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## Sexuality and Shaping of the Blooming Psyche of Molly in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

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Penelope is the supremely faithful wife of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. She is the archetypal symbol of marital faithfulness; she keeps her chastity intact from over a hundred suitors for 20 years while her husband is absent and away on a journey. Penelope is the mirror image of Odysseus because of characteristics like strength and intelligence, which her husband also has. She keeps her suitors at bay by means of a stratagem worthy of Odysseus himself. She asks the suitors to wait until she is finished weaving her burial shroud of her father-in-law Laertes. She, however does an intelligent and interesting thing: by unweaving at night what she weaves by day, she puts off the suitors for years until they find out what she has been doing and force her to finish the shroud.

In Joyce's *Ulysses*, the episode of Molly Bloom is the final chapter of the book. It is named after Penelope, the supremely faithful wife of Odysseus. Molly Bloom is the modern reincarnation of Penelope. Her modern reincarnated shroud is her daughter's jacket for the burial of her infant son Rudy. She differs from Penelope in at least as much as her husband differs from Odysseus. For, while Penelope is renowned for her fidelity, Molly is notorious for her infidelity. She is known all over Dublin as the latest conquest of Blazes Boylan, a fellow singer of Molly's. While Penelope speaks of almost nothing but her longing to see Odysseus again, Molly imagines and speaks about everything to what she has done or wants to do to every man she has ever known.

While reading through this chapter, the first emotion that the readers feel is the shock of something radically different as far as the writing style is concerned. The previous chapter of *Ulysses*, 'Ithaca', walks on stilts, jerking its way along from question to answer holding its head high, hardly ever slipping or stepping down from the lofty tones of scientific attachment to the voice of human experience on the ground. This last chapter, 'Penelope' throws us on to that ground or rather into the head of Molly Bloom as she lies on bed talking to herself silently reenacting the whole of her day and the whole of her life.

Molly thinks, rather feels, like a torrent. Joyce himself says that the episode consists of 8 sentences. But the so called sentences average more than 5 pages each. The first period does not come along for 20 pages, apart from that, the second period comes right at the end of the chapter; the only other period we get is Molly's menstrual flow which, in the midst of the chapter prompts her to say "O patience above its pouring out of me like the sea" (Joyce 983). Elsewhere Molly says "a woman whatever she does she knows where to stop" (Joyce 991). But Molly does not stop until she has poured out everything she has inside her in a flood of words that drown all inhibitions.

One should be warned; this is the chapter that made the censors howl and still makes some readers gag. But the paper hopes to show the readers that this book and especially this chapter, which has been considered pornographic because of the so-called obscene way in which the physical body is dealt with, is actually the realistic depiction of the mind and the desires of the body. The chapter ends not in any vulgar way but by triumphantly celebrating life and love. Here is what Joyce himself said about this chapter: "I am the flesh that always says yes" (Brown: Joyce)

The keyword here is 'Yes' and that is the key to Joyce's conception of Molly. Joyce twice underlines the word in his letter and it is also his very last word "I am the flesh that always says 'yes'" (Brown: Joyce). 'Yes' is the alpha and omega of Molly's monologue, the beginning and the end of it all. That is the point from where she departs in a great mental journey of reminiscence and longing and that is the point to where she at last returns.

What the writers aim to do in this paper is not only to get to Molly's bottom but also to get to the bottom of Molly's 'yes'. It is not an easy task to try to understand a woman and even more so if that woman happens to be Molly Bloom. Getting to Molly herself means flailing through the flames of controversy that this chapter ignited from the beginning. At one extreme, the early admirers such as the great Swiss Psychoanalyst Carl Jung called this chapter a "string of veritable psychological peaches. I suppose the devil of grandmother knows so much about the real psychology of woman" (Deming 583). The other extreme, comes from Nora Barnacle, Joyce's wife, who helped him to inspire the character of Molly. She said about Joyce: 'That man knows nothing about women' (Maddox 208). What she meant by this statement is that Joyce knew nothing good about women. In the Dublin Review for instance, one critic called chapter 18 "a very horrible dissection of a very horrible woman's thought" (Deming Joyce).

On another interesting note, Barbara Clayton takes up the analysis of Kathleen McCormick who has recently shown that in the history of critical response to this chapter the first line of defense against attacks such as that was the argument that Molly is an earth-mother, the symbol of mythic embodiment of female fertility (Clayton 123-125). In fact, near the end of the 'Ithaca' chapter, Molly lies on her left side in the attitude of Gaea Tellus, filled, recumbent, and big with seed. Don Gifford, another famous critic of Joyce, reminds us that Gaea is the Greek goddess of Earth and Tellus Mater is the Roman Earth Mother usually shown lying on her side and cradling two children in her free arm which symbolizes a nice eternal picture (Gifford 605).

If one believes Molly to be the mythic figure of mother-earth we might think that she can do no wrong. Even if she has done wrong then the flow of life itself washes away whatever sins she might be accused of. It is important to take into account the fact that Molly's menstrual blood comes pouring out of her like the sea and with it comes urine as she settles on to the chamber pot "O how the waters come down at Lahore" (Joyce 984). In a sense, this blood and urine act as the fluid force which washes away her sins.

Molly seems a force of nature like earth or rain. But for all her mythic implications, Joyce never allows myth to engulf her, to swallow up her individuality. If one is going to argue that she is an earth-mother one must begin by admitting that unlike Tellus Mater, she is not cradling two children and she has just one living child, her daughter Milly. Furthermore, even though she is said to be big with seed after her sex with Blazes she is definitely not pregnant and shows no sign of wishing to be. "O patience above its pouring out of me like the sea anyhow he didn't make me pregnant as big as he is I don't want to ruin the clean sheets" (Joyce 983).

This shows how Molly's mind works here. Her menstruation makes her lust that this great earth mother is fecund and ripe bursting with prolific power but it tells Molly herself that she is not going to have a child and as a result she seems downright relieved. This is just one of the many facts that complicate our understanding of Molly who personifies a bundle of contradictions and complexities that cannot be readily reconciled. She is an anti-heroine in the sense that her personality is so complex and kind of morally ambiguous that it is impossible for a reader to deconstruct her, and to label her into black/white or good/bad or faithful/adulterer etc. Text removed from the context holds no valid meaning, similarly a person's behavior, if it is seen without the situation and the surrounding, is not true to facts.

The contradictions start with her background. Her father was a Roman Catholic, Sergeant Major in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who is stationed in the island of Gibraltar at the time of Molly's birth in September 1870. Her mother was a Spanish Jew, which would normally mean that Molly herself would have been raised as a Jew. But Molly tells us that she had no mother, which actually means that she never knew her mother. And she makes it clear that she was raised in Gibraltar as a Roman Catholic. At the age of about 16, she moved with her father in Dublin where she met and married Bloom just one month after turning 18. Now 34, she has had two children and has also established herself as a professional singer.

As regards her love life, in a long passage near the end of the 'Ithaca' chapter suggests that she had a slew of lovers in and around Dublin and she is known in Lenehan's phrase as a "gamey mare" (Joyce 548). But so far as we can tell from Molly's own monologue her first lover was Bloom. And they first made love to consummate his proposal just 2 days after her 18th birthday. As the narrative echoes in 'Lestrygonians' chapter, the taste of burgundy leads Bloom back to this rapturous moment and Molly relives it at the very end of her monologue as the paper will analyze later. Before Bloom, she mentions just two suitors. The first to kiss her was the young man named Mulvey whom she knew in Gibraltar and whom she sexually fondled without, as she quiet plainly says, letting him touch her inside her petticoat. Her second suitor was Lieutenant Stanley Gardner whom she evidently met in Dublin and who nervously kissed her goodbye at the canal lock just before going off to South Africa where he died of enteric fever. It is also known that on Gibraltar she flirted with the husband of her girlhood friend Stanhope before both of the Stanhopes left the island. But nothing, she says, in her totally uninhabited monologue indicates that she made love to any man before Bloom or that she ever committed adultery before the afternoon of Bloomsday. So far as we know Molly's fling with Boylan was her first experience of complete sexual intercourse in more than ten years. So, as the paper suggests, here is another contradiction, rather it is better to say irony that the would-be queen of promiscuity has been virtually celibate for over a decade.

Generally what happens is that a single behavior is taken out of context and blown out of proportion. It is a fact that she committed adultery but it does not mean that she is to be blamed entirely for the act. The deeper question is why did she do such a thing? Did she, deep down, have the desire to do it? The paper hopes to understand her behavior through the intratextual approach. That is to say, applying the principle of close reading the paper would try to show that she is not to be blamed for the deed and even though she may have had sex with another man physically, but psychologically she was not receptive of it.

The text explains that Bloom's long abstinence from sex with Molly originates with the death of Rudy but the text does not explicitly mention what Molly thinks of his death. Twice, the thought of Rudy's death crosses her mind. First, she sounds indifferent, asking herself "What was the good in going into mourning for what was neither one thing nor the other" (Joyce 988) but later she sounds desolated by the memory of Rudy's death especially when she thinks of what Bloom has just told about Stephen running wild:

Well it's a poor case that those that have a fine son like that theyre not satisfied and none was he not able to make one it wasn't my fault we came together when I was watching the two dogs up in her behind in the middle of the naked street that disheartened me altoghter I suppose I oughtn't to have buried him in that little woolly jacket I knitted crying as I was but give it to some poor child but I knew well id never have another our 1st death too it was we were never the same since (Joyce 991).

These are not the words of a heartless woman. On the contrary, she reminds us of what Stephen thought back in 'Nestor' chapter when he told himself that only a mother could have the capacity to tolerate, love and nurture someone like Cyril Sargent, Stephen's unintelligent student. Only the heart of the mother has level of devotion that can keep children like Cyril from being trampled underfoot like a snail. Stephen himself calls forth Molly's maternal instincts. She asks, "where would they all of them be if they hadn't all a mother to look after them what I never had". (Joyce 991)

Taking the cue from John Locke's Association of Ideas, where one idea suggests another and that new idea suggests still another idea; Molly thus reminds not only of what Stephen said about mothers but

also, in general, about what Bloom felt about Stephen's need for parental guidance. It is important to take into consideration that, similar to Bloom, Molly was also greatly traumatized by Rudy's death that she knew that she would never have another child. She felt so disturbed that she knew that she will no longer be psychologically able to want to conceive ever again. Rudy's death touches Molly as deeply as it touches Bloom. But instead of killing her desire for sex with her spouse it seems to have turned her against all children, even on her own. She applies the principle of defencemechnasim, that is to say, an unconscious psychological mechanism by which the ego is cushioned against the harmful stimuli. She not only scorns the non-stop pregnancies of Mina Purefoy, but also resents Milly, her only loving child. Similarly she feels jealous of Milly, her own and only daughter because Leopold Bloom loves Milly and admires her vitality. She resents Milly's growing sex appeal, her flirtatious nature and the special attention that she gets from Bloom which leads Molly to think that Bloom no longer cares for her. Molly thinks that she has been bested by her own blood. "I suppose he thinks Im finished out and laid on the shelf." (Joyce 981)

Molly's resentment of her only daughter reflects the contradictory nature of her personality. When she tries to generalize about women as a whole, there are two opposite sets of responses which she elicits; on the one hand, she feels that women ought to rule the world:

I don't care what anybody says itd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it you wouldnt see women going and killing one another and slaughtering when do you ever see women rolling around drunk like they do or gambling every penny they have and losing it on horses yes because a woman whatever she does she knows where to stop sure they wouldn't be in the world at all only for us they don't know what it is to be a women and a mother how could they. (Joyce 991)

In many ways, Molly articulates what Joyce himself saw as the revolution dramatized by Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian writer, the revolt of women against the idea that they are the mere instruments of men. As Molly sees them, women know how to avoid violence, stay sober, manage money wisely, restrain themselves and be mothers. By contrast men are violent, alcoholic and irresponsible. She feels anything but submissive toward them. She makes fun of the male members sticking up at you like a hatrack. And from time to time she lashes out at various men, including both Boylan and Bloom. She also speaks with shocking frankness about her body, her physical needs, and her sexual desires so much so that according to Richard Pearce one should imagine her ideal listener as another woman (Pearce 129-134).

On the other hand, she also contradicts herself and says just a few lines after envisioning the peace and order of a world run by women, she tells herself that men "...have friends they can talk to weve none either he wants what he wont get or its some woman ready to stick her knife in you I hate that in women no wonder they treat us the way they do we are a dreadful lot of bitches" (Joyce 992).

Molly classifies the social structure as "we" and "they" and this could imply that in her wild imagination, she is having a dialogue about men with someone else. It is to be noted that this is hardly the voice of a woman who is seeking common cause with other women against oppressive males. The kind of thing she says against men is nothing to what she has to say against women. Nothing matches the bitterness of her attack on the women. While feminists typically distrust men, the unmothered Molly distrusts most women. As far as the text is concerned the only woman she has ever liked is Stanhope, the friend she had when she was a girl in Gibraltar. She now sees every other woman, including her own daughter as a rival for male attention, an object of contempt or at best an object of pity. Where then can Molly turn for friendship? The only available answer is Bloom. She feels so lonely in the whole wide world that she wants to rest her head on the shoulder of Bloom but there is an unspoken tension between the two and she wants to remove that unspoken tension by doing something which can't be spoken of i.e., adultery. She wants to goad him to action or reaction so that she may be loved and cherished once again by Leopold.

One can even infer that what a wimp and coward Leopold is because he knows that his wife has cheated on him. He should be enraged but instead Joyce lets us know that he sees it entirely as a kind of

serial proposition which then gives rise to thoughts about what could it really mean if his wife has fornicated with her lover. One of the ways by which Joyce tries to encapsulate the so-called adultery of Molly Bloom is through distancing the event by thinking about the relative ways of seeing this. What if the vantage point moves out of the earth to the stars? What would a man and a woman fornicating on a bed look like from Mars? What would it mean on Mars? And Joyce points out that adultery or fornication is not really worse than other things such as natural disaster or child abuse or arson or treason or homicide. Can it really matter that much? And at one point the text says “the lethargy of nescient matter: the apathy of the stars” (Joyce 952).

It is a kind of brilliant yet lethal perception about the affairs of our lives. We generally give importance to almost all the actions and emotions of our lives. However, if we can objectively detach ourselves from our life at a conscious level then how important our actions would be if the distance is sufficiently increased from which we look at these things. As far as “the apathy of the stars” is concerned, how much does any single life mean? How much does the sexual behavior of 2 people mean in the largest possible terms? What Joyce is saying is that at a certain distance, all the things that we most value begin to look whimsical.

Even after 16 years of marriage, Bloom remains her best friend. All of the qualities that Molly ascribes to women at their best can be found in Bloom. According to the description in the novel, Bloom is a pacifist, a good money manager, a man of self restraint and a tenderly solicitous parent. Molly herself salutes his sense of responsibility. In a city filled with drunken, good for nothing, she appreciates his thriftiness and his concern for his family. She also likes his general politeness, his habitual good manners such as wiping his feet and tipping his hat and his consideration for her sleep. Besides appreciating all these virtues, Molly is captivated by Bloom’s worship of her own body. While she was weaning Milly, her breasts got so hard that she asked Bloom to suck them. He loved the taste of her milk so much that he wanted to drink it with his teeth and he sucked her breasts like a big baby.

Remembering this episode, Molly makes herself sound like her mother indulging in a greedy child, a child whose fascinating antics could fill a book and whose worship of her body elates her. She also thinks of his letters filled with rapturous praise for her glorious body. The letters had phrases lifted from some nonsensical book. But Molly isn’t outraged by Bloom’s fraudulence because she has become a connoisseur of his craziness. “Nobody understands his cracked ideas but me” (Joyce 990). So even though Bloom’s letter was both wildly exaggerated and plagiarized it still roused her. “He had me always at myself 4 and 5 times a day” (Joyce 985).

Just as she does not care about the lack of truth in Bloom’s letter, Molly does not want to know the truth about her from herself or from anyone else. She puts on a mask on many occasions. She has been trained to perform as a singer and Cheryl Herr has argued that Molly’s whole monologue can be seen or heard as a performance, a gigantic operatic aria (Herr 133-143). Onstage and off, Molly has always loved playing a role. When she got her first kiss from Lieutenant Mulvey under Gibraltar she told him for fun that she was engaged to the son of a Spanish nobleman.

In Bloom, she found a man who shared this love of play acting and of what might even be called as Ulyssean deception. Catching up with her one day in the rain when they were courting, he wanted to stop her for some intimate fondling and when she told him that her father was waiting for her over dinner, Bloom asked her to pretend as if she had forgotten her purse at the butcher shop and therefore she has to retrieve it. What a deceiver!, she thinks and when he asked her afterwards if he defended her she knew that she could see through her downcast eyes through her pretence of modesty. In other words, Molly remembers Bloom as a charming co-conspirator who could quickly think of a cover story and who was also smart enough to see the difference between the reality of Molly’s desire and the conventional role of modesty that she felt bound to play with her eyelids down. Both were the mirror image of each other.

However, marriage has dimmed Molly’s admiration for Bloom’s cover stories. Now, she resents the kind of play acting which Bloom used to do. She thinks that these are Bloom’s efforts to conceal his own adulterous adventures during a long night out on the town. She does not believe his story that he dined at Wynn’s hotel, which in fact he did not. He made up a pack of lies, she says to herself. She doubts his integrity and imagines that he is enjoying with “some little bitch or other he got in with somewhere or

picked up on the sly” (Joyce 957). Earlier she was impressed by his quick-witted deceitfulness nature but now she is no longer charmed by his nature. She vows to search his pocket in quest of a condom telling herself “I suppose he thinks I don’t know deceitful men all their 20 pockets aren’t enough for their lies”(Joyce 986). Molly’s bitter suspicion of Bloom springs in part from the fear that he thinks that she is past her prime “Im finished out and laid on the shelf”(Joyce 981). If Bloom has sex with another woman, it would symbolize for Molly a kind of both physical and psychological neglect on the part of her husband. It would mean for her that she is no longer needed or desired by her husband, the person whom she most desires. She wants her husband to make love to her.

This fear not only prompts her to resent Bloom and every woman who might stir his interest but also prompts her to yearn for sexual adventures of her own. Her adventure is only for the sake of proving to herself that she can still arouse a man’s desire. Deep down, Molly does not want to do it, that is, to excite men, especially Boylan; but nevertheless she is forced to do it because she wants to test her mettle. She believes that if she can excite the handsome Boylan she can very well excite her husband who worshipped her body once. All she wants is the love of her husband back and she can go to any extent.

Molly’s mind, besides Bloom, is occupied by two men in particular: Blazes Boylan and Stephen Dedalus. As far as Stephen is concerned, Bloom’s talk of Stephen’s wildness rouses Molly’s maternal instincts but with a tinge of reverse Oedipus complex involved in it. That is to say, she feels like a mother and thinks that Stephen needs a mother to look after him even though Molly hasn’t even seen Stephen since he was a boy 11 years ago at the time of Rudy’s death. Now he is a young man in his early 20s and from what Bloom says she gathers that “hes an author and going to be a university professor of Italian and Im to take lessons” (Joyce 988). Since she also knows that Bloom has shown him her picture she wonders why “he didn’t make him a present of it altogether and me too after all why not” (Joyce 988).

She may be implying that Bloom wants Stephen in the house to distract her from Boylan but in any case she makes her own desires perfectly clear. She conjures up the prospect of a passionate romance with this handsome young boy who will quiver to see the touch of her body and make them both famous when he writes about it in the newspapers. This wild imagination of Molly may reflect badly on her personality and her ethics, but psychoanalytically when one reads it then she comes off as a blameless person. Stephen symbolizes the son-figure and Bloom symbolizes the father-figure; so if the son can be coaxed to be aroused then why can’t the father? The rise of the son, Molly hopes, may lead to the rise of the father just to protect one’s wife.

Besides this psychological fantasy of a sensational affair with Stephen, Molly savours the actual, physical experience of orgasmic fireworks with Blazes Boylan: “He must have come 3 or 4 times with that tremendous big red brute of a thing he has...I never in all my life felt anyone had one of the size of that to make you feel full-up” (Joyce 959).

Boylan’s potency grows every time she thinks of him from three or four times to five or six times in the course of her thoughts. In her wild, unexpurgated thoughts, she increases the potency of Boylan only to make Bloom feel timid and thereby unconsciously wanting him to feel jealous. She wants to increase his manliness by challenging his virility. Furthermore, Molly feels not the slightest tinge of guilt for what she has done. On the contrary, she wants Bloom to know that:

his wife is fucked yes and damn well fucked too up to my neck nearly not by him 5 or 6 times handrunningtheres the mark of his spunk on the clean sheet I wouldnt bother to even iron it out that ought to satisfy him if you dont believe me feel my belly unless I made him stand him there and put him into me Ive a mind to tell him every scrap and make him do it out in front of me serve him right its all his own fault if I am an adulteress as the thing in the gallery said (Joyce 993).

Molly is absolutely ruthless. She seems heartlessly bent on crushing the ego of a man who has already been vilified for his Jewishness and exhausted by the pressures of his day. Yet, in spite of all the things that Bloom has endured from others one cannot ignore what Molly has endured from him. She only wanted her husband to make love to her but she did not get it. Hypothetically speaking, if Molly had denied full conjugal rights to Bloom for ten years, even though she was physically capable of granting

him, then Molly would be blamed if Bloom would have sought to make love to some other woman. One would not put the entire burden of blame on Bloom for resenting Molly and for seeking physical satisfaction elsewhere. Hence, it is to be considered that in hypothesis, Bloom is not entirely blameworthy then why is it, in reality, that Molly is blamed for the same action i.e., seeking physical satisfaction elsewhere. One must ask oneself whether or not one can justly put the blame on Molly for trying to satisfy her physical needs. This paper does not fault her or put the blame on her. The paper infers that her bitter outbursts signify not heartlessness but pain, the sheer frustration of not being given her sexual rights-“Its a wonder Im not an old shrivelled hag before my time living with him so cold never embracing me except sometimes when hes asleep the wrong end of me” (Joyce 990).

Molly yearns to be loved to know that she remains sexually desirable. She says “Of course a woman wants to be embraced 20 times a day” (Joyce 990). This alone would explain her lust for Boylan and her eagerness to see him again, “Oh lord I can’t wait till Monday” (Joyce 970). But the irony is that the man she desires the most to excite is Bloom. She is doing all of these acts only to coax her husband into making love to her again. Lying in bed she plans to get up early, put on her best dress and underwear to excite him and then go out leaving him to wonder where she is gone, “make him want me thats the only way” (Joyce 994).

Make him want me. Paradoxically, Molly’s urge to punish and humiliate Bloom springs from her desire for him. From her desperate longing to rouse his desire for her, Molly was born to perform. In letting Bloom see that she has taken Boylan into her bed in showing Boylan’s very spunk to her husband she acts out adultery for him as a way of goading him into sexual action. For it is obvious that she cares more for Bloom than for Boylan. Long accustomed to the refinement in sensitivity of Bloom she finds Boylan a bore.

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 they wear to be admired like a priest or a butcher... sure hed have something better to say for himself an old Lion. (Joyce 989-990).

The paper wants to draw the attention to what Molly says. Her word for Boylan is “No” but her final word for Bloom is “Yes”. Launching the final sentence of the chapter the hammer beats of “No” anticipates by contrast the resounding repetition of “Yes” at the end when Molly remembers passionately affirming the desire for Bloom. This final passage is an emotional homecoming for Molly, a return to the most ecstatic moment of her life. Just as Bloom relived at lunch time the day of their first love making at Howth’s Head, Molly relives it now. She relives what she calls the day when she got him to propose.

When he first asked her to marry her she remembers that she had paused to think of so many things he did not know, including almost all her memory of Gibraltar. But Molly’s wandering thoughts finally come home from Gibraltar to Ireland and at that moment her thoughts come back from all the other men she has ever known to Bloom. As she lay with him among the Rhododendrons, she remembers that he told her that she was herself: “a flower of the mountain... and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him” (Joyce 995).

This last comment could imply that Molly married Bloom because she thought she could always get away with her past just as she got him to propose. But the paper believes that she is talking about his astonishing empathy for women and the suppleness of his sensitivity which in turn moved her to give “him all the pleasure I could” (Joyce 995). Her final words are self affirming and the active verbs plainly tell us that she is not simply accepting Bloom but acting out her own desire

I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish Wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes

my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes (Joyce 995)

There are several interpretations to this passage that can be done but one observation that can be inferred from the close reading of the text is that Molly and Bloom each remembered the day of his proposal as the happiest day of their lives. The important feature to note here is that there is no conventional happy ending like the Happy Ever After and that Joyce has kept his novel open-ended and left enough room for further and even varying interpretations. So, in spite of its noted resounding rapture and affirmation this ending leaves one with more questions and that is, the authors suggest, one of the salient features of a great novel: to be able to make us introspect. Joyce knew that his book was arguably too theoretical, too abstract, too over organized and he therefore said that the Molly Bloom final chapter would be the way the book would be countersigned into eternity. This is the voice of flesh as well as the voice of a spirit that is allied to flesh and it gives us together one of the richest emblems of human life, of its spirit and its body.

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