fathers, and some might send foodstuffs or coal to the parents, or pay the rents on the fathers’ farms (1998: 105). Therefore, the girls who received wages directly might be able to save some money, but those who could not had no funds at their disposal (Simonton, 1998: 105).

The low status of domestic servants contributed to the ease with which they could be exploited by their employers. Hearn specifies the kinds of exploitation servants encountered: low wages, poor food and sleeping accommodation, no half day off, no

¹⁵ For the low money wages paid to servants, see Hearn (2001: 219).

holidays, physical assault, and sexual exploitation (2001: 219). On the whole, the most common form of exploitation for servants was probably that of labor. After all, they had to attend to almost all the household chores, work sixteen hours a day, and were rewarded with meager wages. That their low wages were taken for granted bespoke the exploitation they encountered and their vulnerability in the work market. If they were accused of stealing from the employers, they would certainly get into trouble, as Molly suspected that Mary Driscoll stole her potatoes and oysters and finally dismissed her (Joyce, 1986: 609). However, if the servants were stolen by their masters, they could do nothing but accept their misfortune. In “Telemachus,” Buck Mulligan tells Stephen proudly that he usurps a mirror from his aunt’s servant: “I pinched it [the mirror] out of the skivvy’s room It does her all right” (6). If the mirror—“[t]he cracked lookingglass of a servant” (6)—represents a symbol of Irish art for Stephen, the usurped and voiceless skivvy may act as a representative of domestic servants in Ireland: her experience tells the inseparability of service and such injustice as exploitation and usurpation, her story indicative of the misfortune of many slaveys—as well as the misery of Irish colonial history at large, as postcolonial critics may have argued.

In addition to their labor, servant girls were often exploited sexually. Living under the employer’s roof, the servant could spare food and accommodation expenses, and yet the close contact between servant and master or master’s son might result in a heightened intimacy between them, or even an affair. Once the intimacy was suspected, or the affair came out in the open, dismissal was the common fate awaiting the servant. Mulligan’s aunt prefers to hire plain-looking servants because she wants to avoid such trouble: “Lead him [Mulligan] not into temptation” (6). Molly’s monologue in “Penelope” suggests a possible liaison between Bloom and Mary Driscoll:

once or twice I had a suspicion by getting him to come
near me when I found the long hair on his coat without

that one [Mary] when I went into the kitchen pretending
 he was drinking water 1 woman is not enough for them . . .
 I was sure he had something on with that one it takes me
 to find a thing like that. (Joyce, 1986: 609)

Molly may have dismissed Mary partly for her thieving, but the major cause is probably her suspicion of the liaison between Bloom and Mary: when she finds the garters Bloom sent Mary as a gift in the girl's room, "that was enough for me a little bit too much" (609). Mary Driscoll loses her job due to her likely liaison with the master. But Mary has her own version of story. In the courtroom scene in "Circe," Mary Driscoll denies pilfering and accuses Bloom of sexual harassment. She claims that Bloom "made a certain suggestion" (376), and details Bloom's doings: "He surprised me in the rere of the premises . . . when the missus was out shopping one morning with a request of a safety pin. He held me and I was discoloured in four places as a result. And he interfered twict [*sic*] with my clothing" (376). That Mary receives money wages directly and has "chances with Fridays out" (375) may imply that she is "well off" (609) working for the Blooms, but she has to endure sexual exploitation by the master, and has "to leave owing to his carryings on" (375). Bloom may be an uxorious husband to Molly, an affectionate father to Milly, a caring acquaintance to Mina Purefoy who suffers from hard labor in the maternal hospital; for Mary Driscoll, ironically, he is probably more a lecherous employer than a generous master.

Not only were servant girls harassed easily by the master, other men also tended to take advantage of them. Bloom sees the next-door girl as a sex object, satisfying his own desire by resting his eyes on her "vigorous hips," or "moving hams" (48-49)—an expression suggestive of his commodification of the slavey. Like the kidney he purchases, the servant girl functions as a commodity for consumption, while he plays the consumer who judges the value of the commodity. In "Lestrygonians," Bloom wonders why slaveys frequently become the targets of policemen: "Why those

plainclothes men are always courting slaveys” (134). Judging from the fact that many servant girls strive to find themselves a husband to end their servanthood, it is not difficult to answer Bloom’s question: plainclothes men are always courting slaveys because slaveys are easy to court. In “Two Gallants,” the exploitation of the slavey by Corley is manifest. The son of an inspector of police, Corley does not seem to have a proper job. Knowing this, the slavey brings him cigarettes every night, pays the tram out and back, gives him “two bloody fine cigars,” and offers him a “small gold coin” (Joyce, 1996: 49-60). It is presumable that the slavey steals from her employer, as she is unlikely to afford the gifts. Moreover, Corley speaks of his worry that the girl might get pregnant, and Lenehan responds that she thinks Corley will marry her (51). However, Corley has no intention to set up a family with the slavey; he means only to take advantage of her. Once the slavey’s thieving is discovered, or her pregnancy is confirmed, her future will be considerably dimmed. In her study of women in Ireland, Hill narrates the “tragic experience” of a twenty-year-old servant girl Hannah Kavanagh, which, Hill emphasizes, “was by no means unique” (2003: 29). According to Hill, Hannah bore a child to a man who promised, but failed, to marry her. She drowned the child and was then charged with infanticide, and the tragic story ended with Hannah’s conviction (2003: 29). Sexual exploitation, as the story illustrates, ruined the girl’s career, reputation, and life, and no one could ensure that the nameless slavey in “Two Gallants” would not be another Hannah Kavanagh. Lily in “The Dead” is another Joycean servant girl who is no stranger to harassment. Like Bloom, Gabriel Conroy may be a lenient person. Nevertheless, his “friendly” but frivolous remark about Lily’s upcoming wedding betrays his patronizing attitude toward the girl and a trace of sexual harassment—as well as his internalization of the predominant ideology which considered marriage to be women’s one and only end. But what is more noteworthy is Lily’s back-answer, said in “great bitterness”: “The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you” (Joyce, 1996:

178). It may remain a textual mystery whether or not Lily has been sexually exploited by men like the slavey in “Two Gallants” and Hannah Kavanagh in Hill’s research, and yet, obviously, she knows about men’s “palaver” and intention, and shows contempt for them—and is currently harassed by her employers’ guest, Gabriel.

Conflict with the family, furthermore, might be another form of exploitation. Serving the masters, servant girls might suffer from sexual exploitation; but dealing with the mistresses, they had to endure other difficulties. Luddy points out that mistresses were responsible for both the hiring of household servants and their training and supervision (2000: 53). Inevitably, tensions were inherent in the mistress-servant relationship (Simonton, 1998: 108). Some mistresses might treat their servants as family, but this was not always the case. In “Penelope,” tensions between Molly and Mary Driscoll are clearly detectable. Molly believes that Mary seduces Bloom and steals her foodstuffs: “like that slut that Mary we had in Ontario terrace padding out her false bottom to excite him bad enough to get the smell of those painted women off him”; “stealing my potatoes and the oysters 2/6 per doz going out to see her aunt if you please common robbery so it was” (Joyce, 1986: 609). But Mary denies Molly’s accusation in “Circe”: “As God is looking down on me this night if ever I laid a hand to them oysters!” (376). Mary’s seduction of Bloom and stealing of foodstuffs are never textually confirmed, but the conflict between the suspicious mistress and the youthful slavey results in Mary’s dismissal from the Blooms’; the mistress defeats the slavey ultimately.

What is more, the law took the side of the employers. As Hearn argues, “Servants were offered very little protection by the law while the employer had extensive rights to protect himself against his servant” (2001: 218). In other words, the law helped employers exploit their servants. As a consequence of that, servants were under the “total control” of the masters, “which was in fact reinforced by legislation,” so that domestic servants “had little discretion over the day-to-day conduct of [their] life” (Hearn,

2001: 216). The exploitation of servants by employers was, so to speak, legitimized. In the courtroom scene in “Circe,” Bloom’s harassment of Mary Driscoll is said by his barrister J. J. O’Molloy to be an act of paternal affection: “The young person was treated by defendant as if she were his very own daughter” (Joyce, 1986: 378). O’Molloy defends his client against accusation this way: “*Prima facie*, I put it to you that there was no attempt at carnally knowing. Intimacy did not occur and the offence complained of by Driscoll, that her virtue was solicited, was not repeated” (378). It seems that, according to O’Molloy, so long as the master has no sexual intercourse with the slavey, or harassment does not recur over and over again, the master is not guilty of sexual exploitation. It is worth noting that no one speaks in Mary Driscoll’s behalf. The injustice of the law towards servants seems suggestive enough.

C. The Prospects of Domestic Service

In terms of prospects, domestic service was anything but a promising career. First of all, promotion was rare. Despite the fact that the post of a lady’s maid had certain status in society, and that satisfactory service might be rewarded in a big house (O’Dowd, 2005: 134, 137), only servants in a big house had the chance to move on the servant hierarchy (Simonton, 1998: 102-103). A general servant working for a single-servant household, like Mary Driscoll working for the Blooms, did not have the chance to move on the servant hierarchy, let alone social hierarchy. Luddy articulates this situation: “Opportunities for promotion and upward mobility within domestic service were limited. It was uncommon to move from service in a middle-class household to service in a big house” (2000: 53). Judging from the fact that many girls regarded service as a transitional stage or a prelude to marriage rather than a career, limited chance of promotion might not be an issue.

However, the prospects of marriage were not as satisfactory as servant girls expected. Luddy observes that marriage rates for

domestic servants were low, for they were less likely to marry than women in other occupations—shop assistants, for instance (2000: 53). Hearn explains the reason as that servants worked long hours and had very little time of their own, and therefore had limited opportunities to meet eligible young men, and “[t]his was especially true of those working in one or two-servant households, which included the majority of servants” (2001: 217). For many servant girls, marriage represented a way of escaping from domestic service, and yet the low status of their occupation made it more difficult for them to acquire a marriageable man. The situation grew worse as time progressed into the twentieth century—when the status of domestic servants deteriorated further with the coming of a new age. Some girls had to lie about their occupation in order to secure a man for themselves (Hearn, 2001: 217). Furthermore, a “no followers” rule—that is, a “no boyfriends” rule—was enforced in many households. This rule, as Hearn has it, “isolated servants further from their own social class” (2001: 217), denying them the chance to hunt for a spouse. When seeing the next-door girl at the butcher’s, Bloom also thinks of the rule: “No followers allowed” (Joyce, 1986: 48)—though what he does next is to follow the girl to look at “her moving hams” (49). In “The Dead,” although Gabriel says “gaily” to Lily that “I suppose we’ll be going to your wedding one of these fine days with your young man,” knowing she has “done schooling this year and more” (Joyce, 1996: 178), Gabriel may have to wait a long time for the day to come—if the day really comes—considering the low marriage rates in Ireland, the servile status of slaveys, and Lily’s bitter attitude toward men.

Worse still, domestic servants were often associated with prostitutes. In the courtroom scene in “Circe,” when seeing Mary Driscoll approach with “a bucket on the crook of her arm and a scouringbrush in her hand,” the second watch asks, “Are you of the unfortunate class?” (Joyce, 1986: 375)—suggesting the common association of servant girls with prostitution. This association might result from the fact that servant girls frequently fall victim to

sexual exploitation. Besides that, their eagerness in securing themselves a husband, as the slavey in “Two Gallants” demonstrates, might also bestow upon them the image of a whore, or even reduce them eventually to prostitution.

Whether they turned to prostitution or not, one thing was undeniable: servant girls were easily dismissed. The relationship between employers and servants was a fundamentally unequal one. It happened, not infrequently, that employers dismissed their servants without a month’s notice for “a good and valid reason” (Hearn, 2001: 218). As a matter of fact, servants could easily lose their jobs, without cause or explanation. If they became ill or infirm, they could be replaced by new and healthy ones. When a girl was suspected to be pregnant or sexually active, few employers would hesitate to fire her immediately. The failure to obtain a reference from her former employer could limit the girl’s chance of getting her next job (Simonton, 1998: 106). Molly notes that Mary Driscoll was upset when she fired her: “her face swelled up on her with temper when I gave her her weeks notice” (Joyce, 1986: 609). However upset she is to have to leave the Blooms after four months’ service, the suspicion of her sexual activism, along with the finding of the garters in her room, provides Molly with good cause to dismiss her. Molly is unlikely to give Mary Driscoll a reference. Without a reference, it will be more difficult for the slavey to find employment.

Having limited opportunities for promotion and marriage, and easily associated with prostitution and losing their job, domestic servants did not seem to have good prospects when they entered senility. Beddoe expounds her view:

The rough-mannered servant girl accustomed to service with rough-mannered employers has little before her as she grows older. As soon as she reaches an age when she wants more than a very small sum in wages, she is dismissed and replaced by another young girl. . . . This class of girl in very few years disappears from the ranks of domestic servants, and in doing so, is generally in a worse

position than the factory girl in the same grade. (1998: 112)

Servant girls were in a worse position than factory girls because they were easier to be dismissed when reaching a certain age. Aging, for servants, meant the loss of a job, and the loss of a job meant the loss of a home to stay and the lack of resources to support themselves. As a consequence, many servants, particularly those working in smaller households, were forced to beg on the streets or seek charity when they grew old (O'Dowd, 2005: 138). That the workhouse accommodated a great number of ex-servants might speak for the limited prospects most domestic servants had in old age.¹⁶ Unless they worked for benevolent employers in good places—like the big house—servants were unlikely to lead a rosy life when they entered senility.

D. The Weapons of Domestic Servants

In spite of the difficulties domestic servants faced, they were not entirely helpless: they were, to a certain degree, equipped with a few weapons to defend themselves. Firstly, vacancies were abundant. As Simonton reports, “Before 1900 about equal numbers of servants and employers advertised in the *Irish Times*, but after 1901 there were about 1.3 positions for every servant looking, while periodical literature is full of difficulties in finding and keeping them” (1998: 200). Molly in her monologue confirms such difficulties: “am I ever going to have a proper servant again” (Joyce, 1986: 632). Old Mrs. Fleming, the servant who helps Molly with chores after the dismissal of Mary Driscoll, may be “a nuisance” to the mistress: “you have to be walking around after her putting the things into her hands . . . I found that rotten old smelly dishcloth that got lost behind the dresser . . . with the ironmould mark the stupid old bundle burned on them [a pair of

¹⁶ Luddy states that “many servants were forced to spend their old age in the workhouse” (2000: 53).

drawers] . . . she never even rendered down the fat I told her” (632). Despite the many complaints she makes about the old servant, Molly is reluctant to let her go: “and now shes going such as she was on account of her paralysed husband getting worse . . . Ill have to hunt around again for someone” (632). For Molly, to hire a new servant seems to be more troublesome than to keep an unsatisfactory one—unless the servant transgresses as Mary Driscoll did. It may be surmised that Molly hires the old servant partly because she wants to avoid trouble, as does Buck Mulligan’s aunt,¹⁷ but more importantly, she hires her because it is really difficult to hire one. However unqualified a servant old Mrs. Fleming may be, the fact that she can find work in the Blooms demonstrates the abundance of vacancies for domestic servants in early twentieth-century Ireland: so abundant that even she, an old married woman with an infirm husband to take care of at home, can get a job.

Since good help was hard to find, the threat to leave could serve as a powerful weapon for competent servants (Hearn, 2001: 219; Luddy, 1995: 160; Simonton, 1998: 204). If Molly prefers to keep the unsatisfactory Mrs. Fleming rather than hunt for a new servant, no employers would be willing to let go a competent one. As Simonton asserts: “Departure, or even the threat, was an effective and frequently used expression of servant power, since they could expect to get work readily and always obtained conditions at least as good as their previous position” (1998: 204). Moreover, due to the close interaction between mistress and servant, to have a joyful and contended servant in the household would benefit the mistress and her family, or at least would do no harm. Servants, Hearn declares, were of the uttermost importance to the employing class in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose domestic comfort and welfare depended upon their servants; to a considerable extent, “this dependence favoured

¹⁷ Scott also argues that Bloom fails to resist the temptations of a younger servant, hence the replacement of Mary Driscoll by ancient Mrs. Fleming (1984: 169).

domestic servants” (2001: 219). Molly’s reluctance to see Mrs. Fleming withdraw labor may exemplify this subtle but tangible reliance. This reliance therefore became a powerful weapon for servants to defend their well-being. According to Simonton, between 1880 and 1920, those in Dublin who demanded rises with or without the threat to depart got what they wanted, though there were risks, indicated by the numbers of servants out of work (1998: 204). Considering the numbers of vacancies available, many servants would run the risk.

E. The Decline and Transformation of Domestic Service

Domestic service had long been the dominant remunerated work for Irish women, but the growing discrepancy between the number of servants looking for a job and the number of vacancies available manifested its decline at the turn of the twentieth century. Luddy mentions that the number of female servants began to decrease from 1891: in 1881, 48 percent of the female workforce was in service, while the percentage reduced to 35 in 1901 (1995: 52). The decline of domestic service could be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased emigration, the growth of other work opportunities, and changing attitudes toward dependent and inferior roles such as servants (Hill, 2003: 45).

High levels of female emigration, as Luddy suggests, had reduced the number of females entering domestic service (2000: 52). According to Cormac Ó Gráda, the outflow of Irish migration—about four million between 1850 and 1914—was enormous by international standards; interestingly, it was a “female” emigration, as the outflow of females outnumbered that in other European countries, reflecting “the particularly miserable life facing young women in post-Famine Ireland” (1994: 224-225). Indeed, the alternatives for Irish women to support themselves or their families were few; they could only emigrate or stay at home, engaged in few employments available to them, among which

domestic service was the primary. In her study of the economic power of Irish women between 1880 and 1914, Joanna Bourke argues,

The unmarried woman . . . might do better to emigrate instead of attempting to find paid employment within Ireland. Employment lowered their status. . . . Because their pay was low, they were liable to have to live within another household and provide domestic service to help pay for their keep. The sensible woman recognised that paid employment simply doubled her exploitation and was exhausting. (2001: 206)

Bourke's argument focuses on paid employment in general, rather than service in particular, but it is nonetheless true that between emigration overseas and domestic service at home, more and more women preferred the former to the latter. In comparison with those who stayed at home, in fact, female Irish emigrants had relatively better prospects in receiving countries, whether in terms of wages, job opportunities, or marriage (Ó Gráda, 1994: 227). In "Cyclops," the barflies talk about the "Canada swindle case," in which a Jew "put an ad in the papers saying he'd give a passage to Canada for twenty bob"; among the many people who were cheated include a number of "skivvies" (Joyce, 1986: 264). This case may suggest on the one hand the risk of emigration, while on the other hand reflecting that in 1904 many skivvies would run the risk of emigrating in the hope of gaining better prospects in receiving countries.

Emigration was not the only factor that accounted for the decline of the domestic class. The popularity of education and the rise of other job opportunities, resulting in a negative attitude toward servile positions such as servants, also reduced the numbers of girls entering service. Increased education not only kept younger girls out of service, for compulsory school attendance made it impossible for them to engage in work; more importantly, it provided girls with skills to better their fortune (Simonton, 1998:

202). In “Penelope,” Molly mentions that Milly would have been sent to attend Skerry’s academy were it not for Bloom’s insistence upon sending the girl to learn photography in Mullingar (Joyce, 1986: 630). As Gifford notes, Skerry’s academy was a “shorthand, typewriting, and commercial college” (1988: 625). If Milly did study there, she could possibly get an office job after graduation. As a matter of fact, with the gradual expansion of industrialization, commercialization, and urbanization, other work opportunities emerged for women by the end of the nineteenth century. “Wider opportunities became available,” Whelan enumerates, “in the professions, education, medicine, prisons, retailing and office work” (2000: 10). In 1904, the Irish Central Bureau for the Employment of Women promoted twenty-five occupations for females, ranging from “cookery and domestic positions of a supervisory nature . . . to office work, journalism, civil service, nursing, and teaching” (Walzl, 1982: 38). Qualifications might be high, but the door to more employment alternatives was opened nevertheless.¹⁸ With proper training and education, women could become teachers, nurses, clerks, secretaries, journalists, apothecaries, or even medical practitioners or prison matrons—all these new jobs made the position of servants appear to be even more inferior.¹⁹ The variety of women’s occupations in *Ulysses*—nurse and secretary, for instance—may illustrate the growing opportunities for working women in early twentieth-century Ireland. Domestic service, as a consequence of social change, inevitably lost the privileges which had made its prevalence during the nineteenth century (Simonton, 1998: 202).

The decline in the numbers of live-in servants was followed by the emergence of those who lived out. Increasingly, non-residential servants replaced residential ones to take on

¹⁸ For the high qualifications for new jobs promoted to women, see Schwarze (2002: 217) and Walzl (1982: 38-41).

¹⁹ For women as medical practitioners, see Finn (2000). For women as prison matrons, see Lohan (2000).

household chores, which was another factor that led to the deterioration of live-in service. Simonton explains this gradual popularity of out-servants: for employers, they were cheaper than live-ins, and their non-residence gave more privacy to the employer's family; for out-servants, charring suited those who did not wish to, or could not, live in the employer's house, and this meant that more married women could enter domestic occupations, or retained them after their marriage (1998: 202). Compared with live-in service, charring was endowed with more freedom and independence, allowing employers to enjoy service and privacy simultaneously, and working women to have more control over their home and time. Women were thus less tied to the work, and could use it to suit their own needs (Simonton, 1998: 203). As a result, charring maintained a better status than live-in service during this period of time; more and more servants preferred to be charwomen rather than residential slaveys. In addition to engaging in charring, out-servants could also take in lodgers or washing to increase their income (Simonton, 1998: 110), which was impossible for live-in servants. Old Mrs. Fleming in *Ulysses* is obviously an out-servant, or a charwoman, who helps Molly with domestic chores like cleaning and washing on the one hand and takes care of her infirm husband at home on the other. Apart from cleaning and washing, she also does sewing and darning. The socks Bloom wears on 16 June 1904 were darned by her, though Bloom wishes that she could do better (Joyce, 1986: 74). The replacement of Mary Driscoll, a live-in slavey, by Mrs. Fleming, an out-servant, indicates change in the role of servant; unstoppably, domestic service was undergoing transformation in this period of time.

III. Conclusion: Working Women in History and in Joyce

“Change came,” Hearn comments, “because the inferior, dependent position of the servant became unacceptable in a more

democratic world” (cited in Luddy, 2000: 53-54). In the new century, when Ireland was struggling for her freedom and democracy, women’s occupations were also undergoing transformation, as demonstrated by the growth of more work opportunities and the decline of domestic service. From a respectable and favorable job in the nineteenth century to an inferior and unacceptable work in the twentieth century, the transformation was gradual but tangible and tremendous. Whether as a favorable job or an unacceptable work, domestic service had allowed numerous Irish women to support themselves and their families, meanwhile contributing to the economy of the nation. As Simonton asserts, “It must not be assumed that women were passive recipients of their culture. There is sufficient evidence that women were active in shaping and defining their own sense of value and status” (1998: 9). That the next-door girl provides domestic service for her senile employers, Mary Driscoll works in the Bloom family to earn her living, old Mrs. Fleming strives to take care of and support her paralyzed husband—all these exemplify the active participation of women in Irish society and economy, however trivial or insignificant their roles may be. Women, in short, were far more active and competent than they were thought, and servants, in particular, were not simply a metaphor for colonial subjugation—as most Joyceans see the word—but a social reality, an indispensable part of Irish life and history. Joyce may only hint at their presence in *Ulysses*, suggesting their marginalization and obscurity in Irish society; yet these hints are sufficient for us to have a glimpse of their visages and to register significant change in the chapter of Irish history which Joyce (re)constructs. The reflections of Mary Driscolls and Mrs. Flemings in the cracked lookingglass are indeed fragmented. Put together, these fragments present the real life of a group of working women and form an implicit chapter of women’s work history. Visible shades these servants may be, yet the textual shades of visibility allow these women to come into shape and be seen in the light. In his reconstruction of Irish colonial history with

Stephen, Bloom, and Molly as spokespersons, Joyce represents—simultaneously but probably unintentionally—an obscure and fragmented history of working women in Ireland.

It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that Joyce's scanty textual representation of servants leans toward the negative aspects—hardship and exploitation in particular. This partial representation may reflect the decline of service and the transformation of women's remunerated work in early twentieth-century Ireland, but undeniably, service had had its heyday. A comprehensive historical survey, as what this paper has shown, thus supplements Joyce's partiality, helping to present a more complete picture of a group of working women from the heyday of the employment to its decline. Joyce's representation, on the other hand, registers a significant stage of domestic service when it was undergoing change and losing its predominance. To have a clearer glimpse of the visages of domestic servants in Ireland by 1904, in short, both historical research and the Joycean textual representation are indispensable.

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裂鏡中的僕人：女傭、愛爾蘭、喬伊斯

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摘 要

《尤利西斯》一書呈現了許多被忽略或者視而不見的女性勞工。這些女性在文本中的模糊隱匿反映出女性在就業市場以及愛爾蘭社會的邊緣地位。儘管如此，一九〇四年的愛爾蘭女性在經濟上的表現遠比一般所認知的更為積極、更有實力。本文嘗試以此觀點切入，探究一群喬氏文本中隱約提及的女性勞工：女傭。幫傭業乃是十九世紀與二十世紀初愛爾蘭女性的三大有薪工作之一，於此期間經歷了相當程度的變化。無論是一份在十九世紀被視為體面、合適的工作，或者是一門在二十世紀被視為卑微、不受歡迎的行業，幫傭讓許多愛爾蘭女性得以養活自己和家人；然而其貢獻往往不被承認。喬伊斯文本中輕描淡寫的女傭反映了此一積極參與社會和經濟活動卻被忽略漠視的情形。「僕人」一詞不僅僅是殖民地卑屈處境的暗喻，更是社會現實，是愛爾蘭生活與歷史不可抹滅的一部分；喬氏裂鏡中確實可見僕人之隱約身影。在以史提芬、布盧姆、莫莉為代言人建構愛爾蘭歷史之際，喬伊斯也同時呈現了一頁女性勞工隱匿、破碎的歷史——儘管可能出於無意。

關鍵詞：喬伊斯、《尤利西斯》、愛爾蘭、有薪工作、女傭