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Joyce and Middlebrow Culture: Advertizing, Women's Magazines and Popular Fiction in *Ulysses*

Abstract: The essay will look at examples of popular writing in James Joyce's Ulysses, with the purpose to show that the relationship between what is seen as high modernist fiction and middlebrow writing is dialogical, in the Bakhtinian sense. The article will also attempt to answer questions regarding the connection between Ulysses and middlebrow culture, in terms of an audience, consumer identity, advertizing practices and modernity. How could one define Bloom's "advertisal" approach, based on creating visual lure, curiosity and the supposed mystery of female subjectivity? Bloom does not only consider women's clothing in terms of advertizing, he looks upon many other aspects of life from the same perspective. What kind of a book is Molly reading in "Calypso" when she asks Leopold to explain to her the term metempsychosis, which she has found in Ruby the Pride of the Ring, and what does Bloom buy her in the "Wandering Rocks"? If we know that the first novel finds its inspiration in Ayme Reade's Ruby. A Novel. Founded on the Life of a Circus Girl, a nineteenth-century sentimental circus story featuring a girl-made-slave as the protagonist, Sweets of Sin, the one bought during his wanderings, remains unidentified as a dime pornographic novel, with a title invented by Joyce or lost among the many of the type in the age. How do these sources contribute to the revisitation of the understanding of reception of popular fiction among women?

Key words: James Joyce, popular culture, advertizing, women's magazines, middlebrow writing

The essay will look at examples of popular writing in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, with the purpose to show that the relationship between what is seen as high modernist fiction and middlebrow writing is dialogical, in the Bakhtinian sense. Joyce's novel can be defined, according to Bakhtin, "as a diversity of social speeches, sometimes even diversity of languages and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (32). Popular fiction, romance and women's magazine sample discourses are to be detected in a few chapters in the novel. They are not meant to create the illusion of reality, but to draw attention to the polyphonic complexity of the text and to the multiplicity of voices which establish a subtle dialogue among themselves.

How could one define Bloom's "advertisement" (Devlin 16) approach, based on creating visual lure, curiosity and the supposed mystery of female subjectivity? In "Lotus-Eaters", Bloom observes with attention the clothing of an upper-class woman in front of

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Grosnover Hotel, on the other side of the street, while M'Coy is bothering him with all sorts of questions:

Stylish kind of coat with that roll collar, warm for a day like this, looks like blanket cloth. Careless stand of her with her hands in patch pockets. [...] She raised a gloved hand to her hair. [...] Drawing back his head and gazing far from beneath his eyelids he saw the bright fawn skin in the glare, the braided drums. (Joyce 89-90)

Bored with M'Coy's chatter, Bloom gazes at this scene in front of the hotel. A porter is pushing a case onto a cab; a man is searching his pockets for change; a woman stands waiting. She is stylishly dressed and looks haughty. As M'Coy talks about Dignam's death, Bloom cannot take his eyes from her hand, her hair, her skin, her boots and her foot. He is just about to enjoy her silk-stockinged leg as she gets into the cab, when a tram passes and blocks his view, causing frustration.

According to Devlin, Bloom will become an early twentieth-century avatar of Blackwell, a commentator for the "Best and Worst Dressed List" in a contemporary magazine. Bloom's comments refer both to style and to the appropriateness given the circumstances. Roaming through the streets of Dublin, Bloom assesses the taste and tastelessness of many characters he encounters. For instance, in "Lestrygonians", his thoughts are interrupted again by meeting Josie Breen, wife of Denis Breen, who has become weak-minded; they exchange greetings and inquiries and Bloom notices her shabby apparel and aging features ("And that dowdy tocque, three old grapes to take the harm out of it. Shabby genteel", Joyce 200). He remembers with regret that she "used to be a tasty dresser" (Joyce 200) and as the smell of food from Harrison's assails him, reminding him of Josie Powell, before she was married, when he was courting her ("Rhubarb tart with liberal fillings, rich fruit interior. Josie Powell that was", Joyce 200). Bloom likes tasteful clothing fitting a tart-like, full body, as shown in his recollections of Molly's style:

Molly had that elephantgrey dress with the braided frogs. Mantailored with selfcovered buttons. [...] Never put a dress on her back like it. Fitted her like a glove, shoulder and hips. Just beginning to plump it out well. Rabbit pie we had that day. People looking after her. (Joyce 196)

Later in "Nausicaa", he reveals his taste for fashion over nudity, behaving as a real judge of taste. This preference for fashion, especially feminine, connects Bloom to Joyce, as suggested by a conversation of Joyce's with his friend Frank Budgen. Budgen said: "But ... as I remember you in other days you always fell back upon the fact that the woman's body was desirable and provoking, whatever else was objectionable about her", to which Joyce replied: "Perhaps I did. But now I don't care a damn about their bodies. I am only interested in their clothes" (qtd. in Devlin 7).

Gerty McDowall's dress is described as seen by the girl herself, with all its neatness, grace and good taste. Her greatest pride is her "four dingy set" unundies and that day she was wearing the blue set "for luck"; blue, "her own colour" (Joyce 456) was also the Virgin Mary's colour. Bloom assumes that a double layer of clothing attracts the eye due to its resemblance to a "blue female outer garment discretely exposing white underwear beneath"

(Devlin 21). Gerty compares her display with the pictures of “skirt-dancers and highkickers” (Joyce 476) cut out of papers and used by a gentleman lodger of Bertha Supple to raise his passion. On the other hand, due to the use of blue and white colours and to the many references to the mass held in the nearby church, Gerty’s image can be compared to a virgin’s icon as well, Bloom expressing his adoration for her virginally white underpants:

and he could see her other things too, nainsook knickers, the fabric that caresses the skin, better than those with pettiwidth, the green four and eleven, on account of being white and she let him and she saw that he saw and then it went so high it went out of sight a moment (Joyce 477)

“Nainsook” means “soft, light cotton material, often with a woven stripe”; “Hindi nainsukh” means “pleasant” and “nain” “eye” with “such” means pleasure to the eye (*Webster’s* 1198 qtd. in Devlin 22), which is what Gerty is offering Bloom.

As Gerty leans backward as if to watch the fireworks, her legs and white knickers are on display. This leads to a moment of imaginary consummation both for the girl and Bloom. Before the climactic moment, Bloom focuses on Gerty’s stockings and legs (“and there wasn’t a brack on them and that was what he was looking at, transparent”, Joyce 668). Like in the Josie Breen scene, Bloom with echoes from Gerty’s mind, cannot refrain from noticing the rumpled style of rather aging Cissy Caffrey (“she did look a steele tugging the two kids along with the flimsy blouse she bought only a fortnight before like a rag on her back and a bit of her petticoat hanging like a caricature”, Joyce 469), who is thus contrasted with Gerty.

As an advertizing agent, Bloom does not only consider women’s clothing in terms of advertizing, appeal and style, but he looks upon many other aspects of life from the same perspective. For instance, he thinks of politicians as promoters of their own personalities in terms of successful products: “You must have a certain fascination: Parnell. Arthur Griffith is a squareheaded fellow but he has no go in him for the mob” (Joyce 207).

On looking at tombstones, Bloom considers that the epitaphs should have the role of an ad for the entire existence of the deceased one. One epitaph may show someone’s spending foolishly and the consequences of debts; another may praise a person’s life dedicated to hard work or travelling. The texts may be accompanied by photos as well, as Joyce has an obsession of how to preserve the memory of the dear ones departed. And in another chapter, “Hades”, he thinks of recording the voice of the beloved ones who are no longer among us:

Besides how could you remember everybody? Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house. [...] Remind you of the voice like the photograph reminds you of the face. Otherwise you couldn’t remember the face after fifteen years, say. (Joyce 144)

Interestingly, at the beginning of the twentieth century in a small Romanian village, Săpânța, wood carvers beautifully worked coloured epitaphs on the crosses in the village cemetery in the same manner in which Bloom envisaged them in his mind. Bloom’s

imaginary epitaphs and the Romanian ones in the now famous Merry Cemetery of Săpânța share the same joyful approach, which may appear peculiar in the context of death. As Joyce created imaginary eulogies for the traveller to Cork or the woman with the saucepan cooking good Irish stew, Stan Ioan Pătraș, the Romanian carver worked his texts and pictures on crosses telling his own story and the stories of an alcoholic, a musician, a miller, a soldier, a wife, a dancer, a drowned boy and so on. For instance, “The Song of George Lupatoc – Dancer” goes like this:

Here you find me, George Lupatoc.
I was full of life in both work and play.
For as long as the world was good to me
I danced and played with merriment

For as long as I had the strength to work
I strove to build a fortune
Much good that was
When I arrived at my grave,

Leaving this life in my 77th year. (*Muzica e irlandeza dar...11*)

Or “The Song of the Drowned Boy”:

On the evening of 9th June
I left to get some spring water.
My parents didn’t know
I was brought home drowned.

No one knows what happened,
They simply found me dead,
In Săpânța near a rock.
I leave the world sad behind me.
Oh, my poor short life,
How little of it I got to live,
How little of it I got to live. (*Muzica e irlandeza dar...11*)

The epitaphs on the blue crosses, just like Joyce’s gramophone, represent a dialogue between the dead and the living and help the living face their own mortality. The fascination with epitaphs manifested by Joyce’s character and Romanian countrypeople at the beginning of the twentieth-century may derive from another common popular practice with the Irish and Romanians, i.e. ‘wakings’ of the dead or pre-burial night-long celebrations of the lives of the recently deceased persons.

Bloom has a whole philosophy about advertizing. It should be something “to catch the eye” (Joyce 106), which becomes obvious when he expresses his dislike for an ad with a cyclist “doubled up like a cod in a pot. Damn bad ad”; instead, he suggests something

“round like a wheel. Then the spokes: sports, sports, sports: and the hub big: college” (Joyce 106) for an ad promoting college sports. We infer that he prefers more creatively iconic ads to explicit, representative ones. In “Lestrygonians”, he goes on criticizing ads for Wisdom Hely’s business by giving examples: one is of sandwichmen wearing tall hats inscribed with H.E.L.Y.S; another one is a poor quality pun in “You can’t lick’em. What? Our envelopes” or such as in “Hello, Jones, where are you going? Can’t stop, Robinson, I am hastening to purchase the only reliable inkrazer Kansell [cancel/ can sell], sold by Hely’s Ltd., 85 Dame Street” (Joyce 194-195). They lack a sense of attractiveness/ appeal and mystery.

Bloom’s advertizing perspective works in the following manner:

he is curious about what causes curiosity itself – the curiosity, in particular, that makes people stop and look at an image for a particular product. His ideal visual lure is predicated on the supposed ‘mystery’ of female subjectivity: his proposed ad involving a “transparent showcart with two smart girls sitting inside writing letters” would work, he assumes, because “everyone dying to know what she is writing” (in Devlin 19)

The forbidden fruit has always been tempting. Curiosity and visual taboo have been a classical topic, as Bloom recalls the Biblical story of Lot’s wife: “Curiosity. Pillar of salt” (Joyce 195).

Bloom’s philosophy of advertizing is that ads, in order to be successful, have to be consumed in themselves first. They may be compared to food for people’s eyes, so an ad showing a brandname followed by a description of the product will not intrigue the consumer in any way and will probably not sell. In “Aeolus”, we are given an example of Bloom’s ideal ad for a manufacturer of keys, named Keys: at the top “two house of keys”, followed by the icon of the “two crossed keys”, at the bottom, the name of the business and a brief description of it (Joyce 153). The three-element ad approach is significant at various levels in general in *Ulysses*, according to Devlin (25). One level is that of the triangular relationships in the novel: Molly, Bloom and Boylan; Molly, Bloom and Martha; Bloom, Gerty and Cissy; Molly, Bloom and Mary Driscoll; Molly, Bloom and Josie Powell Breen; Molly, Bloom and Stephen, etc. Another level is connected to the shift from the religious sphere to the profane one: St. Patrick used the shamrock to illustrate the theory of the Trinity, whereas Bloom uses three-element advertizing to persuade people, advertizing and consumption having become the new religion of modernity.

In “Itahca”, Bloom’s last thoughts before falling asleep, after he has spent much of the day designing the ad for Alexander Keys, focus on the perfect ad:

What are habitually his final meditations?

Of some one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop in wander, a poster novelty, with all extraneous accretions excluded, reduced to its simplest and most efficient terms not exceeding the span of casual vision and congruous with the velocity of modern life. (Joyce 848)

His aim is to create an ad that keeps the pace with the speed of contemporary life. In a nutshell, according to Anne Fogarty, the text captures the manner in which commodities synchronize with consumer desires as the driving force of capitalist economies. “In this seeming insight into Bloom’s unconscious in “Ithaca”, Joyce at once captures the essence of twentieth-century society and mockingly lays it bare” (2). Joyce re-writes our manner of asserting individuality in urban environment through patterns of consumption. “In the city, the display of wealth through adornments and entertainment leads to an increased awareness of style” (Patterson 21), style being the concept cherished by Bloom when referring to women’s attire. Yet, Joyce’s approach to style deconstructs Veblen’s social emulation and conspicuous consumption models. The city is depicted as the location for the development of tastes in fashion, as for instance, Molly is dreaming of going to Belfast to buy herself elegant clothes.

The world at the turn of the century was one in which mass-produced objects flooded the urban environment producing a sense of anxiety. According to Simmel, the density of the modern metropolis has just been remaking the density of human identity, captured by Joyce’s novel (409-424).

This is why the metropolis is the seat of commerce and it is in it that the purchasability of things appears in quite a different aspect than in simple economies. It is also the seat of the blasé attitude. In it is brought to a peak, in a certain way, that achievement of the concentration of purchasable things which stimulates the individual to the highest degree of nervous energy. (Simmel qtd. in Patterson 40)

Actually, Bloom is even more modern as he is fascinated with the consumption of ads in themselves, our psychic life and identity. He even ponders on markers of difference and ways of becoming noticeable.

Joyce’s characters are shown against the background of modernity represented by commodities, signs, maps, headlines, stories, pubs, explored in details. “The experience of modernity, in other words, becomes defined precisely by the experience of things” (Latham 16). Joyce insists on the importance of all these elements, “withdrawing them from the gray tones of a blasé existence in order to reveal their beauty, their richness, and their fascination” (Latham 16). Although nothing special happens to Bloom on 16 June 1904, he is endowed with the ability to extract the complexity of the nothingness of everyday life.

In “Calypso”, Molly indicates requestingly while eating breakfast. She wants to ask Leopold to explain to her the term metempsychosis, which she has found in the novel she has finished reading, *Ruby the Pride of the Ring*. Leopold explains “the transmigration of souls”, which baffles Molly further. Bloom looks through the book, a cheap erotic novel. “The monster Maffei”, whip in hand and naked circus girl at his feet remind Bloom of circus cruelty to animals, a dangerous trapeze act, death and than Dignam.

He turned over the smudged pages. *Ruby: the Pride of the Ring*. Hello. Illustration. Fierce Italian with carriage whip. Must be Ruby pride of the on the floor naked. Sheet kindly lent. *The monster Maffei desisted and flung his victim from him with an oath*. Cruelty behind it all. Doped animals. Trapeze at Hengler’s. Had to look the other way. Mob gaping. Break your neck or we’ll break our sides. Families of them. Bone them young so they

metempsychosis. That we live after death. Our souls. That a man's soul after he dies.
Dignam's soul ... (Joyce 78)

It is known that this novel finds its inspiration in Ayme Reade's *Ruby. A Novel. Founded on the Life of a Circus Girl*, a nineteenth-century sentimental circus story featuring a girl-made-slave as the protagonist (Power 115-121). After a difficult childhood, her family broken, Ruby is sold into slavery to Signor Enrico, a circus master whom Joyce changes from Mr. Henry to Signor Maffei (reference to *Mafioso*). The heroine is worked to exhaustion and led to her death before her father's eyes, the latter having returned from Australia to ensure the sentimental scene. By imagining this book, Joyce revisits the Victorian popular novel: melodramatic, protagonist going through misfortunes, yet, no happy ending to reward her. Passages of this re-written book intertwine in Bloom's consciousness with his interests, i.e. cruelty to animals, circus, erotic fantasies and Dignam's funeral.

In "The Wandering Rocks", Bloom is looking in a bookshop for something else for Molly to read. He picks up *The Awful Disclosure of Maria Monk*, Aristotle's *Masterpiece*, Masoch's *Tales of the Ghetto*, *Fair Tyrants* by James Lovebirch (but he has bought it) and *Sweets of Sin*. He starts reading some passages in the cheap erotic novel based on the triangle – husband, wife and lover (Raoul).

-All the dollarbills her husband gave her were spent in the stores on wondrous gowns and costliest firillies. For him! For Raoul!

Yes. This. Here. Try.

-Her mouth glued on his in a luscious voluptuous kiss while his hands felt for the opulent curves inside her déshabillé.

Yes. Take this. The end.

-You are late, he spoke hoarsely, eyeing her with a suspicious glare. The beautiful woman threw off her sabletrimmed wrap, displaying her queenly shoulders and heaving embonpoint. An imperceptible smile played round her perfect lips as she turned to him calmly. (Joyce 303)

The explicit language occurs throughout the day in Bloom's mind, evoking a state of mental surrender to sensuous images of feminine body and nudity. Moreover, Bloom relates the obscene passages to his desire for Molly. As he scans the passages, "he plans to use the text as a sort of code to which will let he is aware of what's going on – whether in dismay or in fascination is not quite clear" (Kiberd 165). Yet, the "phlegm cough" of the shopman and the "dingy curtains" of his shop offer an ironical touch to Bloom's romantic fantasy. The novel bought during his wanderings, remains unidentified as a dime pornographic novel, with a title invented by Joyce or lost among the many of the type in the age.

In “Circe” references to the two pornographic novels *Ruby the Pride of the Ring* and *Sweets of Sin* materialize again in the scene of two imaginary policemen questioning Bloom, a result of his state of uncertainty and apprehension. They claim to have caught him red-handed, yet he claims to be doing good to others. The authority records his plea related to the prevention of cruelty to animals and Bloom is touched by this theme, condemning stories of circus life as demoralizing. The monster Maffei, about whom he read in Molly’s book, materializes as lion tamer with a whip and a revolver, being associated with animal taming techniques: knotted throngs, strangling pulley, red-hot crowbar. Bella, the whore-mistress of the brothel Leopold and Stephen find themselves in, is imagined as a circus tamer ordering characters turned into animals. The play is again on animal imaginary and gender as Bella takes on masculine features and Bloom behaves in a submissive manner.

How do these sources contribute to the revisitation of the understanding of reception of popular fiction among women? Are such novels offering an escape or are they reinforcing myths of the family, fulfillment through (heterosexual) love? Romance novels offer dramatic visions of male/ female interactions leading to “satisfying and enduring love commitments” (Nachbar and Lause 477). Romances are escape novels, yet, they also validate specific social orders. Molly is unhappy with Boylan, thus paradoxically needing romances as refuge. Meanwhile, just like Bloom, she is dreaming of reconciling with her husband, the youth scene on Howth being a leitmotif of the thoughts of both spouses. Femininity and masculinity are constructed socially, and this may be one of the aspects that Joyce seems to draw attention to through his reinterpretations of popular novels. Joyce also foregrounds fantasy themes in dialogue with Bloom’s fantasies of these representations of dream visions of male/ female relationships as he has a whole series of imaginary or distant affairs with many female characters in the novel (Martha, the servant, Mrs. Breen).

In “Nausicaa”, the characters, especially Gerty MacDowall, are defined through English fashion magazines and romantic stories with a manly man and self-sacrificing wives. Gerty is sitting lost in thoughts; she is described as beautiful, slender, graceful, pale, in a sentimental idiom of her own thinking under the impression of the romances favoured by her. The setting against which she is introduced at the beginning of the chapter is typical of romances: “The summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace. Far away in the west the sun was setting and the last glow of all too fleeting day lingered lovingly on sea and strand ...” (Joyce 449). Her eyes are attractive, her hair waves naturally and her blush adds to her loveliness on the advice of the Woman Beautiful page of the *Princess Novelettes*.

Why have women such eyes of witchery? Gerty’s were of the bluest Irish blue, set off by lustrous lashes and dark expressive brows. Time was when those brows were not so silkily-seductive. It was Madame Vera Verity, directress of the Woman Beautiful page of the *Princess novelette*, who had first advised her to try eyebrowline which gave that haunting expression to the eyes, so becoming in leaders of fashion, and she had never regretted it. (Joyce 453)

Princess Novelettes was a weekly magazine published in London; each issue included one complete novelette or an installment of a serialized novel. Among the features included, we mention: “All about People”, “Beauty’s Boudoir”, “Boudoir Gossip”,

"Fashion Supplement" (*Ulysses* annotated 386). There seems to have been no Woman Beautiful page and no Madame Vera Verity but the magazine advertized G. Kera Miller among the "Most Celebrated Writers of the Day" and carries her serialized stories (*Ulysses* annotated 386).

Gerty is also dressed according to style advertized in these women's magazines:

Gerty was dressed simply but with the instinctive taste of a votary of Dame Fashion for she felt that there was just a might that he might be out. 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), with a smart vee opening down to the division and kerchief pocket (in which she always kept a piece of cottonwool scented with her favourite perfume because the handkerchief spoiled the sit) and a navy threequarter skirt cut to the stride showed off her slim graceful figure to perfection. [...] Her shoes were the newest thing in footwear. [...] Her wellturned ankle displayed its perfect proportions beneath her skirt and just the proper amount and no more of her shapely limbs encased in finespun hose with high spliced heels and wide garter tops. (Joyce 455)

What is the relationship between the manner in which Gerty MacDowell is portrayed in "Nausicaa" and English fashion magazines and romances, such as that of *The Princess Novelette*, *Lady's Pictorial* and Miss Cummins's novels? How is Joyce's novel constructed so that it could show the "fictitious" nature of the consumer identities constructed in these women's magazines? These magazines offered women a fictitious formula for perfection in beauty and style and introduced them to a select group of apparently initiated ones ("women like you"); actually, their target is high popularity. They were also manuals of survival in a patriarchal world. Many modernists may have seen their art as counter-move "to the feminine-commercial code of popular magazines. They called for an end to the idea of 'poetry for ladies' and a return to what they would consider the harsh, surgical modes of modern life" (Kiberd 194). But Joyce's programme seems to be more subtle than mock Gerty's desire to change herself into a model recommended by these magazines, consisting of "a conflation of masculine and feminine modes, via Bloom, the man brave enough to admit his own femininity" (Kiberd 194). Anyway, it is just appropriate to use popular magazines as Blooms works for them and Gerty is a consumer of them.

There are small details that undermine the seriousness of the descriptions as perceived from Gerty's perspective. For example, Gerty's slightly shopsoiled ribbon bought at Clery's summer sales to embellish her hat undermines the luxurious vocabulary of fashion journalism as depicted in the excerpt above and in many other in the chapter. Also, the feminine "prudishness of such publications is canceled out by the pornographic scenario that Joyce envisages" (Fogarty 6). Gerty swings her leg, conscious of the dark eyes fixed in her worship. Leaning backward, she reveals her thighs and knickers, so that an imaginary consummation follows. She gives herself visually, feeling no shame, thus the fact that Gerty is rendered a certain agency in the erotic game is unusual for the romantic formula. Gerty's lameness revealed in the end and thus shocking Bloom proves to be one more element in contradiction with romance. And being mock-romantic, the scene has been associated with a kind of pornographic entertainment at the time in Dublin. "Mutoscope pictures in Capel street: for men only. Peeping Tom. Willy's hat and what the girls did with

it. Do they snapshot those girls or is it all a fake? *Lingerie* does it. Felt for the curves inside her *dishabille*. Excites them also when they're" (Joyce 480).

'The mutoscopes' of Capel Street mentioned by Bloom. These were machines, operated by a male who entered a booth and cranked a handle. As he did so, young women in the picture showed off their legs by raising their skirts for the cameramen until the viewer – in Bloom-like fantasy, watching without being watched – reached his satisfaction. (Kiberd 202)

Gerty's thoughts are imbued with romance and the solution to her problems seems to involve marriage:

where the couples walked and lightening the lamp near her window where Reggy Wylie used to turn his freewheel like she read in that book *The Lamplighter* by Miss Cummins, author of *Mabel Vaughan* and other tales. For Gerty had her dreams that no-one knew of. She loved to read poetry and when she got a keepsake from Bertha Supple of that lovely confession album with the coralpink cover to write her thoughts in she laid it in the drawer of her toilette which, though it did not err on the side of luxury, was scrupulously neat and clean. (Joyce 473)

Details of the girl's life, like the toilette which "did not err on the side of luxury", her father's alcoholism, the mother's headaches, the typical stock drunkard's household, turn her romantic aspirations comical. Bloom becomes for a while the focus of her unrealized girlish dreams. Though being aware she has raised the devil in him, Gerty remains quite immaculate in her romance, distancing herself from the world of prostitutes; Bloom, in a counter-move, wonders whether Molly could have charged Boylan for his pleasure and how much she is worth. "Retrospectively, her romantic daydreams and desire for fashionable perfection are revealed to be compensatory fantasies that hold at bay her knowledge that she is unlikely ever to acquire the marital status for which she yearns" (Fogarty 6). Interestingly, Gerty works hard imagining the ideal wife she would like to be; Molly, far from being the ideal, is actually married.

Instances of modernity in the sense of consumer culture are also offered by the "Penelope" episode. Molly looks forward to her concert in Belfast with Boylan because she could go shopping in a new city. She would like more clothes and new corsets to make her look slimmer. Molly would like to be able to spend freely; she hates the small of her wardrobe, the need to remake old hats, and the need to wear the same dresses at concerts.

yes and the second pair of silkette stockings is laddered after one days wear I could have brought them to Lewers this morning and kick up a row and made that one change them only not to upset myself and run the risk of walking into him and ruining the whole thing and one of those kidfitting corsets Id want advertized cheap in the Gentlewoman with elastic gores on the hips he saved the one I have but thats no good what did they say they give a delightful figure line II/6 obviating the unsightly broad appearance across the lower back to reduce flesh my belly is a bit too big (Joyce 888)

Her consumerist illusion is catered for by the same style of women's magazines, which makes her aware that style is extremely important. Molly's desire for fulfillment is accomplished through her consumerist desires. And she takes comfort in the thought of women remaining beautiful in spite of age – Kitty O'Shea, Lily Langtry, the mistress of Edward VII. Towards the end of the chapter her little consumerist dissatisfactions turn into nostalgia and her final yeas liberates her from petty neediness (Fogarty 6).

In an article on Joyce and popular culture, Kershner reminds of a previous article "Joyce, Bakhtin, and Popular Culture" (1989), in which his assumption is that the popular culture voices in *Ulysses* find themselves in a dialogic relationship, which allows the possibility of being self-subversive (9-19). In conclusion, the paper has been an attempt to answer questions regarding the connection between *Ulysses* and middlebrow culture, in terms of romance and popular novels and magazines audience, consumer identity, infant advertizing practices and modernity.

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