

“I Eat; Therefore I Am”—Molly and Food

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Abstract

Molly's streams of consciousness in “Penelope” are filled with food and eating, which make up a major and crucial part of the person “Molly Bloom” and present a detailed and realistic picture of her life. Food acts as a sign. The rights of entitlement to food signify the financial condition of a household. Moreover, it conveys to Molly private coded messages concerning Bloom, and enables her to make connections with her family, her past, and the community in Dublin. In taking part in various food-related activities, Molly also participates in the communal life of Dublin. Dietary practices thus constitute a part of the identity of Molly Bloom. She eats; therefore she is. Not entirely free from sociocultural constraints, Molly nevertheless reverses the traditional gender roles of man as consumer and woman as the consumed, savors the pleasures brought about by food and sexuality, and suggests the naturalness and inevitability of bodily functions engendered by food consumption.

Key Words: Molly Bloom, *Ulysses*, food, social practice, gender