

Among Rhododendrons: People And Objects in James  
Joyce's *Ulysses*

by

Lily Kong  
Class of 2016

A thesis submitted to the  
faculty of Wesleyan University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
with Departmental Honors in English

# *t a b l e o f c o n t e n t s*

acknowledgements.....1

introduction.....2

chapter one: bloom.....12

chapter two: molly.....39

chapter three: molly + bloom.....54

conclusion.....72

## *a c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s*

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Joe Fitzpatrick, for his unfailing support and guidance throughout this project. It has been an honor and a genuine pleasure to be able to work with him, and I cannot thank him enough for his help. Without him, the thesis that follows would not be possible, nor would it have taken the shape that it has. I would also like to thank him for teaching one of the most thought-provoking classes I've ever taken at Wesleyan, which opened my eyes to a new way of reading and understanding *Ulysses*.

I would also like to thank Jill Moraski for being the best friend I could ever ask for and for being there for me no matter the circumstances; Matt Lim for his constant companionship and encouragement every step of the way, if only by virtual means; Simon Chen, Michelle Lee, and Lynn Ma for their invaluable moral support throughout this process, and for making me ramen and granola in times of stress; my parents, for understanding my writing a thesis despite not understanding the thesis itself; my sister; Ox; my high school Joyce teacher, whose class first made me fall in love with *Ulysses*; and anyone who has ever let me talk their ear off about *Ulysses* or helped me come up with a title for this thesis. Thank you so much.

## INTRODUCTION

James Joyce's *Ulysses* very simply tells the story of a day in Dublin, with the bulk of the novel following Leopold Bloom as he walks through the city, interacting with different people and institutions within the community. An agglomeration of references to classic literature, Greek mythology, and Irish history, among many others, *Ulysses* is anything but simple. Saturated with the tiny details of everyday life, *Ulysses* perplexed early readers who were faced with the flood of information presented by the novel. As a way of trying to handle the level of minutiae in the novel, readers turned to methods of organization, such as the Linati and Gilbert schemata, which replaced the chaotic mass of details with established networks of symbols based in Greek mythology. As readers became more familiar with *Ulysses*, they sought a different kind of reading in texts such as Don Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*. Gifford's text serves as an encyclopedia or catalogue of people, places, and things in *Ulysses*, treating the text and the objects within it referentially in a way that allows for a more refined reading than the Linati and Gilbert schemata. It is easy to get caught up in symbols and referents as ways of understanding *Ulysses*, especially when the tools used to read *Ulysses* extensively utilize symbolism and references, replacing objects with ideas or attempting to use the real world to explain the details of the novel. Gifford's text and the Linati and Gilbert schemata provide ways of coping with the everydayness of the novel, but they do not address the everydayness itself. What a mode of reading in which symbolism

or referentiality are put at the forefront of analysis neglects is the real physical and tangible world of *Ulysses*—or, more simply, its objects.

Much recent scholarship on *Ulysses* explores the prevalence of the quotidian and everyday objects in the novel. For instance, Declan Kiberd, the author of *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Life in Joyce's Masterpiece* revisits the notion that *Ulysses* is a novel for the everyman about the beauty of the occurrences of everyday life. Kiberd states that Joyce “believed that by recording the minutiae of a single day, he could release those elements of the marvellous latent in ordinary living, so that the familiar might astonish. The “everyday” need not be average, but a process recorded as it is lived – with spontaneity and openness to chance” (11). Kiberd focuses on the processes humans experience in quotidian life, with chapter titles corresponding to a particular process occurring in each episode. For instance, his chapter on “Lestrygonians,” in which Bloom eats lunch, is simply entitled “Eating”; his chapter on “Hades,” during which Paddy Dignam’s funeral occurs, entitled “Dying”; and his chapter on “Penelope” entitled “Loving.” These titles demonstrate how Kiberd deals not with the symbolic, but with the physicality of the world of *Ulysses*, and implicated in this physicality are the objects within and comprising it. Other scholars engage more directly with the objects themselves, such as Mark Osteen, who investigates the different hats worn in *Ulysses* and their social implications in his essay “A High Grade Ha: The ‘Politicoecomedey’ of Headwear in *Ulysses*,” and David Galef, who examines costumes in “Circe” in his article, “The Fashion Show in *Ulysses*.” These examples show how recent scholarship on *Ulysses* is in conversation

with the physicality and materiality of the novel, which plays a crucial role in understanding its characters.

Take, for instance, the opening passage of the second section of *Ulysses* in which the reader is introduced to Bloom:

“Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods’ roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.

Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray...Another slice of bread and butter: three, four: right. She didn’t like her plate full. Right. He turned from the tray, lifted the kettle off the hob and set it sideways on the fire. It sat there, dull and squat, its spout stuck out. Cup of tea soon. (4.1-14)

What is most striking about this passage is the deluge of objects, almost to the point of overload. The objects never stand alone; rather, they are accompanied by descriptors or modifiers, the soup not simply soup, but “thick giblet soup,” the breakfast things not general breakfast items, but “her breakfast things,” and the tray markedly “humpy.” The kettle, “dull and squat,” is personified as sitting, implying that the objects themselves might also be characters. The way these detailed objects coexist with and introduce Bloom illustrates that they are principal to Bloom’s life and in turn reveal aspects of his personality. The detail does not exist simply to describe, but also to distinguish Bloom as a connoisseur of the particular and peculiar. Bloom counts the slices of bread, once again drawing attention to the specificity of

the objects, as well as to the significance of the exact number of slices. The reader, through Bloom, quite literally lives in a world of objects, and thus the materiality and physicality of the objects are inextricably tied to Bloom's character. Bloom is very deliberately rooted in the physical world in a way that other characters, such as Stephen, are not.

*Ulysses* is far from being the only novel of its time to explore objects and the way these objects enter into relationships with characters. Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* is a significant example of a modernist text that understands memory through objects; one of the most notable scenes that investigates this connection is the madeleine scene in "Combray":

She sent for one of those squat, plump cakes called *petites madeleines* that look as though they have been molded in the grooved valve of a scallop shell...I carried to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had let soften a bit of madeleine. But at the very instant when the mouthful of tea mixed with cake crumbs touched my palate, I quivered, attentive to the extraordinary thing that was happening inside me...And suddenly the memory appeared. The taste was the taste of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray... my aunt Léonie would give me after dipping it in her infusion of tea or lime blossom. The sight of the madeleine had not reminded me of anything before I tasted it; perhaps because I had often seen them since, without eating them, on the shelves of the pastry shops, and their image had therefore left those days of Combray and attached itself to others more recent...And as soon as I had recognized the taste of the piece of madeleine

dipped in lime-blossom tea that my aunt used to give me...immediately the old gray house on the street, where her bedroom was, came like a stage set...all of Combray and its surroundings, all of this, acquiring form and solidity, emerged, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea. (45-8)

The narrator's description of the appearance and the process of eating the madeleine can be likened to the aforementioned opening passage of *Ulysses*. The narrator takes care to describe the madeleines, depicting them as "squat" and "plump." The softened madeleine harmonizes with the tea in a very particular way; this tradition of eating the madeleines with lime-blossom tea has strong associations with the narrator's aunt, thrusting him back into nostalgic memories of both his aunt and childhood home. The narrator's interaction with the madeleine is similar to Bloom's interaction with objects, and the specific nature of these interactions signifies the importance of these objects to their respective handlers. However, Proust's utilization of objects in "Combray" is quite different from objects' roles in *Ulysses*; the madeleine in this scene acts as a memory trigger for the narrator. The impetus for the flood of memories from the narrator's childhood home in Combray is the exact taste of the madeleine, and not simply the madeleine itself, as the narrator specifically says the visual aspect of the madeleine is not what prompts his recollections. Objects in *Ulysses*, on the other hand, exist in a web of relationships with the characters, and the two coexist in an interlacing structure. The very nature of interactions between characters and objects in *Ulysses* and *Swann's Way* differs fundamentally in that in *Swann's Way*, the madeleine is used as a tool for memory recall, which expands into a set of memories associated with Combray. Once the memory of Combray is

established, the object of the madeleine fades into the background; however, in *Ulysses*, objects, in being a crucial part of relationships between characters, remain and persist within memories. They are not merely stepping-stones to a memory, but imperative to and recurring in memories, existing the same way Bloom and Molly exist in memories and the larger world of Dublin.

*Ulysses* navigates the relationships between characters and objects in a unique manner in that many of the main characters are invested in very particular and specific things. Bloom's fixations on certain objects, such as clothing, food, and flowers, is particularly striking, and in tracing these objects throughout the novel, it becomes evident that such objects are not simply objects of Bloom's everyday life, but objects in which Bloom has deep personal and psychosexual investment. His approach to objects is meticulous and careful; he is a neat eater, appreciates tidy and appropriately fitting clothing, and has a general need for orderliness regarding the objects in his life. Bloom's obsession with clothing, especially women's clothing, is not only tied to his desire for order and neatness, but also with his own femininity and sexuality, which also relate to Bloom's attachment to flowers and his Henry Flower pseudonym; these same objects can also be traced in Molly's day. From her first introduction she is presented half-asleep, surrounded by things strewn about her bedroom. The image of Molly as messy and amongst objects is one that persists throughout the novel, and also serves as an important juxtaposition with the image of Bloom's neatness. Both of these images are facilitated by the use of objects, and they help to illustrate Bloom's obsessive interaction with certain objects compared to Molly's virtual lack of interaction with those objects. However, Molly, like Bloom,

obsesses over clothing, and her use of clothing is a major part of how she views herself and her own sexuality. Thus, objects not only exist within the web of relationships and associations in the novel, but also help in examining relationships between people by analyzing characters' treatments and approaches to objects.

The role of objects in *Ulysses* helps the reader to better understand one of the most significant relationships in the novel: Molly and Bloom's. Both Molly and Bloom are portrayed as outsiders, and analyzing objects creates an entryway into understanding how they deviate from social norms. It is crucial to pay attention to what is literally presented to us along with the characters, which is all of the stuff that Molly and Bloom live amongst. Molly and Bloom are not simple characters, and their complexity envelops the relationship they have with each other. Interestingly, Bloom and Molly interact with each other very little over the course of *Ulysses*—just a short conversation in “Calypso”—but their respective inner monologues divulge much of how they feel about each other. Both Molly and Bloom's thoughts about themselves and about each other are mediated through and populated by objects that are involved in associations, memories, and their own personalities. This thesis aims to analyze Molly and Bloom's relationship through their relationships to certain objects in three sections: the first on Bloom, the second on Molly, and the third as a synthesis of Bloom and Molly.

Bloom's interactions with objects not only demonstrate aspects about his personality and his individual mannerisms, but also reveal his complex sexuality. Through investigating Bloom's relationship with food, the reader discovers Bloom's methodical nature in regard to eating and his distaste for mess; the introduction into

Bloom's proclivities towards orderliness through food then call attention to Bloom's orderliness in regards to everything in his life. His relationship to food also reveals a particular taste that Bloom prefers over others; it is clear from the beginning that Bloom is unusual, and as the novel continues, his peculiarities encompass not just food, but clothing. Bloom's relationship to clothing is the nexus at which Bloom's unusual nature intersects with his sexuality and sexual preferences. As with food and various other aspects of his life, Bloom prefers clothing to be tidy and orderly; however, his main fixation in terms of clothing is women's clothing, such as stockings and petticoats. He interacts with such articles of clothing in a voyeuristic manner, best exemplified by this encounter with Gerty MacDowell on Sandymount Strand; yet, Bloom's obsession with women's clothing is not simply rooted in his masculine consumption of women's bodies. His encounters actually wearing women's clothing and cross-dressing in both his fantasies and in real life gesture towards a deeper desire to actually identify or even embody a woman. His sexuality is not only facilitated by clothing, but also by flowers, and flowers become a crucial part of Bloom's identity through his pseudonym as Henry Flower. Flowers also become a way in which he sees Molly, as he associates Molly with various flower scents throughout the novel.

Molly, in many ways, exists at variance with Bloom, especially in her relationships to objects. Like Bloom, she is extremely attentive to clothing, but for quite different reasons; for Bloom, clothing is yet another aspect that he fits into his specific way of ordering the world, as well as a tool used to explore his sexuality. While clothing also relates to Molly's sexuality, her obsession with clothing is tied to

her own vanity and allure. She uses clothing as a tool to increase her sexual appeal to men, much like Gerty does when she performs for Bloom on Sandymount Strand. Molly and Gerty both view clothing as a means to increase social power, and they understand that to have fine clothing is to be respected by others in the public sphere. It is this preoccupation with appearances and fashion that connect Molly and Gerty with a level of shared femininity, an aspect of femaleness that manifests itself in both women. Where Molly and Gerty differ, however, is in their commitment to this image of femininity; Molly, in the privacy of her home, refuses to conform to this image, which is evident in her dirty eating habits and the environment of mess that surrounds her. Her eating habits illustrate yet another difference between her and Bloom, and they also parallel her attitude in regards to sex. Her thoughts in "Penelope" demonstrate that, though she feels social pressures to be ladylike in terms of eating and sex, her true character is vulgar and coarse, and thus she defies this image of conventional femininity in many ways. Molly's sexuality is a major way in which she ignores female standards in that she occupies a very assertive and powerful position when she has sex, and demands a degree of decorum from her partners. Through her dominance, she is masculinized in her sexual relationships, and even expresses the desire to be a man.

In analyzing Molly and Bloom's individual relationships and investments in objects, tensions within their relationship become apparent, and on the surface, it is not difficult to understand why their marriage appears to be failing, why they have not been able to have consummate sex in several years, and why Molly resorts to Blazes Boylan to sexually satisfy her. Their differences seem irreconcilable, rooted in their

opposing ways of ordering and thinking about the world around them. However, by exploring the objects that produce incongruities in Molly and Bloom's characters—food, clothing, and flowers—I argue that their relationship is more complex than expected, and that these very same objects also have a way of resolving the differences between Molly and Bloom. These objects appear in key memories that both Molly and Bloom remember, and the analysis of objects in relation to their relationship tells a very different story than the analysis of objects in relation to them as individuals. Exploring the passages involving Ben Dollard, Molly's lotion, and the moment of Molly and Bloom's proposal demonstrates how the novel uses objects to make sense of their relationship, uncovering their deep-seated mutual understanding for each other, as well as the unconditional comfort they find in each other.

## B L O O M

From Bloom's first introduction, his peculiarities are apparent, made most noticeable by the emphasis on the fact that his favorite food is associated with urine. Additionally, "Calypso" shows Bloom bringing his wife breakfast in bed, which "...in the male-dominated city of 1904...must have seemed an act tantamount to perversion" (Kiberd 83). As the reader gradually learns more about Bloom, it is clear that he stands out as a character, person, and man living in Dublin at the time. Bloom's obvious relish of his meal consisting of "beasts and fowls" (4.1-2) demonstrates his special and peculiar relationship to the food he consumes; though the meal is odd, bordering on repulsive, it is exactly how Bloom prefers it. The portrayal of the food suggests that the meal has been prepared in a very specific manner, as evidenced by the descriptors accompanying each food item comprising the meal. The giblet soup is "thick giblet soup" (4.2), the gizzards are "nutty gizzards" (4.2), the liver is "fried with crustcrumbs" (4.3), and finally the grilled mutton kidneys "gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine" (4.4-5), which appears to be what Bloom most enjoys. This meal has not been thrown together haphazardly; rather, it is a carefully orchestrated array of foods that have been prepared and cooked in a particular way.

This desire for order is even more apparent in "Lestrygonians," in which Bloom encounters a disturbing scene at the Burton: "His heart astir he pushed in the door of the Burton restaurant. Stink gripped his trembling breath: pungent meatjuice, slush of greens...Perched on the high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes

bulging, wiping wetted moustaches” (8.650-6). Indeed, the image of “A man spitting back on his plate: halfmasticated gristle: gums: no teeth to chewchewchew it” (8.659-60) continues to haunt him throughout the novel (“Chap in the Burton today spitting back gumchewed gristle” (13.876)). There is a marked difference in the description of the food in the Burton as compared to that of Bloom’s breakfast. Bloom’s breakfast is presented to the reader very specifically; Joyce makes a point to emphasize that Bloom eats the “inner organs of beasts and fowls” (4.1-2), but more accurately, he dines on giblets, gizzards, heart, liver, and kidneys. The food the men at the Burton eat are described with no such precision; their food is a “slush,” or even more simply, “sloppy food,” and there is no effort to describe the types of meat being consumed other than the fact that they smell of “meatjuice.” There is no care put into this food, signaled by the fact that there is no care put into the descriptions of the food.

He is so disgusted by the men in the Burton that he must leave (“Out. I hate dirty eaters” (8.696)), and later, when he sits down to a meal, the reader sees how Bloom prefers food to be eaten. Bloom prepares his food meticulously: “Mr. Bloom cut his sandwich into slender strips. . . He studded under each lifted strip yellow blobs” (8.777-82); Bloom dislikes waste, as he puts just the right amount of mustard under each sandwich strip, no more, no less. Bloom’s alimentary habits contrast with those of the men at the Burton, who have little concern with the ritual of eating Bloom invests in. While he tenderly cuts and dots his sandwich with mustard, curating every piece just so, the men at the Burton spit and gulp with no regard or respect for the food they consume. This act of eating his sandwich demonstrates the control Bloom

exerts over his food and his process of eating, as well as a near obsession with performing eating the right way for him.

The comparison between Bloom's eating habits and the eating habits of the men at the Burton distinguishes Bloom from other men in Dublin, but "Hades," in which Bloom attends a funeral for Paddy Dignam, truly cements his outsider status from other male Dubliners. Bloom is not, by any means, a typical man living in Dublin; he is Jewish, though non-practicing, relatively wealthy, and does not participate in the prevalent drinking culture in which his fellow Dubliners often engage. These differences are visible to those who surround him, and this visibility manifests itself in the way others treat him. Heather Cook Callow, in her article "Joyce's Female Voices in 'Ulysses'" observes, "The tone of their relationship is set by Martin Cunningham's initial remark: 'Come along, Bloom'...a call that places Bloom somewhere between a dog and a lower form schoolboy. During the carriage ride and funeral, Bloom is the only man addressed by others by his surname..." (153). For much of the ensuing conversation, Bloom speaks disproportionately little compared to the rest of the men in the carriage, is hardly ever addressed, and, when he does try to speak, is interrupted. His contributions to their conversation are rarely responded to, and the only question he is asked is not even about him:

Mr Power asked:

—How is the concert tour getting on, Bloom?

—O, very well, Mr Bloom said. I hear great accounts of it. It's a good idea, you see .... (6.211-214)

When Mr. Power finally addresses Bloom, the question refers to Molly's concert tour, and Bloom is still interrupted even after responding, unable to complete his thought. Bloom's thoughts on the subject seem of no interest to the men in the carriage, as with much of what Bloom has to say to them throughout the novel.

Bloom's social ostracism is especially apparent when Martin Cunningham notices Reuben J. Dodd, a Jewish moneylender, on the street:

—We have all been there, Martin Cunningham said broadly.

His eyes met Mr Bloom's eyes. He caressed his beard, adding:

—Well, nearly all of us. (6.257-261)

Martin Cunningham looks pointedly at Bloom, almost expressing disdain at the fact that Bloom has not had to interact with Dodd as frequently because he has money, unlike the rest of the men. His relative wealth is yet another factor that separates and alienates him from his fellow Dubliners, and it is another aspect in which he cannot relate to them. Bloom does not engage in the constant money lending and borrowing cycle much of the rest of Dublin seems to be involved in, especially at the pub, which Bloom also does not frequent; his wealth, rather than raising his social status, almost lowers it because it erases a crucial aspect of equality that others can relate to. It is clear that these men do not respect Bloom as they do each other, intimating that they do not see him as a typical man.

Bloom's alienation from the rest of the men not only manifests itself in conversation, but also in his appearance. Mark Osteen discusses clothing in "Hades", focusing in particular on the various hats that the men of Dublin wear to Paddy Dignam's funeral: "Likewise, most of the men in the episode wear silk top hats,

visible tokens of social power. Bloom is thus a little underdressed, and if his more casual hat suggests a lack of respect for Dignam, it may also help to explain the others' disdain for him and his exclusion from their social circle..." (269). This analysis of Bloom's hat says much about him, in that though he is socioeconomically superior to his fellow Dubliners, he is socially inferior, and this social inferiority permeates his entire being, manifesting itself through such a seemingly inconsequential object as a hat. However, hats also work in a different way when Bloom points out the dinge in John Henry Menton's hat ("your hat is a little crushed, Mr Bloom said pointing" (6.1018)); Osteen writes, "...Bloom 'gets the pull' over Menton by recognizing the limits of Menton's prestige. Bloom's undented bowler again betokens his unpretentious dignity and the comic resilience that enables him to defeat a rival and assert social equivalent with his apparent superiors" (270). Though Bloom's bowler is considered casual for a funeral, its undented and neat appearance is more significant. Bloom pointing out Menton's crushed hat can be seen as a symbolic revenge because Bloom values the neatness of his hat over its suitability for the event, thus he is superior to Menton, whom he sees as a romantic rival held in high regard by the other men. Despite Bloom's underdressed hat, this scene demonstrates Bloom's priority for orderliness and how he uses the hat to subtly expose this value, as well as assert his own kind of dominance over those who think him inferior.

Bloom's particularities regarding clothing are further explored in the penultimate episode, "Ithaca," in which the reader finally enters Bloom's home. The same methodical way Bloom handles his food in "Lestrygonians" is repeated in the

way Bloom treats his clothing in “Ithaca”: “He deposited the article of clothing on a chair, removing his remaining articles of clothing, took from beneath the bolster at the head of the bed a folded long white nightshirt, inserted his head and arms into the proper apertures of the nightshirt, removed a pillow from the head to the foot of the bed, prepared the bedlinen accordingly and entered the bed” (17.2109-13). Bloom takes care to fold all his clothing and even to make his bed before he gets into it; the fact that he inserts his “head and arms into the proper apertures of the nightshirt” suggests that he puts on the nightshirt in the correct and appropriate manner. Bloom’s need for organization and order extends to nearly every aspect of his life, including his home; “Ithaca” sees Bloom in his home environment in a way not afforded by any of the other episodes, as the reader has an objective view of how Bloom operates in and organizes his own space. One instance shows Bloom organizing the books on his bookshelf, some of which have been placed upside-down:

What reflections occupied his mind during the process of reversion of the inverted volumes?

The necessity of order, a place for everything and everything in its place: the deficient appreciation of literature possessed by females: the incongruity of an apple incuneated in a tumbler and of an umbrella inclined in a closestool: the insecurity of hiding any secret document behind, beneath, or between the pages of a book. (17.1408-14)

In this excerpt, habits previously seen in Bloom, such as his methodical placement of mustard on his sandwich, are placed in context; Bloom is not just methodical about food, he is methodical about everything. This passage in the catechism reveals that

Bloom's need for order is not just universal, but also compulsory; he notices every little detail, from the apple inappropriately wedged into a tumbler, to a slanted umbrella. There is even an order to the sentence, the phrase "a place for everything and everything in its place" generating a chiasmic effect, as if Bloom's thoughts are also ordered. While he places the books back in their upright positions, his mind associates this impropriety with "the deficient appreciation of literature possessed by females," hinting that women do not know how to appreciate literature properly, and therefore do not know how to put books in their proper place either.

The inverted books not only speak to females' inability to understand literature, but also show how Bloom feels about Molly's intelligence. In "Ithaca," it is revealed that Bloom routinely tries to educate Molly "[b]y leaving in a conspicuous place a certain book open at a certain page...by open ridicule in her presence of some absent other's ignorant lapse" (17.693-7), presumably in an attempt to improve her "deficient mental development" (17.674). The books that he leaves for Molly to read might very well be the same books that have been returned back to the bookshelf upside-down. In leaving books for her to read, Bloom hand-selects the types of books he wants her to read; in ridiculing an individual's ignorance, Bloom subtly points at a certain ignorance of which he wants Molly to be aware. Following the question, "With what success had he attempted direct instruction?" (17.698), referring to the success of the aforementioned methods by which Bloom uses to educate Molly, the response states, "She followed not at all...forgot with ease, with misgiving remembered..." (17.699-701). Despite the ways in which Bloom does not conform with other men in Dublin, his view of Molly and of women in general suggest that he

still upholds certain standards of masculinity that do align with those of an average Dublin male.

Bloom's tendency to try to shape Molly's intelligence a certain way is demonstrative of a masculine control he tries to impose on her, which manifests itself in aspects such as her clothing, in particular Molly's undergarments. In "Lestrygonians," Bloom contemplates buying a birthday present for Molly: "Could buy one of those silk petticoats for Molly, colour of her new garters" (8.1061-2). This gift recalls an earlier moment when Bloom attends to Molly in their bedroom: "But he delayed to clear the chair: her striped petticoat, tossed soiled linen...he took up a leg of her soiled drawers from the bed. No? Then, a twisted grey garter looped round a stocking: rumpled, shiny sole" (4.265-6, 4.321-3). There seems to be significance in the fact that the petticoats he wants to buy for Molly are silk, as contrasted with the striped petticoat she currently owns, which are associated with her soiled and dirty clothing. Even though petticoats are hidden from the public eye, he wants to buy her petticoats specifically of silk, a relatively high-quality material. He attempts to impose a degree of control over her in wanting to buy her the clothing he thinks she should wear, just as he puts in the effort to leave around the books that he thinks she should read. There is a standard against which Bloom measures his wife, and he subtly attempts to thrust this standard upon her. His actions are masculine in the way that, in attempting to buy her new clothing, which seems like a considerate, and almost romantic, gesture from a husband and his wife, he is also policing her body and making sure she wears what he deems appropriate for her to wear.

Bloom's particularity regarding clothing is not limited to Molly, but extends to other women as well; earlier in "Lestrygonians," he notices a woman on the street walking next to A.E.: "Her stockings are loose over her ankles. I detest that: so tasteless" (8.542). The image of her loose stockings follows Bloom during his journey through Dublin; at the end of "Nausicaa," he compares the woman's loose stockings to Gerty MacDowell's stockings: "Transparent stockings, stretched to breaking point. Not like that frump today. A. E. Rumped stockings" (13.929-931). This example demonstrates that Bloom has a certain disdain for those who are dressed improperly; the word "tasteless" can mean inelegant, but it can also relate back to Bloom's relationship to food and his consumption of it. The word "tasteless" indicates Bloom's consumption of the woman's clothing as well as her body; in fixating on Gerty's tight and transparent stockings that reveal the form of her body, Bloom consumes Gerty's body through her clothing. The idea of consumption relates to Bloom's association of women's bodies to food, as evidenced by the scene in when he follows a woman from Dlugacz's butcher shop ("Mr Bloom pointed quickly. To catch up and walk behind her if she went slowly, behind her moving hams" (4.171-2)).

Bloom's objectification of women and focus on their bodies hints at a certain degree of misogyny that he possesses. His equating women to food illustrates the fact that, for Bloom, they are intended to be consumed, which is exactly what Bloom does as he ogles them: he consumes their bodies, and he uses their bodies metonymically to represent their whole selves. Martha F. Black writes, "Out in man's world, even Bloom tends to objectify the female...He is an "'adorer of the adulterous rump'...He worships Molly's behind and her breasts—distinctly biomorphic, female parts—

instead of the whole of Molly” (73). Indeed, when he first looks upon Molly in “Calypso,” he primarily notices her body: “He looked calmly down on her bulk and between her large soft bubs, sloping within her nightdress like a shegoat’s udder” (4.304-5). As with the woman at the butcher shop, Bloom fixates on Molly’s body, comparing her breasts to a “shegoat’s udder,” therefore associating Molly not with an animal, but an animal’s mere body part. Bloom’s preoccupation with women’s bodies is intricately tied to a specific image of woman that he prefers; this image relates to his ideas about clothing and education, which are rooted in Bloom’s particularities about the world.

Bloom’s voyeurism of women’s bodies becomes fully fleshed out in “Nausicaa,” during which Bloom masturbates to Gerty MacDowell, a young woman with her friends on Sandymount Strand. Bloom’s interaction with Gerty is closely tied not only to the clothing she wears, but also to the fact that she is wearing the right clothing and using it in the right way to arouse Bloom. Examining Gerty’s clothing proves that Gerty places great value in the clothing she wears and the image she presents to the world:

A neat blouse of electric blue selftinted by dolly dyes (because it was expected in the *Lady’s Pictorial* that electric blue would be worn)...and kerchief pocket (in which she always kept a piece of cottonwool scented with her favourite perfume because the handkerchief spoiled the sit)...She wore a coquettish little love of a hat of wideleaved nigger straw contrast trimmed with an underbrim of eggblue chenille and at the side a butterfly bow of silk to tone. All Tuesday week afternoon she was hunting to match that chenille but

at last she found what she wanted at Clery's summer sales, the very it, slightly shopsoiled but you would never notice, seven fingers two and a penny. She did it up all by herself and what joy was hers when she tried it on then, smiling at the lovely reflection which the mirror gave back to her! (13.150-62)

Every article of clothing Gerty wears has been carefully chosen and curated by her, from the blouse that she dyes herself, to the cottonwool that she deliberately sprays her perfume on. Her entire ensemble is orchestrated meticulously, and the above description shows just how much effort Gerty goes through in order to exhibit the semblance of proper dress. The passage insinuates that Gerty might not actually be able to afford the clothing she desires to wear, or what she imagines a refined lady should wear, as defined by *Lady's Pictorial*, but that she goes out of her way to hide this disadvantage. She dyes her own clothing because she cannot afford a real electric blue blouse, and she must buy the ribbon on sale; even though purchased new, it is still "shopsoiled." Instead of buying an expensive hat that already has a matching ribbon, she attaches the ribbon herself, admiring how much she is able to mimic an appearance of affluence. The ribbon itself she purchases on sale, and though it is discounted, she still pays a substantial amount for a mere "seven fingers" of ribbon. Gerty aims to achieve a certain level of perfection, even through her clothing, as evidenced by her referring to the matching ribbon as "the very it," implying that there is only one perfect ribbon and that she has found it. The meticulousness with which Gerty coordinates her entire outfit recalls the image of Bloom carefully cutting his sandwich into strips and dotting each strip with a dollop of mustard.

In “Nausicaa,” the performance Gerty puts on for the voyeuristic Bloom, in which clothing plays a crucial role, can be seen as shorthand for sexual intercourse, a performance enhanced by the presence of clothing. The clothing she wears plays an important role in the performance she puts on for Bloom, as it is simultaneously a tool used to hide as well as reveal, thus making clothing an instrument of performance. The first time she looks at Bloom, Joyce writes, “Till then they had only exchanged glances of the most casual but now under the brim of her new hat she ventured a look at him...” (13.367-8). Only when safely tucked behind the perfect appearance of her hat with its cheap matching ribbon does Gerty have the courage to face her potential “dreamhusband” (13.431) directly. Clothing for Gerty is also a tool of concealment because it allows her to hide her lame leg, giving her more confidence in being able to showcase her body to Bloom. She says, “Three and eleven she paid for those stockings in Sparrow’s of George’s street on the Tuesday...and that was what he was looking at, transparent, and not at her insignificant ones that had neither shape nor form...” (13.499-503). From this passage, “her insignificant ones” might refer to the stockings on her “insignificant” or “lame” leg.

Only the presence of Gerty’s clothing can allow for its absence as she must first be wearing clothing in order reveal the body beneath it; though Gerty does not remove her clothing, she arranges her clothing so that her legs show. Bloom has already previously demonstrated an attraction for clothes that both cover skin, but also reveal, such as petticoats. Throughout the novel, he consistently thinks of buying petticoats for Molly: “...could buy one of those silk petticoats for Molly, colour of her new garters” (8.1061-2). Petticoats typically are worn under clothing, as they are

a type of undergarment; while they do cover the body to some extent, their presence points more so to the body underneath the petticoats than what is worn over the petticoats as they are the only barrier to access of the body. He demonstrates a similar fixation for undergarments while masturbating to Gerty:

...nainsook knickers, the fabric that caresses the skin, better than those other pettiwidth, the green, four and eleven, on account of being white and she let him and she saw that he saw...she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn't resist the sight of the wondrous revealment half offered like those skirt dancers behaving so immodest before gentlemen looking and he kept on looking, looking. (13.724-33)

Bloom describes clothing as “wondrous revealment half offered,” reinforcing the idea of clothing that both covers and reveals. The aforementioned stockings are also an interesting choice of clothing because while they cover the skin completely, Gerty's stockings are markedly transparent such that while she is technically clothed, her legs are revealed in their entirety. Bloom consumes her performance, engaging with and participating in the show by being a willing spectator.

In “Nausicaa,” both Cissy Caffrey and Gerty expose themselves to Bloom; but what distinguishes Gerty's performance for Bloom from Cissy's? Gerty describes how Cissy deliberately runs in front of Bloom and reveals her undergarments to him:

She ran with long gaudy strides it was a wonder she didn't rip up her skirt at the side...she was a forward piece whenever she thought she had a good opportunity to show off and just because she was a good runner she ran like

that so that he could see all the end of her petticoat running and her skinny shanks up as far as possible. It would have served her right if she had tripped up over something accidentally on purpose with her high crooked French heels on...the flimsy blouse she bought only a fortnight before like a rag on her back and bit of her petticoat hanging like a caricature. (13.478-509)

In contrast with Gerty's performance for Bloom, Cissy's is haphazardly thrown together, unplanned, and spontaneous. Moreover, her clothing is not proper in any way; she wears "crooked French heels" and her blouse resembles a "rag on her back." Unlike Cissy's, Gerty's performance is so much more appealing to Bloom because she dresses properly, her stockings hugging her form as opposed to loose around her ankles; she is, in Bloom's view, "tasteful" as opposed to "tasteless." When Bloom thinks about buying petticoats for Molly, he says, "...could buy one of those silk petticoats for Molly, colour of her new garters" (8.1061-2). "Colour of her new garters" suggests that Bloom wants to buy petticoats for Molly that match the color of her new garters, and indeed, Gerty has matched her garters to her underwear, both of which are blue: "...and the garters were blue to match on account of the transparent" (13.716). Thus, in the case of Gerty, the kind of image she aims to present to the world is one that also appeals to Bloom's predilections and taste for orderliness.

Gerty's performance for Bloom recalls the element of performance in Bloom's relationship with Martha, a woman with whom he corresponds via letters. Bloom first draws the connection between Gerty and Martha when he guesses that Gerty is menstruating: "Near her monthlies, I expect, makes them feel ticklish...How many women in Dublin have it today? Martha, she" (13. 777-82). Bloom's comment

that Gerty's menstrual cycle makes her "ticklish," which might be taken to mean titillated, and subsequent remark about both Gerty and Martha menstruating simultaneously indicates a parallel between the sexual natures of the two women's performances. In Martha's case, her sexual performance takes on the form of a letter, the contents of which is revealed in "Lotus Eaters": "I am awfully angry with you. I do with I could punish you for that. I called you naughty boy because I do not like that other world" (5.243-5), and later, "Please write me a long letter and tell me more. Remember if you do not I will punish you. So now you know what I will do to you, you naughty boy, if you do not wrote" (5.251-3). Similar to his relationship with Gerty, Bloom's interaction with Martha serves as a substitute for the lack of sex occurring between him and Molly.

Additionally both relationships are associated with objects that help to understand them: Gerty and Bloom's relationship utilizes clothing, while Martha and Bloom's relationship utilizes flowers, as shown by the flower Martha encloses with the letter. The flower represents Martha's recognition of and willingness to accept the character of Henry Flower, the pseudonym Bloom uses when writing to Martha, that Bloom has constructed. Henry Flower embodies a side of Bloom that the reader has not previously seen, and the slightly sadomasochistic relationship between Bloom and Martha appears to oppose the previously established image of a masculine Bloom. In this scenario, Bloom is the one who is punished as opposed to punishing, and thus he occupies a more feminine and submissive role. However, it can be inferred from Martha's letter that Bloom has asked Martha to call him "naughty boy" and to tell him that she will punish him, and thus he is truly the one in control of their

relationship, the same way he wants to buy silk garters to Molly in an effort to control what she wears. Thus Bloom, as Henry Flower, has the power to impose this masculine control on Martha and dictate their relationship through his words.

Bloom's alternate identity of Henry Flower has the ability to impose power over women, and Henry Flower's dominance and masculinity come to life in "Circe." As Black writes, "Bloom also incongruously imagines himself in the role of the traditional courtly lover and Don Juan..." (73). In "Circe," Bloom's Don Juan fantasy is realized through the character of Henry Flower; who is described wearing:

*...a dark mantle and a drooping plumed sombrero. He carries a silverstringed inlaid dulcimer and a longstemmed bamboo Jacob's pipe, its clay bowl fashioned as a female head. He wears dark velvet hose and silverbuckled pumps. He has the romantic Saviour's face with flowing locks, thin beard and moustache. His spindlelegs and sparrow feet are those of the tenor Mario, prince of Candia. He settles down his goffered ruffs and moistens his lips with a passage of his amorous tongue. (15.2479-2488)*

No longer Bloom, but a more tangible projection of Bloom's fantasy, Henry Flower is a lover and aficionado of romance. The Bloom the reader knows is no such person, occasionally fraternizing with prostitutes in dark alleyways and described as a "coon" (6.704) by John Henry Menton ("In God's name...what did she marry a coon like that for? She had plenty of game in her then" (6.704-5)). Conversely, Henry Flower has "the romantic Saviour's face with flowing locks"; he is fashionable and regal, evoking images of a prince. Henry Flower is also decidedly masculine; his Jacob's pipe, which Gifford explains as, "[a] large Continental pipe...here associated with the

patriarch" (432), has a female head; later on in the episode, Henry Flower appears "*caressing on his breast a severed female head*" (15.2620). Through these two images, he becomes defined by his association with women and his womanizing; more specifically, he is linked to the conquering of women. The female head on his Jacob's pipe and the severed female head suggest that he has adorned himself with the heads of women whose bodies he has done away with. His highly detailed outfit suggests that even in his unconscious, Bloom uses clothing to understand and as a means of seeing himself. He is seductive, moistening his lips with a "passage of his amorous tongue," almost assuming a demeanor of danger. In his first appearance, Henry Flower says, "There is a flower that bloometh" (15.2489-90), suggesting that Henry Flower is the version of Bloom that has fully bloomed, as opposed to the "real" Bloom, "the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower" (5.571-2). Henry Flower represents Bloom's masculine desires amplified and fully manifested.

Henry Flower, however, is not the only form in which Bloom appears in "Circe," which sees Bloom transforming into a myriad of different figures. These transformations are rooted in Bloom's many fantasies, and one such fantasy is that of the everyman's hero and social reformer:

...he has the usual male desires for power...Bloom's hallucinatory drama at first centers on success in society, instead of the identification with nature, body, or feeling associated with the feminine. He dreams of success in creating cultural change. In fantasy he is the working man's hero...Like other males in Joyce's microcosm of male stereotypes, Bloom hopes to be scripted as among the thinking gender. (Black 72)

The fantasies Bloom has in “Circe” of social change are very much masculine in nature, as his transformation from workman into Lord Mayor of Dublin to king is largely legitimized by the approval of important male figures in Dublin, such as the late Lord Mayor Harrington. The response to Bloom’s speech is especially indicative of the type of approval he desires from others:

*All the windows are thronged with sightseers, chiefly ladies. Along the route the regiments of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the King’s Own Scottish Borderers, the Cameron Highlands and the Welsh Fusiliers, standing to attention, keep back the crowd. Boys from High school are perched on the lampposts, telegraphy poles, windowsills...The ladies from their balconies throw down rosepetals...The men cheer. Bloom’s boys run amid the bystanders.... (15.1400-1449)*

This excerpt demonstrates that Bloom wishes for respect and approval from the men in Dublin, especially members of the military; the admiration of women; and to be a role model for young boys. The ladies who throw down rose petals recall the image of Bloom as a Don Juan-esque romancer; they reiterate the idea that, in addition to being a widely and socially respected public figure, he also has success with women, which further legitimizes this imagined hypermasculinity. That the boys are students is significant because Bloom does not want to be a role model for just any youth, but more specifically educated boys, further supporting the fact that Bloom has respect for intelligence embodied by many male figures, such as Stephen and himself, but not by female figures, such as Molly. The public nature of his speech underscores the

long-held idea that men belong in the public sphere and women in the private sphere, and Bloom perfectly embodies this notion in this section of “Circe.”

However, “Circe” also presents the reader with a wildly contrasting image of Bloom, especially in Bloom’s interactions with the prostitute Bella/Bello. Bloom and Bella/Bello are involved in a sadomasochistic relationship in “Circe,” closely paralleling the text of *Venus in Furs* by Leopold Von Sacher-Masoch. In *Venus in Furs*, the main character, Severin, enters as a submissive into a sadomasochistic relationship with a beautiful woman, Wanda; although initially unsure of the relationship, Wanda progressively becomes more involved in the punishment and torture of Severin, and finally the novella culminates in Severin being “cured” of his perversion when he is finally dominated by a man. Bloom, like Severin, wishes to be dominated by a woman (“Exuberant female. Enormously I desiderate your domination” (15.2777)). He subverts his previously established masculinity in wanting to be subservient to a woman, recalling the first image of him bringing breakfast to Molly in “Calypso.” In “Calypso,” Bloom’s actions revolve around Molly; he arranges the breakfast plate according to her needs, he leaves his house without his latchkey in order to avoid disturbing her sleep, and he rifles through her soiled clothing to get a book for her. He even ensures that he has left their residence during the time of Molly and Boylan’s scheduled rendezvous at 4PM. She fully dominates their conversation:

—Would you like the window open a little?

She doubled a slice of bread into her mouth, asking:

—What time is the funeral?

...

Following the pointing of her finger he took up a leg of her soiled drawers from the bed. No? Then, a twisted grey garter...

—No: that book.

Other stocking. Her petticoat.

—It must have fell down, she said.

He felt here and there. *Voglio e non vorrei*...Not in the bed. Must have slid down. He stooped and lifted the valance. The book, fallen, sprawled against the bulge of the orangekeyed chamberpot.

—Show here, she said. I put a mark in it. There's a word I wanted to ask you.

(4.317-32)

The first question in this interaction is one Bloom asks to ensure Molly's comfort, and even then she ignores it for the more pressing issue of "metempsychosis," commanding Bloom to search through her mess for a book he very possibly bought for her. "*Voglio e non vorrei*" translates to "I want to and I wouldn't like to" (Gifford 77), which indicates his conflicting feelings about submitting to Molly's demands. Despite this inner conflict, he decides on "*voglio*" rather than "*non vorrei*", and rummages around and under the bed for the book Molly requested, which is next to a chamber pot. Thus, Bloom physically lowers himself in comparison to Molly, stooping below her level in order to carry out her orders. His compliance to her is reiterated in "Circe," when the fan disdainfully says to Bloom, "And the missus is master. Petticoat government" (15.2759-60), "petticoat government" relating back to Bloom's fixation on Molly's clothing and his worship of her body. "Petticoat

government” also emphasizes the role of clothing in the sadomasochistic relationship, which becomes an important element in Wanda and Severin’s relationship through the use of furs. As Wanda becomes Severin’s mistress, her use of her furs becomes a statement of power; at times she will shed her furs and even give them to Severin, at these moments becoming a loving and affectionate partner to him (*Masochism* 212-3). However, she quickly demands that he return them to her, a deliberate and premeditated action that further asserts her power to tease and dominate him.

The imagined fan is the not the only one who recognizes the “missus” as master; when Bloom gives Boylan’s letter to Molly, he sees that it is addressed “Mrs Marion Bloom” (4.244). Gifford explains this inscription as, “In 1904 an ill-mannered mode of address to a married woman who is living with her husband. She should be addressed ‘Mrs. Leopold Bloom’” (76). Even Boylan recognizes that Molly is not entirely Bloom’s, and that he is not the dominant figure in their household. Though she still takes Bloom’s last name, Boylan addresses her as “Marion,” as she is known prior to her marriage to Bloom, as if Boylan does not legitimately recognize their marriage. In this way, Bloom embodies the feminine in his relationship with Molly and is thus emasculated by both his actions and his status as a cuckold.

Much of what happens between Severin and Wanda is echoed in Bloom and Bella/Bello; however, a crucial difference in these two relationships is that Bloom transforms into a woman and Bella into the male Bello. That Bloom must turn into a woman in order to be dominated by Bello illustrates the misogynistic view that to be submissive or dominated is to be female and to be dominating or dominant is to be male. Black writes, “...in a patriarchal society woman is an enslaved dependent

and...sexist society encourages, by its very nature, power relationships that are sadomasochistic. Bello informs Bloom that he will have to endure what women endure in order to be feminine” (75). Using this analysis, Bloom upholds the patriarchal social order as well as his own masculinity, as he is only dominated as a woman. However, the fact remains that “Circe” reveals Bloom’s latent desires to actually be a woman as shown by his submissiveness, his cross-dressing, and finally his birthing of children. “Circe” helps in uncovering some of Bloom’s past, especially his early childhood: “To be a shoefitter in Manfield’s was my love’s young dream, the darling joys of sweet buttonhooking, to lace up crisscrossed to kneelength the dressy kid footwear satinlined, so incredibly impossible small, of Clyde Road ladies. Even their wax model Raymonde I visited daily to admire her cobweb hose...” (15.2814-18). Finally, the root of Bloom’s fascination with women’s undergarments is at least partially revealed, and it has much to do with the aesthetic quality of women’s clothing.

The way Bloom describes his captivation with women’s clothing is reminiscent of Gerty’s attitude towards clothing; the same way she reads the *Lady’s Pictorial*, from which she models her own outfits, Bloom admires the outfits of Clyde Road ladies. The *Lady’s Pictorial* is described as a fashion journal with “pretensions to fashionable upper-class tone” (Gifford 286), and “Clyde Road ladies” refers to the women who reside at Clyde Road, “a fashionable upper-middle-class Anglo-Irish residential area south-southeast of metropolitan Dublin” (Gifford 501). Both Bloom and Gerty hold upper-class fashion in high esteem, which is evident in the way Gerty aims to emulate these fashions and the way Bloom describes the beautiful clothing he

yearns to be surrounded by. The “satinlined” footwear and pantyhose are articles of clothing that Bloom still fixates on; perhaps Bloom’s obsession with undergarments is only partially due to masculine voyeurism, and also somewhat due to an identification with women like Gerty and a desire to wear such garments.

Bloom not only desires to wear women’s clothing, but has also done so in the past. “It was Gerald converted me to be a true corsetlover when I was female impersonator in the High School play *Vice Versa*” (15.3009-11), Bloom says in “Circe.” The play in which Bloom first cross-dresses is titled “*Vice Versa*,” the title itself signifying an inversion of sorts. Earlier in the episode, Bloom confirms that this instance of cross-dressing is not an isolated occurrence when he reveals that he has tried on Molly’s clothing:

BLOOM

...I tried her things on only twice, a small prank, in Holles street. When we were hard up I washed them to save the laundry bill. My own shirts I turned. It was the purest thrift.

BELLO

...And showed off coquettishely in your domino at the mirror behind closedrawn blinds your unskirted thighs and hegoat’s udders in various poses of surrender, eh?

(15.2986-92)

One of the most striking aspects of Bloom’s cross-dressing experiences with Molly’s clothing is that he describes them as “the purest thrift”; while “thrift” can mean “savings, earnings, gains, profit,” it can also be taken to mean “the fact or condition of thriving or prospering” according to the *OED Online* (“Thrift”), and by referring to

trying on Molly's clothing as a "thrif," Bloom's words can mean that the condition in which he prospers is that in which he is wearing women's clothing. It is the "purest thrif," suggesting that for Bloom, this experience of trying on Molly's clothing is very clearly intentioned; it is truly a condition in which he thrives, unmarred by any outside or societal influences. This notion is affirmed by Bello's remark that Bloom tries on Molly's clothing behind "closedrawn blinds."

The image of Bloom showing off to himself in the mirror is reminiscent of Molly's last look in the mirror before greeting Boylan ("Bronze gazed far sideways. Mirror there. Is that best side of her face? They always know. Knock at the door. Last tip to titivate" (11.1046-7)), as well as Gerty's look in the mirror to assess her outfit (She did it up all by herself and what joy was hers when she tried it on then, smiling at the lovely reflection which the mirror gave back to her! (13.161-2)). Like Molly and Gerty, Bloom admires his own body in the mirror, dressed in women's clothing and posing "coquettishely." The word "coquettishely" suggests that Bloom, in women's clothing, looks coquettish in the way that women do, and can also imitate the female body in a coquettish manner. While this clothing plays a role in Bloom's apparent coquetry, his "[showing] off coquettishely," illustrates that he is somewhat familiar with the ways of coquetry; thus, Bloom's coquetry is not only due to the fact that he dons coquettish clothing, but also due to an inherent knowledge about how to perform these feminine actions. Bloom's "hegoat's udders" evoke the image of Molly's breasts in "Calypso," which Bloom compares to a "shegoat's udder" (4.304-5), further drawing a parallel between Bloom's body and women's bodies. While Bloom is still male as a "hegoat," he also has udders, which are markedly female

organs, painting Bloom as a quasi-hermaphroditic being; he is not simply male, nor simply female in nature, but both.

The culmination of Bloom's feminine fantasies in "Circe" is epitomized in the scene during which Bloom gives birth. After Dr. Dixon pronounces him "a finished example of the new womanly man" (15.1798-99), Bloom declares "O, I so want to be a mother" (15.1817) before giving birth to octuplets:

*All the octuplets are handsome, with valuable metallic faces, wellmade, respectably dressed and wellconducted, speaking five modern languages fluently and interested in various arts and sciences... They are immediately appointed to positions of high public trust in several different countries as managing directors of banks, traffic managers of railways, chairmen of limited liability companies, vicechairmen of hotel syndicates. (15.1823-31)*

The event of Bloom giving birth more obviously signifies Bloom's desire to identify with or be a woman, but what is more interesting is the way Bloom's children are depicted. All of Bloom's octuplets are attractive, successful, and socially powerful; this depiction of Bloom's fantasy children contrasts greatly with Bloom's actual children. In "Hades," Bloom thinks about his son Rudy, who passed away eleven years ago: "Our. Little. Beggar. Baby. Meant nothing. Mistake of nature. If it's healthy it's from the mother. If not from the man. Better luck next time" (6.328-30). Gifford explains this reasoning as being rooted in "the ancient Jewish belief that the health of a child is a reflection on the virility of the male" (111). Throughout the novel Bloom ruminates on Rudy, expressing guilt over Rudy's death, which is encapsulated in this excerpt from "Hades" in which Bloom feels that Rudy's death is

a result of his own failure of masculinity. However, as a quasi-woman with the ability to give birth to children, Bloom's octuplets are not only completely healthy, but exceptionally so, as evidenced by the word "wellmade." In a way, his octuplets exemplify many of Bloom's preferences and fantasies; they are well-dressed, which Bloom obviously values, intelligent, and have the power to enact social change, as Bloom imagines himself in "Circe." They are specifically intelligent in "various arts and sciences," which, incidentally, are the same esteemed intelligences Bloom assigns to himself and Stephen in "Ithaca" (16.7559-60). It is only through being a mother that Bloom can give birth to these healthy and perfect beings, suggesting Bloom's wish to be a mother and therefore a woman. In his eyes, only women have the power to birth strong, healthy children, while male weakness can result in unhealthy and weak children.

These examples convey to the reader that what is at stake in this analysis of Bloom is his very nature. While he is peculiar and deviates in many ways from the norm, he is also particular, and has a very specific idea of how the world should be ordered; despite perpetuating ideas of women as inferior and submissive to men, Bloom nevertheless identifies to a certain extent with women, while simultaneously embodying masculine desires. A nexus of contradictions, Bloom does not seem to be wholly man or woman in the way he navigates his life; at once, he is presented to us serving his wife breakfast in bed, then, episodes later, pleasuring himself to a stranger at Sandymount Strand. The different iterations of himself that appear in "Circe" also contradict each other; he sees himself in his fantasies as a masculinized social reformer or a womanizing Don Giovanni, but also as a mother or feminized

submissive in a sadomasochistic relationship. Objects, such as food, clothing, and flowers, have a vital role in helping to elucidate these identities that Bloom embodies. However, matters become even more complicated when the role of Molly in Bloom's life and the status of their relationship are taken into consideration. This next chapter analyzes Molly in terms of her as an individual and in relation to Bloom.

## M O L L Y

Who is Molly, exactly? From the very moment of her introduction, Joyce does not reveal much about her, her first words being “Mn” (4.57). These first words lie in stark contrast with the opening lines of “Calypso,” which, from their first read, indicate a peculiar and particular quality about Bloom. The reader never sees Molly in public life; Molly is only ever seen in the comfort of her own home, indulging in her own personal habits. Only when we arrive at “Penelope” do we begin to gain insight into the mind of the woman who has mystified the reader for the entirety of the novel, and even in “Penelope,” Molly’s thoughts are often incomplete, interrupting each other as her mind wanders. Unlike Bloom’s episodes, in which his thoughts are always contextualized in the outside world, “Penelope” gives the reader a muddle of Molly’s experiences and opinions on various people, behaviors, and things, unfettered by grammar or punctuation.

Much of what the reader learns of Molly is through Bloom; Bloom thinks about Molly throughout the entire day, and from his thoughts, as well as other characters’ commentary, what is immediately evident is that Molly is defined much by her body and her clothing, as evidenced by Bloom’s fixation on her breasts, her behind, and her undergarments. “Penelope” affirms that Molly places great value on clothing, and thus her appearance. “...*Ulysses* does not present her doing the work with textiles that has been associated with women throughout most of history—except in the sense that she expends serious amounts of energy thinking about her appearance. Even with regard to her singing career, she seems to be more interested

in what is on her body than on the program” (Harper 175). The amount of energy Molly expends thinking about clothing is comparable to the effort Gerty puts into her outfits, as Gerty spends an entire afternoon searching for chenille for her straw hat and matches her underwear to her garters. It is important to think about Molly in relation to Gerty and their respective roles in the novel; with no other female voices present in the novel prior to “Penelope,” *Ulysses* uses Gerty as a means to establish a norm for femininity and femaleness in the novel. Her narrative, written in what Callow describes as “romanticized ladies magazine rhetoric” (156), is the novel’s representation of a clichéd and specifically gendered language written for and used by women of the time. The similarities between Molly and Gerty’s discourse demonstrate a degree of conventional femininity in both Molly and Gerty, which is especially evident in their approaches to clothing.

For Molly, as for Bloom, clothing plays an integral role in sexual performance, and thus Molly has great personal investment in it: “...I could quite easily get him to make it up any time I know how...I know plenty of ways ask him to tuck down the collar of my blouse or touch him with my veil and gloves on going out 1 kiss then would send them all spinning...” (18.186-91). Molly understands the interactive and performative aspect to how clothing works in the world, as evidenced by the fact that, in this instance, she allows the man, whose identity is unclear, to tuck down her collar himself. Molly uses clothing as an extension of her own body; to tuck down her collar is to touch her collarbone, and to touch him with her veil and gloves is to place her hand on him. Gerty uses her stockings in a similar manner, as the sheer quality of Gerty’s stockings allows Bloom to see the shapely form of her legs, which

the stockings help to define. Later on, Molly remembers, "...I had that white blouse on open in the front to encourage him as much as I could without too openly they were just beginning to plump..." (18.787-9), and then, "...Ill change that lace on my black dress to show off my bubs..." (18.900-1). Molly understands the sexual value of the clothing she wears, knowing exactly how to subtly position or alter her clothing to make herself noticeable to men and to accentuate her own female figure.

Molly is very selective about the clothing she wears, being acutely aware of the fact that she must pay special attention to her clothing because she is no longer as young and beautiful as she was. She has concerns about her weight, saying, "...my belly is a bit too big Ill have to knock off the stout at dinner..." (18.450), and about her age; she recalls a memory in which she finds Milly sitting with her legs up: "...I had to tell her not to cock her legs up like that on show on the windowsill before all the people passing they all look at her like me when I was her age of course any old rag looks well on you..." (18.1034-7). A hint of jealousy can be detected in Molly's tone, a combination of resentment for Milly's youth as well as a disdain for her clothing. The same way that Gerty must be very careful about the type of clothing she wears, as well as its placement in order to conceal her lame leg, Molly must be very particular about what she wears to highlight her assets and detract attention from her age or weight.

For Molly, the way one dresses makes a statement about one's personal life, and clothing is a way of expressing one's socioeconomic and relationship status. Throughout "Penelope," Molly desires fine clothing because she realizes its sexual and social value: "...Ive no clothes at all the brown costume and the skirt and jacket

and the one at the cleaners 3 whats that for any woman cutting up this old hat and patching up the other the men wont look at you and women try to walk on you because they know youve no man then..." (18.470-4). Fine clothing implies that one has the financial stability to afford it, and this financial stability comes in the form of a husband. The reference to patching up one's hat gestures towards Gerty's hat, for which she spent an entire afternoon searching for a matching ribbon. Molly seems to think even more critically about the social role of clothing than Gerty does, suggesting that it is not enough to merely repair an old hat to make it look new because people cannot be fooled by just a semblance of sartorial savvy. Thus, Molly deliberates about all the new clothing she wants to buy in "Penelope," illustrating that appropriate clothing, at least for her, is not only fine in quality, but must possess a newness that silently declares one's wealth and social standing.

However, Molly's idea of proper clothing is quite different from Bloom's, as she says, "...he thinks he knows a great lot about a womans dress and cooking mathering everything he can scour off the shelves into it if I went by his advices every blessed hat I put on does that suit me yes take that thats alright the one like a weddingcake standing up miles off my head he said suited me..." (18.519-23). This excerpt illustrates a rift between Molly and Bloom's perceptions of propriety, which is quite significant given Bloom's strict personal rules concerning properness and orderliness. Bloom's comments on the woman's rumped stockings ("Her stockings are loose over her ankles. I detest that: so tasteless" (8.542)) and preference for high-quality fabrics in women's undergarments demonstrates a seeming knowledge and taste for clothing, particularly women's clothing; but Molly's assessment of the

“weddingcake” hat suggests a disparity between Molly and Bloom’s opinions regarding clothing despite the fact that both have very specific ideas about the proper appearance of clothing. Molly’s voice sheds new light on Bloom’s mannerisms; because the novel largely focuses on Bloom, the reader grows accustomed to all of Bloom’s eccentricities. Molly contextualizes Bloom’s voice, calling attention to the fact that Bloom’s need for order and bizarre tastes are indeed strange, demonstrated by the fact that he thinks the “weddingcake” of a hat is appropriate for Molly. Molly’s voice acts a counterpoint for Bloom’s, reminding the reader to remember that Bloom’s way of ordering the world is not the only or the right way, and it is not by any means the novel’s way.

Bloom and Molly interact very differently with clothing and define it in different ways, and this same disparity between them exhibits itself in relation to food. As seen previously, Bloom demonstrates a certain fastidiousness and neatness associated with the process of eating; however, Molly does not abide by these same standards at all. In “Penelope,” she says, “...I wished I could have picked every morsel of that chicken out of my fingers it was so tasty and browned and as tender as anything only for I didnt want to eat everything on my plate those forks and fishlicers were hallmarked silver too I wish I had some I could easily have slipped a couple into my muff...” (18.430-4). This excerpt is unique in that it places Molly outside her home and in public, and her public self feels the restraint of proper manners and ladylike ideals. Thus, she restricts herself from eating everything on her plate for fear of giving the impression of being uncouth, and she refrains from licking her fingers of the chicken.

Despite her restraint, the fact remains that her true desire is to devour her food with no regard for manners or appearances. Molly's attitude towards eating is best encapsulated by the idea of her stealing food by hiding it in her "muff," or handwarmer, ostensibly food that she will later eat. That she even considers this course of action illustrates a crudeness in the way Molly eats, and this crudeness exhibits itself when she is in the privacy of her own home in "Calypso," scarfing down the breakfast Bloom brings her: "She doubled a slice of bread into her mouth...she swallowed a draught of tea from her cup held by nohandle and, having wiped her fingertips smartly on the blanket, began to search the text with the hairpin till she reached the word" (4.318-35). Kiberd observes that Molly's eating habits conflict with Bloom's "orderly consumption" of food (133); indeed, Molly has no care for eating her food the way Bloom does, cursorily stuffing the bread in her mouth, which contrasts with how Bloom carefully cuts and applies condiments to his bread. Additionally, Molly holds her cup by "nohandle," showing that she is not handling the teacup the correct way and demonstrating that she has no care for proper eating etiquette, a possible example of the "dirty eaters" Bloom hates. She goes on to wipe her dirtied hands on their bedspread and searches her book using a hairpin, another instance of improper usage of an object, much like the cup's "nohandle." Given Bloom's loathing of the dirty eaters at the Burton, this representation of Molly raises the questions of why and how Bloom tolerates Molly's habits, which are not at all as particular as Bloom's. She does not fit into his ordering of the world at all, demonstrating a refusal to do so through her actions.

Molly's relationship with and enjoyment of food is linked to her relationship with sex. She recalls a memory she has of having sex with a man, possibly Boylan: "...I was coming for about 5 minutes with my legs around him...O Lord I wanted to shout out all sorts of things fuck or shit or anything at all only not to look ugly or those lines from the strain who knows the way hed take it...some of them want you to be so nice about it..." (18.587-92). The same way Molly feels pressure to be gracious in her eating habits, she also feels in her sexual encounters. She worries about looking ugly or facial wrinkles from the intensity of her expression, reinforcing the idea that she strongly feels the constraint of societal expectations of women. She also worries about how her partner sees her, again emphasizing her concern of how others view her, as well as her belief that appearances carry a great amount of weight in relation to others. However, in the privacy of her own thoughts, her true nature is not ladylike or proper, and her instinctual reaction to the pleasure of sex is not to be "nice about it," but rather to express herself with the vulgar and improper words that she really wants to use. Inherently, Molly is not dainty or nice or organized, but blunt and dirty, in multiple senses of the word.

In fact, Molly's dirty habits and sexual encounters show, despite her markedly female obsession with clothing and appearance, that in many ways, she deviates from the feminine standard that Gerty represents. The image of Molly *Ulysses* presents the reader with is certainly not one that depicts a stereotypical woman in the way Gerty and Gerty's discourse in "Nausicaa" represents women. Despite both Gerty and Molly's obsession with their clothing and appearance, Gerty actually puts these socially imposed rules on clothing into effect, while Molly, confined to her home in

“Penelope,” can only ruminate on them. The general sense of a polished and kempt appearance that surrounds Gerty does not accompany Molly; perhaps Molly’s comparative filth is simply because Molly is never portrayed outside her home in public as Gerty is. But perhaps the reason is that Molly, unlike Gerty, does not feel the need to fully commit to the performance of femininity as an identity, but rather is an identity she embodies only in public. She is clearly very comfortable in her own home, the space in which her relentlessly honest monologue takes place. Molly is portrayed as idle, and the unclean state of her bedroom and the disarray of her soiled clothing show that Molly is either lacking skill in or chooses not to exert energy on any caretaking duties. In this case, her lack of interaction with objects and nonchalance for their orderliness are what define her state of being. While Molly waits for Bloom to bring her breakfast in bed, unwilling to prepare her own bread, butter, and cream (4.298), Gerty prides herself in her culinary skill and embodiment of domesticity:

She would care for him with creature comforts too for Gerty was womanly wise and knew that a mere man liked that feeling of hominess. Her griddlecakes done to a goldenbrown hue and queen Ann’s pudding of delightful creaminess had won golden opinions from all...she didn’t like the eating part when there were any people that made her shy and often she wondered why you couldn’t eat something poetical like violets or roses....

(13.224-30)

The first sentence of this excerpt introduces the idea of being “womanly wise,” and this womanly wisdom is largely defined by knowing how to make a home, especially

for a husband. Gerty's mastery of cooking makes her a paragon of womanhood and wifehood. That she is more interested in the actual cooking of the food rather than its consumption demonstrates that she is more dedicated to the making of her home than her own enjoyment in eating; in this respect, she is the exact opposite of Molly.

Though they are both concerned about being observed as they eat, the way Molly wishes to savor the chicken morsels directly conflicts with Gerty's detachment from eating altogether. Molly's relationship with food is not one of wanting to provide food for her household or husband; it is a similar relationship that the men at the Burton have to food in that the main focus is on consumption, and more specifically, disorderly consumption.

Her lack of caretaking skills in both her role in the home and as a wife is further emphasized by the fact that much of soliloquy is spent thinking about herself and all the men in her life. Her sexuality is at the forefront of her mind rather than issues of the household or of motherhood. Critics often read Molly as a stereotypical woman in that she has been conditioned by society to please men:

...[Molly] spends lots of time making herself alluring, for she has fallen under the sway of masculinist propaganda that teaches woman that her goal is man...She likes to think that other women would envy her successes with men, for her conditioned belief that women are defined through men leads her to accept the idea that women are marketable and quantifiable. (Black 78-9)

While on the surface, Molly seems to only think of herself as an object of male consumption, a closer look reveals that Molly approaches her sexuality in a very different manner. Though Molly spends a large portion of "Penelope" thinking about

her various encounters with men, she is also an agent of her own sexuality, and she chooses whom she allows and does not allow access to her body:

...he caressed them outside they love doing that its the roundness there...he wanted to touch mine with his for a moment but I wouldnt let him he was awfully put out first...O yes I pulled him off into my handkerchief pretending not to be excited but I opened my legs I wouldnt let him touch me inside my petticoat because I had a skirt opening up the side I tormented the life out of him...I liked him like that moaning I made him blush a little when I got over him.... (18.796-815)

Molly allows him to touch her clothing but not her actual body, essentially teasing while also simultaneously pleasuring him by using her clothing both to entice and to shield. The handkerchief is another example of clothing that Molly uses as an extension of her body, as she satisfies him but only allows him to climax into her handkerchief as opposed to her body. The sexual encounter is on her terms; she decides what he can and cannot touch, and what happens between them is a question of what she “lets” him do, thus allowing her full control over the situation. She pleases him because it gives her pleasure, as indicated by the fact that she says “I liked him like that moaning,” which demonstrates that her actions are based on her own preferences. She enjoys the power she has over him, delighted with how much she can torment and tease him. “...I suppose Im nothing any more when I wouldnt let him lick me in Holles street one night... “ (18.1245-6), she says almost sarcastically, commenting on how easily men dismiss women when they are denied access to women’s bodies.

Molly, however, is not one to be dismissed. She has her own opinions about how she wants to be treated during sex, and she is adamant about making sex about her, not just her partner. She says, "...he does it all wrong too thinking only of his own pleasure his tongue is too flat or I dont know what he forgets that whethen I dont Ill make him do it again if he doesnt mind himself and lock him down to sleep in the coalcellar with the blackbeetles..." (18.1249-52). She mentally reprimands Boylan for not giving her enough attention and only caring about his own pleasure. For Molly, it seems that every moment and every detail of a sexual encounter is crucial, and the mere fact that Boylan's tongue is too flat is enough to warrant locking him in the "coalcellar with the blackbeetles." Molly is not willing to compromise her own pleasures and desires; she wants control over her sexual relationships and her body, and more importantly, she demands a certain degree of respect from her partner. She says, "if he doesnt mind himself," introducing a language of politeness and consideration into her sex life.

Molly sees sex as an act of mutual respect, and it is clear from her soliloquy that Boylan has no manners regarding sex, and is thus an imperfect partner for her. Molly says:

...no thats no way for him has he no manners nor no refinement nor no nothing in his nature slapping us behind like that on my bottom because I didnt call him Hugh the ignoramus that doesnt know poetry from a cabbage thats what you get for not keeping them in their proper place pulling off his shoes and trousers there on the chair before me so barefaced without even

asking permission and standing out that vulgar way in the half of a shirt....

(18.1368-73)

Again, the idea of having manners crops up, and it is clearly very important to Molly that he respects her. She does not appreciate being slapped just because she does not obey his every command, such as refusing to call him “Hugh” or “huge.” That she says, “thats what you get for not keeping them in their proper place,” suggests that Molly believes women to rightfully have control over men in some respects, and to teach them manners and respect instead of simply catering to their every need. She hates that he treats her home as his, carelessly throwing his clothing and shoes around her house; her disdain at how he pulls off his shoes and trousers demonstrates her disapproval at how he interacts with his clothing. Molly expects decorum and respect from Boylan, denying him a level of intimacy and informality that exists between her and Bloom. However, it is also important to note that for Bloom, Molly does not have to have this same expectation of good manners because Bloom is inherently decorous (“...Poldy anyhow whatever he does always wipes his feet on the mat... (18.225-6), evidenced by his aforementioned need for tidiness and order amongst his belongings.

For Molly, sex is not just about pleasing the man, nor is it about simply being dominated by the man either. Molly is very much aware of her own sexuality and her sexual power on men, and she wants to use it. Again, it is useful to compare Molly to Gerty, who also recognizes her own sexual power on men—as evidenced by the show she puts on for Bloom—but still wants to be protected by a man: “...a manly man with a strong quiet face...who would understand, take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the strength of his deep passionate nature and comfort her with

a long long kiss. It would be like heaven” (13.210-14). For Gerty, the conventional romantic female figure, a man protects her and sweeps her off her feet with a passionate kiss; he is strong, and comforts the comparatively weak Gerty. In this excerpt, the man occupies the active position, the doer of the actions, while Gerty is merely the receiver of the actions, a passive figure. In juxtaposition, Molly, whose “1 kiss then would send them all spinning” (18.190-1), occupies the dominant role in this instance, and it is her kiss that disarms the men, as opposed to vice versa, placing her in the more masculine position in her relationships.

In fact, Molly not only occupies a quasi-masculine role in her sexual relationships, but she also wishes to be a man at times. She remembers a sexual encounter in her past: “...I bet he never saw a better pair of thighs than that look how white they are the smoothest place is right there between this bit here how soft like a peach easy God I wouldnt mind being a man and get up on a lovely woman...” (18.1144-7). Later on she says:

...I suppose its because they were so plump and tempting in my short petticoat he couldnt resist they excite myself sometimes its well for men all the amount of pleasure they get off a womans body were so round and white for them always I wished I was one myself for a change just to try with that thing they have swelling up on you so hard and at the same time so soft when you touch it.... (18.1378-83)

Molly is cognizant of her attractiveness and appeal to men, while also being aware of the fact that she, along with all other women, has to put in effort to make sure she is “so round and white for them.” She wants to be a man in order to be able to

appreciate how much effort she puts into her own appearance the way a man does, to be able to objectify and consume her own body. However, from these excerpts, Molly does not fully want to be a man, but to have the body of a man with the knowledge and mind of a woman; she wants to be able to have sex with a woman in a male body, but still know that the “smoothest place is right there between this bit here” and still know what a penis feels like to a woman, “so hard and at the same time so soft.” Thus, Molly becomes quasi-man, quasi-woman in these moments, similar to how Bloom becomes feminine-bodied in “Circe,” but still remains Bloom in name and essence. Yet, while both Molly and Bloom both embody a certain degree of androgyny, their motives and the nature of their desires differs; Molly’s desire to be a man is tinged with narcissism, as she wants to be able to admire her own body. Her fantasy of having sex with herself relates to her preoccupation with her appearance in terms of dress and her body. Meanwhile, Bloom’s fantasies of becoming a woman are rooted more so in a deep desire to experience being a woman, as “Circe” reveals that he wants to be able to give birth and to embody a feminized role of submission, these fantasies supported by his actual encounters with cross-dressing.

Despite all of Molly’s differences from Gerty and her desire to be masculine, at the end of “Penelope,” the reader still sees Molly expressing feelings similar to Gerty’s of wanting a man to comfort her: “...of course a woman wants to be embraced 20 times a day almost to make her look young no matter by who so long as to be in love or loved by somebody...” (18.1407-8). Though *Ulysses* paints Molly very differently from the conventional woman that Gerty represents, the fact remains that she cannot detach herself from the experience of being and living as a woman in

this society. This quote illustrates that Molly wants to feel young because she cares about her appearances, just as most women like her do, and that she wants to be loved, just as Gerty wishes. Finally, *Ulysses* reminds the reader that Molly is still bound by these societal influences, and that she is not so dissimilar from Gerty. Nevertheless, though restrained in many ways by society, Molly is free in mind, and her rambling thoughts show a Molly that exists outside the bounds of society, a Molly who believes women should be able to be priests, who wishes she could experience being a man, and who asserts her control in her sexual relationships. In her thoughts, she is unencumbered, able to embody an identity outside the conventional norms of femininity.

## MOLLY + BLOOM

Upon closer analysis of Bloom and Molly, as well as a deeper understanding of their individual natures, it is evident that certain incompatibilities exist between them as people and as husband and wife, especially in their individual relationships to objects. While Bloom orders the world in a very particular, albeit peculiar, manner, Molly seems to oppose this order, as well as many other socially constructed orders in the world of Dublin in 1904. Bloom exhibits fastidiousness in his quotidian life, demonstrating extreme care in matters such as eating habits and the appearance of dress; conversely, Molly does not show this same sense of meticulousness. In fact, Molly's eating and living habits exist almost in direct contradiction to Bloom's order of the world, which requires very specific methods of eating and organizing his belongings. Though both Molly and Bloom express very specific preferences regarding clothing, Bloom is more concerned with the propriety of clothing and its tidy appearance, while Molly's obsession with clothing is very much linked to her sexuality and how clothing adds to her allure.

Additionally, there is the pressing question of gender and sexuality in both Molly and Bloom's identities, which becomes clearer through analyzing objects in their lives. Both Molly and Bloom are portrayed very differently from other women and men, respectively, in the novel, and they both possess some vaguely androgynous qualities. Bloom's sexuality is most fully fleshed out in "Circe," in which his fantasies reflect both masculine and feminine desires to be a public leader, a feminized submissive, and a mother. Molly's soliloquy confirms a degree of

conventional womanhood within Molly, but also thoroughly explores her refusal to be constrained by the limits of being a woman in Dublin, as well as her desires to be a man. However, as mentioned previously, their inclinations towards the opposite gender are driven by different motives. Neither fully conforms to the sexual or gender norms of the time, and Joyce makes an effort to distinguish Molly and Bloom from the rest of their community. That they are both exhibit androgynous qualities to some extent seems fitting for their relationship, as Bloom often wishes to occupy a more submissive position and Molly a more dominant one. Their desires appear to complement each other, but the fact that they have not had sexual intercourse to completion for eleven years gestures at a distance between Molly and Bloom. Thus, there is a fissure in their relationship not only in the sense of individual preferences and ways of ordering the world, but also in the physical sense.

What, then, keeps Molly and Bloom's marriage together? Bloom recognizes the nature of their marriage has changed, saying, "I was happier then. Or was that I? Or am I now I?" (8.608), and even contemplates divorce (17.2202). Molly also expresses dissatisfaction with their marriage when she thinks, "...I'd rather die 20 times over than marry another of their sex of course hed never find another woman like me to put up with him the way I do..." (18.231-3); the fact that she feels she must "put up" with Bloom indicates how tired she seems of him. The mutual discontent with their marriage raises the question of why they continue to simply tolerate each other. However, despite their disillusionment with their marriage and with each other, there are certain moments that resurface time and again throughout the novel in both Molly and Bloom's memories that point to much deeper emotions

for each other and a more profound mutual understanding than their personal thoughts might reveal. These key memories, facilitated by food, clothing, and flowers, are imperative to understanding and cementing Bloom and Molly's relationship.

One of the key memories that consistently crops up throughout the novel is that of Ben Dollard. Ben Dollard appears within two different contexts in *Ulysses*, the first of which pertains to Molly's joke about his "base barreltone" (8.117). Bloom says, "She's not exactly witty. Can be rude too. Blurt out what I was thinking. Still, I don't know. She used to say Ben Dollard had a base barreltone voice. He has legs like barrels and you'd think he was singing into a barrel. Now, isn't that wit... Barrel of Bass. See? It all works out" (8.116-22). Bloom admits to himself that he does not find Molly very bright, and he can only think of this one example that he could possibly consider witty, spending the rest of the paragraph trying to justify to himself that it is, indeed, witty. Bloom, who values a very specific kind of intellect, experiences an inner struggle of how to properly educate Molly; as mentioned earlier, he attempts to guide her education by leaving books around the house for her to read, but to no avail. This joke also perturbs Bloom because not only does he continue to question Molly's intelligence, but he also questions his own judgment of intelligence: "See? It all works out" (8.122), he concludes after figuring out exactly why her joke is witty, but still unsettled he has to go through so much to prove its wittiness to himself. Thus, this issue of Molly's intelligence is a point of contention in their relationship, and Ben Dollard plays a crucial role in bringing this tension to the surface.

However, this memory, like many other memories throughout the novel, is intimately tied to an object that recurs throughout the memory; the Ben Dollard has a

major connection to clothing in that he borrows a too-tight tuxedo from Bloom and Molly's former clothing business: "Night he ran round to us to borrow a dress suit for that concert. Trousers tight as a drum on him. Musical porkers. Molly did laugh when he went out. Threw herself back across the bed, screaming, kicking. With all his belongings on show... Well, of course that's what gives him the base barreltone" (11.554-9). Molly remembers it as well: "...Ben Dollard base barreltone the night he borrowed the swallowtail to sing out of in Holles street squeezed and squashed into them and grinning all over his big Dolly face like a wellwhipped child's botty... imagine paying 5/- in the preserved seats for that..." (18.1285-90). There is sweetness to this memory: Bloom and Molly, both obsessed to a certain degree with clothing, own a clothing business, and the clothing they provide for Ben Dollard is wrong; but, even though it does not fit properly, Bloom and Molly experience this impropriety together. Ben Dollard, comical in the inappropriate tuxedo that they have provided for him, looks so foolish that Molly laughs, and Bloom fondly remembers her laughing, as well as her exact reaction. The mention of "base barreltone" in the context of this memory is no longer an issue of Molly's intelligence, but rather a simple and fond reference to a joke she makes. Thus, the particular item of the too-tight pants is an example of how the novel uses the inert aspects of everyday life, in this case clothing, to reconcile tensions between characters.

*Ulysses* not only utilizes clothing as a way of relieving tensions between Molly and Bloom, but its use of flowers provides the reader with a way of understanding their relationship that bridges the previously established difference between them. Flowers are present in Molly's lotion, which she specifically asks

Bloom to get for her from the chemist. In “Penelope,” she wonders whether he has gotten it for her: “...O no there was the face lotion I finished the last of yesterday that made my skin like new I told him over and over again get that made up in the same place and dont forget it God only knows whether he did after all...” (18.458-61).

Though Molly reprimands Bloom for forgetting her, in “Lotus Eaters,” the reader sees Bloom ordering the lotion, yet another thing he willingly does for her:

—Sweet almond oil and tincture of benzoin, Mr Bloom said, and then  
orangeflower water...

It certainly did make her skin so delicate white like wax.

—And white wax also, he said.

...That orangeflower water is so fresh. Nice smell these soaps have. Pure curd soap. Time to get a bath round the corner. Hammam. Turkish. Massage...Mr Bloom raised a cake to his nostrils. Sweet lemony wax. (5.490-512)

The scent that reappears within this passage is that of the “orangeflower water” that “is so fresh,” and this instance of the flower water contrasts with the description of Molly in “Calypso,” which associates her with the scent of foul flowerwater” (4.316).

This “orangeflower water” is linked to memories of the past, as opposed to the present description of her “foul flowerwater” scent.

The “orangeflower water” appears alongside other scents, such as citrus fruits and almond, which conjure up past memories of Molly. Bloom remembers:

Quiet long days: pruning, ripening, Olives are packed in jars...Molly spitting them out. Knows the taste of them now. Oranges in tissue paper packed in crates. Citrons too...Pleasant evenings we had back then. Molly in Citron’s

basketchair. Nice to hold, cool waxen fruit, hold in the hand, lift it to the nostrils and smell the perfume. Like that, heavy, sweet, wild perfume. Always the same, year after year. (4.202-9)

Bloom associates the citrus fruits with a time and place more relaxing than the present, as evidenced by the “quiet long days” and the “pleasant evenings we had back then.” There is an olfactory association, which is that of the fruit’s perfume, which Bloom describes as “heavy, sweet, wild perfume.” The description of the perfume relates to the episode’s title of “Lotus Eaters,” referencing the Lotus Eaters of Homer’s *Odyssey*. According to Gifford, the Lotus Eaters thrive on flowers, specifically lotuses, and they act as a drug that causes Odysseus’ men to forget their desire to return home (Gifford 84). The perfume Bloom recalls in this memory parallels the drug of the lotus; the “heavy, sweet, wild perfume” that shrouds his memory suggests it is like the lotus in that it prevents Bloom from wanting to return “home” or to the present. He still harbors a yearning for the past, as well as for a younger Molly and possibly a happier time. Later on, Bloom again associates these citrus fruits with a vision of idleness: “He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow...floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower” (5.567-72).

The citrus fruits and almond also emerge when Bloom sees an advertisement for a company “Agendath Netaim” (4.191-2), which offers customers the opportunity to buy and plant eucalyptus trees on a plot of land in Turkey. In return, the company

sends the customers the fruit the trees bear: “Orangegroves and immense melonfields north of Jaffa. You pay eighty marks and they plant a dunam of land for you with olives, oranges, almonds or citrons” (4.194-6). Sprinkled throughout the novel are fantasies Bloom has of the Orient, or what he refers to as the Far East, a place he imagines as a peaceful and lethargic paradise, a place in which he can participate in an almost drug-induced state of languor: “The far east. Lovely spot it must be: the garden of the world, big lazy leaves to float about on...Lethargy. Flowers of idleness” (5.29-34). He dreams of an exotic fantasyland far away from his home, suggesting a deep dissatisfaction with his current situation, including his marriage.

The connection Bloom makes between the sweet perfume of almonds and citrus fruits and a younger Molly implies a failing marriage, and Bloom’s dwelling on the earlier years of their relationship appears more obvious when these scents of almond and citrus are contrasted with his associations of the present Molly and her scent of “foul flowerwater”: “He looked calmly down on her bulk and between her large soft bubs, sloping within her nightdress like a shegoat’s udder. The warmth of her couched body rose in the air, mingling with the fragrance of the tea she poured...Her full lips, drinking, smiled. Rather stale smell that incense leaves next day. Like foul flowerwater” (4.304-16). The scents connected to Molly are rather specific and quite unusual; when she drinks tea, the overall aroma is like that of “foul flowerwater” that is “stale,” almost equating her with something that is old and past its prime. This portrayal of Molly as “stale” contrasts strongly with “that orangeflower water [that] is so fresh” (5.500-1). This sentiment is echoed when he compares her breasts to a “shegoat’s udder,” an image suggesting that her breasts

have sagged and are no longer the breasts of a young woman. Additionally, the scent is “foul,” indicating a sense of unpleasantness and almost disgust surrounding Molly. From her portrayal in “Calypso,” Molly is by no means a refined or even appealing woman. It is not simply that this scent surrounds Molly, but that the warmth of her body somehow becomes one with the stale scent.

Yet, Bloom has already shown a propensity towards foul smells when he enjoys the grilled mutton kidneys “which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine” (4.4-5). From the reader’s very first encounter with Bloom, Joyce makes it known that Bloom enjoys the scent of urine with his food. Bloom demonstrates a certain attachment with these smells of deceased animals and food, and in his mind, he also associates these smells with women and their bodies. When Bloom goes to Dlugacz’s butcher shop to buy kidney, he ogles the maid from next door, “The shiny links, packed with forcemeat, fed his gaze and he breathed in tranquilly the lukewarm breath of cooked spicy pigs’ blood...His eyes rested on her vigorous hips...The porkbutcher snapped two sheets from the pile, wrapped up her prime sausages and made a red grimace...To catch up and walk behind her if she went slowly, behind her moving hams” (4.165-72). Bloom establishes a link between the smell of pigs’ blood with the body parts of the maid, which he compares to the sausage links, as evidenced by the fact that he says “*her* prime sausages” as opposed to “*the* prime sausages.” The prime sausages are then linked to “her moving hams,” further establishing a connection between the sausages and the woman’s body. There is an air of desire surrounding the meat itself and the meat of a woman’s body that he finds appealing, and these disgusting scents relate back to the staleness and foulness

of Molly's scent. Though it might not initially seem so, the foul and stale smell he perceives when he serves Molly breakfast is as alluring of a smell as the almond and citrus perfume. The "foul flowerwater" is just a different way Bloom sees Molly, partially because she is not the same Molly, but an older Molly with a different body. Though her body has aged, Bloom still cannot help ogling her breasts, which he describes as "large soft bubs," indicating a sense of admiration and comfort in them.

The sense of comfort that Bloom finds in Molly and memories of Molly, both past and present, is not only explored through flowers and the scents of flowers, but also is strongly associated with Bloom's memories of Molly. The salient memory of Bloom and Molly's relationship is one in which Bloom proposes to Molly on Howth Head; Bloom remembers the scene in "Lestrygonians," after he has exited the Burton and enters Davy Byrne's, a place in which he finally feels comfortable enough to eat his lunch in the orderly and tidy way he prefers. It is significant that even the environment in which Bloom recalls this memory is one of comfort, a setting in which he can feel free to be himself, just as he feels with Molly. Additionally, flowers are woven throughout the memory, strengthening Bloom's sense of comfort and even joy when he is around Molly:

Stuck on the pane two flies buzzed, stuck.

Glowing wine on his palate lingered swallowed. Crushing in the winepress grapes of Burgundy. Sun's heat it is. Seems to a secret touch telling me memory. Touched his sense moistened remembered. Hidden under wild ferns on Howth below us bay sleeping: sky. No sound. The sky. The bay purple by the Lion's head. Green by Drumleck. Yellowgreen towards Sutton. Fields of

undersea, the lines faint brown in grass, buried cities. Pillowed on my coat she had her hair, earwigs in the heather scrub my hand under her nape, you'll toss me all. O wonder! Coolsoft with ointments her hand touched me, caressed: her eyes upon me did not turn away. Ravished over her I lay, full lips full open, kissed her mouth. Yum. Softly she gave me in my mouth the seedcake warm and chewed. Mawkish pulp her mouth had mumbled sweetsour of her spittle. Joy: I ate it: joy. Young life, her lips gave me that pouting. Soft warm sticky gumjelly lips. Flowers her eyes were, take me, willing eyes. Pebbles fell. She lay still. A goat. No-one. High on Ben Howth rhododendrons a nannygoat walking surefooted, dropping currants. Screened under ferns she laughed warmfolded. Wildly I lay on her, kissed her: eyes, her lips, her stretched neck beating, woman's breasts full in her blouse of nun's veiling, fat nipples upright. Hot I tongued her. She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me.

Me. And me now.

Stuck, the flies buzzed. (8.896-918)

The excerpt is almost a sensory overload; Bloom remembers every detail, from the taste of the seedcake, to the feel of her hand, and it is exactly this detail that causes the memory to stand out. The sensory detail gives the memory a timeless quality; even though this memory occurs many years ago, Bloom remembers it as if it happened yesterday, and thus it demonstrates a state of being stuck in time. This "stuckness" is echoed in the two flies that are stuck on the pane, which represent Molly and Bloom. The fact that these two flies trigger Bloom's memory of Molly

further demonstrates that this memory has not faded, and that an everyday occurrence as simple and obscure as two flies together can bring him back to a time that he and Molly were physically together as the flies are.

The way that memory works in this passage is important in understanding Bloom and Molly's current relationship. Bloom describes the field that he and Molly are lying on as "buried cities," or what used to be cities, but have now been replaced by a field. Like the buried cities, this image of him and Molly together might be buried in the past, but it is still present because the memory remains. The fields that cover the buried cities do not necessarily erase the cities themselves; instead, they can be seen as a version of the cities recycled into something new. These cyclical qualities of life recall Bloom's thoughts in "Hades" when he thinks about the way burials give way to life: "It's the blood sinking in the earth gives new life" (6.771), suggesting that Bloom and Molly's feelings are not actually gone, but have instead changed into something altogether different that has not necessarily lost the same sense of intimacy. Recycling is also echoed in the image of Molly feeding Bloom the seedcake. Bloom has previously expressed disgust at chewed-up food, as evidenced by the "halfmasticated gristle" (8.660) that continues to haunt him throughout his journey; however, when Molly feeds him the seedcake, he receives the chewed-up food with joy. For Bloom, it is possible that he does not mind Molly's chewed-up food because of his attraction for her; however, he might also prefer Molly's seedcake because it is being recycled as food for him, as opposed to the man's chewed-up food, which goes to waste. He calls the chewed-up seedcake "mawkish pulp"; the pulp is valuable because Molly has chewed it up, and therefore it contains Molly's essence.

She has chewed up the seedcake specifically for Bloom, feeding it to him as if providing him with sustenance.

Molly feeding the seedcake to Bloom, who acts as the receiver of the action, indicates a certain power dynamic existing between Bloom and Molly that is echoed in their kiss. The first time he kisses her, he says, “Ravished over her I lay, full lips full open, kissed her mouth” and the second time he kisses her, he says, “Wildly I lay on her, kissed her.” The syntax of these two sentences is interesting in that though he conveys that he kisses her, the subject, “I,” does not directly precede the verb “kissed.” Instead, “I” is oddly separated from its action, dissociating Bloom from his action of kissing. Later on, he says, “She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me.” In these sentences, Bloom is very clearly in the passive role because he receives her kiss. From these examples, it might be said that Molly clearly has the power in their relationship, which is also supported by the fact that, when the reader first meets Bloom and Molly, Bloom is bringing her breakfast in bed and obeying her every command. However, there is still ambiguity in how power plays out in this relationship; in the sentence, “All yielding she tossed my hair,” it is unclear as to who is “all yielding.” Bloom could be yielding to Molly, or Molly could be yielding to Bloom, which the grammar of the sentence would suggest since “she” is the subject directly following “all yielding.” In a way, they are yielding to one another, each allowing the other to be exactly as they desire in this moment—Bloom slightly feminized, and Molly slightly masculinized, but both remaining themselves.

Kiberd writes, “[Molly] remembers their love-making on Howth even more fondly than Bloom does” (269), and indeed, the last two pages of her soliloquy are dedicated to this particular memory in Howth. She remembers:

...he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth...yes he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life...yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldnt answer first.... (18.1572-81)

This passage gives the reader insight into the nature of Molly and Bloom’s relationship in that it illustrates firstly, the way power figures in their relationship, and secondly, Molly’s deep understanding of Bloom. Again, the fact that Molly feeds Bloom the seedcake is echoed in this passage, reiterating that she is the active giver of the action and he is the passive receiver, a receptacle for Molly’s “nutritious” seedcake. Molly occupies a more dominant, or more masculine, position in their relationship when she says, “I got him to propose,” and mentions that “I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldnt answer first.” These excerpts suggest that Molly has a considerable amount of control over Bloom, intimating that she is the one who has control over her own proposal, taking away Bloom’s agency. There is almost the sense that Molly secretly plans and manipulates Bloom into proposing to her by “leading him on,” and when he asks, she

still maintains the upper hand in that it is her decision whether or not and how immediately she wants to accept his proposal.

While Molly occupies a more masculine role in their relationship, Bloom's part is that of the more conventionally submissive and feminine position. Aside from Bloom's more passive role in their relationship as a receiver of Molly's actions, Molly notices that he "understood or felt what a woman is," and this understanding can be due to both Bloom's capacity for empathy and ability to see from perspectives other than his own, and his partial identification with and desire to be a woman. Bloom is also feminized in that he compares himself to a flower, as evidenced by Molly remembering that he says, "so we are flowers all." In equating himself to a flower, he puts himself on the same level as Molly, whom he calls "flower of the mountain," which demonstrates an association of his own self with a certain degree of womanliness. His identity as a flower and understanding of himself through flowers relates to the last scene in "Lotus Eaters," in which Bloom takes a bath: "his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower" (5.570-2). This quote confirms Bloom's passive character in that he is the "limp father of thousands," suggesting that he has the potential to be a father, but does not take any action to be so, opting instead to be a "languid floating flower," stagnant in his condition. This is the condition that Bloom wants to be in; he desires to be more passive, which is supported by his fantasies with Bello in "Circe," and Molly allows him to be exactly that through her more dominant nature.

Bloom as flower recalls the idea of the “language of flowers” (5.261) that Bloom thinks about after reading Martha’s letter: “Language of flowers. They like it because no-one can hear...he read the letter again...Angry tulips with you darling manflower punish your cactus if you don’t please poor forgetmenot how I long violets to dear roses when we soon anemone meet all naughty nightstalk wife Martha’s perfume” (5.261-6). The “language of flowers” refers to the study of florigraphy, which attaches symbolic meanings to specific flowers (Gifford 90). For instance, tulips symbolize dangerous pleasures, violets modesty, anemones frailty, and so on (Gifford 90). Bloom says, “they like it because no-one can hear,” in which “they” most probably refers to women; he imagines an almost nonsense language of flowers that is a secret feminine language to which only women are privy.

Though this language does not actually exist, the language of flowers is reminiscent of the fact that Bloom encodes his own name as a flower through his moniker as Henry Flower. Thus, Bloom uses flowers to see and understand himself, and this idea of Bloom as flower reconciles Bloom’s masculinity and femininity. At once he is both Henry Flower, the bloomed and amplified masculinity of Bloom, as well as the more feminine and passive “languid floating flower.” Molly is also a “flower of the mountain,” embodying a similar androgyny. The novel, therefore, does not utilize flowers as symbols in the way Bloom’s language of flowers does, but as objects through which the characters understand themselves and others, and they form a connection between Molly and Bloom that is not immediately visible. This scene with the seedcake on Howth demonstrates a harmony between them, in their flower-ness and their sexuality: “[Molly] wants at moments to be a man as much as [Bloom]

wishes to be a woman, and when these moments overlap, they know paradise. Even on their tryst at Howth, she had already sensed his need at times to play the woman in sexual activity..." (Kiberd 271).

While this scene shows a complementary androgyny in both Molly and Bloom that fits together, it also demonstrates the deep understanding Molly has of Bloom, an important factor that keeps them together. As previously shown, Bloom is quite odd, and as the reader sees him move through society, all of the ways in which he is distinct from the other characters become clear. However, nobody understands Bloom as Molly does, which does not become evident until "Penelope." In "Penelope," Molly says, "...I know every turn in him Ill tighten my bottom well and let out a few smutty words smellrump or lick my shit or the first mad thing comes into my head..." (18.1530-2), referring to her relationship to Bloom. Molly is incredibly observant of people, especially Bloom, and this excerpt from "Penelope" demonstrates how well she understands him. She knows "every turn in him," suggesting that Bloom's complexities do not escape her, illustrated by her careful observation of all of his habits. "...Poldy anyhow whatever he does always wipes his feet on the mat when he comes in wet or shit and always blacks his own boots too and he always takes off his hat when he comes up in the street..." (18.225-8). Many of Bloom's idiosyncrasies throughout the novel occur outside of Molly's view, giving the reader the sense that they are very personal and mostly go unnoticed. However, whether or not it is simply a product of many years of marriage, Molly is very much aware of Bloom's peculiarities. She pays as close attention to Bloom's habits as he pays to making sure that all of his rituals are performed correctly. Molly is suspicious of the fact that

Bloom sends Milly away to learn photography, concluding that he does so to facilitate her relationship with Boylan. Kiberd, in his analysis of "Calypso," writes, "This tidying of the room, even down to the detail of the door left finally open, might be taken as Bloom sub-consciously "setting up" the theatre of afternoon adultery for Boylan" (86). Molly agrees: "...such an idea for him to send [Milly] down there to learn to take photographs on account of his grandfather instead of sending her to Skerrys academy where shed have to learn...only hed do a thing like that all the same on account of me and Boylan thats why he did it Im certain the way he plots and plans everything out..." (18.1004-9). Molly picks up on every little detail of Bloom's actions and is incredibly perceptive, finding it strange that Bloom sends Milly to learn photography rather than sending her to school, which is indeed quite odd considering Bloom, as shown before, values a certain type of intellect and education.

Her close observation of Bloom's habits confirms her statement that she knows "every turn in him." This quote also shows that she is very cognizant of Bloom's sexual desires and she knows that Bloom is not too discerning in terms of what "mad thing" she says to arouse him. Molly knows exactly what to say to influence Bloom to do what she wants of him, and this sentiment is echoed in the Molly's memory of Howth head when she says, "I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes" (18.1579-81). While Molly's actions can be read as ill-intentioned and most probably are, there lies at the foundation of her manipulation of Bloom a very profound acceptance of all of Bloom's quirks and habits, as well as a cognizance that Bloom is "not natural like the rest of the world" (18.268). She knows what to say to

him to get her way and to satisfy him sexually, but she can only do so because she understands exactly how Bloom operates. She also has a deep understanding of Bloom's sexuality, and her acceptance of his desire to be feminized allows him to be his full and unfettered self in their relationship. His willingness to yield to Molly's dominance also allows her to be her whole self, unconstrained by anything. It is this mutual surrender that cements the foundation of their relationship, and though their relationship wavers, it still does not break.

## CONCLUSION

The study of objects and their interconnections to and between characters in *Ulysses* is a crucial one, as one cannot read *Ulysses* without encountering or noticing the sheer amount of objects that surface and resurface throughout the novel. To read *Ulysses* without attending to its physical world is to overlook a vital part of what makes the novel both impressive and authentic. However, objects serve multiple purposes in *Ulysses*, and while it is possible and valid to read objects symbolically and referentially in the text, it is equally as important to eschew these methods of reading and examine what objects actually achieve in helping us understand the characters and the relationships between the characters. My thesis does not aim to decode objects that can be read as symbolic or as referents, but to understand how the novel uses objects as tools to more fully expand upon the glimpse of Dublin we get from the single day of the novel. Only then can we achieve a fuller sense of who the characters really are and the intricacies of their relationships to one another. Objects in *Ulysses* are things in which the characters are personally invested, serving as landmarks for memories, associations, and libidinal cathexes. They are not simply objects, but become an important pathway into the characters' interiority. In tracing items specific items such as food, clothing, and flowers, the novel starts to open up in a way that allows us to see the interlacing structure of objects and characters underneath.

Food becomes one of the crucial items to follow throughout the course of *Ulysses* because it is not only an object that is introduced alongside Bloom, but also

appears during Molly and Bloom's rare moment together in "Calpyso." Immediately, their individual relationships to food become apparent; while Bloom meticulously prepares Molly's breakfast and brings it to her, Molly shovels this same breakfast into her mouth. These two small moments reveal a great deal about Molly and Bloom's individual natures, as well as their relationship to each other. Bloom's preference for order and meticulousness manifests itself in his careful preparation of Molly's breakfast, while Molly's careless consumption of her breakfast is an example of her lack of consideration for orderly consumption as well as her refusal to commit to an image of being ladylike. Bloom's need for order regarding his food is expounded on in "Lestrygonians," and it is his attitude towards food and the process of eating that illuminates his need for order with respect to all objects in his life, which is most exemplified when we enter his home in "Ithaca."

That Bloom brings breakfast to Molly also signals at a certain power dynamic in their relationship in that, in many cases, Bloom serves Molly, who occupies a dominant role in their relationship. The power relations reiterate themselves in the scene with the seedcake, in which Molly, in the more dominant position, feeds the seedcake to Bloom. This power dynamic masculinizes Molly while feminizing Bloom, and thus food becomes an object through which a broader explanation of their sexualities can occur. Molly's cursory handling of her breakfast food and her lack of manners in her own home demonstrates that Molly refuses to commit wholly to an image of femininity that we see exemplified in the novel by Gerty MacDowell. Molly is therefore distinguished from Gerty, who embodies a type of conventional

femininity; additionally, she sometimes thinks about rejecting her femininity altogether and actually becoming a man.

Thus we see the objects of food helping to understand and investigate Molly's sexuality, but what about Bloom's sexuality? In trying to understand Bloom's sexuality, clothing becomes the key object to trace through the novel; not only does clothing reaffirm Bloom's preferences for tidiness, but it is also an entryway into exploring Bloom's sexuality. Bloom's fixation on women's clothing is deeply rooted in his aesthetic appreciation for it, as evidenced by his admiration of the Clyde Road ladies' outfits (15.2817), as well as an underlying desire to actually be a woman. His fantasy of being a woman manifests itself in his cross-dressing, and even more so in "Circe" when he actually turns into a woman. Clothing is also of great importance to Molly, but Molly's relationship and obsession with clothing has much to do with the power it gives her. She recognizes proper clothing as a symbol of social and sexual power, whereas Bloom's desire for proper clothing is simply a product of his peculiar and orderly nature. Molly specifically uses clothing in a performative manner to heighten her sexual appeal, just as Gerty does when performing for Bloom.

Bloom's sexuality also unfolds itself through flowers, the most significant example in which Bloom actually sees himself as a flower in the form of Henry Flower. Through Henry Flower, he pursues a semi-sadomasochistic relationship that is both feminine and masculine in nature; he is feminized through Martha's supposed punishment, as he is by Bello's punishment, but he is also masculinized because he actually holds the power in his relationship with Martha. His identity of Henry Flower is physically cemented in the flower that Martha sends him enclosed in her letter. He

sees himself as a “languid floating flower” (5.571-2), but he also sees Molly as “flower of the mountain” (18.1576), and thus, he understands both himself and Molly through flowers. His understanding of Molly using flowers is through her scent and her lotion; he first describes her scent in “Calypso” as one associated with “foul flowerwater” (4.316), and later, when he orders her lotion at the chemist, her lotion ingredients include “orangeflower water” (5.491). These two types of flower water are associated with two different versions of Molly: a Molly from the past and a Molly from the present. The “orangeflower water” brings back memories of a dreamy and relaxing time of the past when Bloom and Molly’s relationship is pleasant and happy, and it also relates to Bloom’s vision of an exotic and lethargic land far away from home through the “Agendath Netaim” (4.191-2) advertisement. Conversely, the “foul flowerwater” is indicative of a relationship past its prime, almost demonstrating a sense of sourness and decay within their relationship.

It is important to note that all of the key objects I explore—food, clothing, flowers—are present in the first scene of “Calypso,” the only time Molly and Bloom are seen together throughout the entire novel. Food is present in the breakfast Bloom prepares for Molly, clothing in the various articles of Molly’s undergarments that are lying around in their bedroom, and flowers in the form of Molly’s “foul flowerwater” scent. That these three categories of objects are present during the only interaction between Molly and Bloom signals their importance in their relationship. What can be observed about all three of these objects is that they both present points of conflict in Bloom and Molly’s relationship, as well as points of resolution. There are substantial differences between Molly and Bloom’s alimentary habits in that Bloom requires

order regarding consumption of food and detests the exact type of sloppy eating that Molly engages in. However, this tension is relieved in the scene with the seedcake in which Molly feeds Bloom her chewed-up food and he receives it with joy. Their attitudes concerning clothing and what constitutes suitable clothing differs greatly; while Bloom's requirement for proper clothing comes from his specific ordering of the world, Molly's relates more to her own vanity and sexual allure. Yet, their conflicting views with respect to clothing become resolved in their mutual memory of Ben Dollard in the too-tight pants he borrows from Molly and Bloom's clothing business. Molly and Bloom's individual associations with flowers contrast in nature; while Bloom's identity as a flower has much to do with his sexuality, Molly's is connected with her aura and exoticism. The associations that Bloom makes between Molly and flowers also seem to indicate a rift in their marriage, as her present aroma of "foul flowerwater" (4.316) contrasts strongly with the "orangeflower water [that] is so fresh" (5.501), which is linked to memories of Molly in the past. However, in "Penelope," when Bloom tells Molly "we are flowers all" (18.1576-7), the differences in their flower associations dissolve, and they suddenly identify with each other.

When objects such as food, clothing, and flowers in the novel are examined in detail, we see that the novel uses these inanimate aspects of quotidian life to both create and resolve tensions between the characters. Not only do they exist in relation to and between the characters, but they also have the power to change the way we see characters' relationships in the novel. Investigating such objects in the context of Bloom and Molly reveals all the incompatibilities that exist between them; but in the context of their relationship and their memories together, it is clear they share a

profound and complex love that is unparalleled. While Molly and Bloom's marriage has certainly evolved into something quite different than their initial relationship, their memories together, which are permeated by objects, anchor them together. There is hope yet for their relationship, and Kiberd agrees, as he reads the end of *Ulysses* as a fusion of Molly and Bloom: "What can confidently be said is that in the final pages the identities of Leopold and Molly fuse, as in John Donne's poem that says "we two, being one, are it"" (276). Finally, at the end of the novel, they remain Bloom and Molly, and their love for one another remains as well.

## Works Cited

- Black, Martha F. "S/He-Male Voices in *Ulysses*: Counterpointing the 'New Womanly Man.'" *Gender in Joyce*. Ed. Marlena G. Corcoran and Jolanta W. Wawrzycka. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. 62-81. Print.
- Cook Callow, Heather. "Joyce's Female Voices in *Ulysses*." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 22.3 (1992): 151-163. Print.
- Galef, David. "The Fashion Show in *Ulysses*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 37.4 (1991): 420-431. Print.
- Gifford, Don, and Robert J. Seidman. *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. Print.
- Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Ed. Hans Walter Gabler, Claus Melchior, and Wolfhard Steppe. New York: Random House, Inc., 1986. Print.
- Kiberd, Declan. *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Life in Joyce's Masterpiece*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2009. Print.
- Masochism*. Trans. Jean McNeil. New York: Zone Books, 1989. Print.
- Mills Harper, Margaret. "Fabric and Fame in the *Odyssey* and 'Penelope.'" *Gender in Joyce*. Ed. Marlena G. Corcoran and Jolanta W. Wawrzycka. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. 62-81. Print.
- Osteen, Mark. "A High Grade Ha: The 'Politicoecomedie' of Headwear in *Ulysses*." *Joycean Cultures/Culturing Joyces*. Ed. Vincent J. Cheng, Kimberly J. Devlin, and Margot Norris. London: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1998. 253-283. Print.

Proust, Marcel. *Swann's Way*. Trans. Lydia Davis. New York: Penguin Group Inc., 2002. Print.

“thrift, n.1.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016. Web. 21 February 2016.

### Works Consulted

Blamires, Harry. *The New Bloomsday Book: A guide through Ulysses*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 1996. Print.