THE PARALLAX MOTIF IN ULYSSES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Theodore Jeffery Freeman, B. A.

Denton, Texas

May, 1979
Freeman, Theodore Jeffery., The Parallax Motif in "Ulysses." Master of Arts (English), May, 1979, 91 pp., bibliography, 37 titles.

This study is a detailed textual examination of the word "parallax" in Ulysses. It distinguishes three levels of meaning for the word in the novel. In the first level, parallax functions as a character motif, a detail, first appearing in and conforming to the realistic surface of Bloom's inner monologue, whose meaning is what it tells of his crucial problems of identity. In the second, parallax functions as an integral part of the symbolic complex, lying outside of Bloom's perceptions, surrounding the emblem of crossed keys, symbol of, among other things, paternity and homerule, two major narrative themes. The third level involves parallax as a symbol informing the novel's overriding theme of the writing of Ulysses itself and of the relationship between the novel's representative life and artistic design.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. PARALLAX AND BLOOM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PARALLAX AND THE THEMES OF PATERNITY AND HOMERULE</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. PARALLAX AND THE ARTISTIC VISION IN ULYSSES</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If asked about the word "parallax," most readers of *Ulysses* will say of it, as Bloom does in "Lestrygonians," "I never exactly understood." It is one of the most obscure of the major word-motifs in the novel, not because Joyce has left its meaning obscure, but because it has been commonly ignored, misunderstood, or incompletely evaluated by general readers and serious critics alike. The following study will demonstrate that, in fact, "parallax" is carefully and subtly weighted with meaning in *Ulysses* and that, investigated in terms of the novel's complex laws of correspondence and development, "parallax" reveals itself to be a key word in relating character, theme, and structure in the novel. First, however, it will be helpful to account for the present lack of understanding of the "parallax" motif, since to do so will necessarily be at the same time to emphasize certain critical assumptions about the nature of Joyce's artistic technique which are required in order to assess the significance of "parallax" or any other motif in the novel.

Part of the reason for the obscurity of "parallax" lies in its esoteric meaning as a trigonometric measuring
system used by astronomers to determine the distances of celestial bodies. This meaning acts as an obstacle to many readers who, intimidated by a scientific concept, simply ignore the word or check it off to Joyce's supposedly gratuitous word-hoarding. It is wrong to assume that the scientific meaning of parallax is gratuitous in *Ulysses*. Although there is nothing of scientific exactitude involved in Joyce's use of the word, the reader should at least be aware of the fact that parallax involves the degree to which a celestial object varies in relation to other celestial objects when it is observed from opposite points of the earth's surface or from opposite points of the earth's orbit. The angles resulting from these observations are used to find the mean or proper position of the body in relation to the earth or sun. Parallax, then, is a relationship between an observed object and two observers which furnishes a way to fix the position of the observed object by measuring its distance from the observers. Through parallax, observers and object are related to one another and thereby "fixed" in the process.

The scientific meaning of parallax, however, has no value in *Ulysses* until it is redefined in terms of its use in the novel. Too often, those critics who have returned from an astronomy textbook armed with a general
knowledge of the word's scientific meaning, labor under the erroneous conviction that parallax can automatically serve as a symbol for any number of thematic or structural aspects of the novel simply because it appears in the novel seven times. It is assumed that parallax has meaning in *Ulysses* because of some meaning it is thought to have in and of itself, before it has established meaningful relationships among the other words of which *Ulysses* is composed.

For instance, it is often pointed out that there are actual narrative incidents of parallax in the novel involving Stephen and Bloom: their simultaneous observations of the matutinal cloud in "Telemachus" and "Calypso"; of Shakespeare's face in a mirror in "Circe"; of constellations and of Molly's lamp from Bloom's garden in "Ithaca." It has never been explained, however, how parallax as a word, in any of its appearances in the novel, is connected to these narrative events; it is assumed that simply their occurrence in the same novel as the word "parallax" provides a sufficient connection.

Other more general meanings have been claimed for parallax by those critics who relate it to *Ulysses* as a novel with multiple points of view, both in terms of the various "unstable relative viewpoints" of the novel's characters, and in terms of various historical
perspectives, which Ellmann says establish "a kind of parallax to [Joyce's] own time, as viewed from the two points of the classical age and the Renaissance." It has been used to explain the micro/macrocosmic view in which *Ulysses*, by virtue of its reflection of man's dilemma in the stars, "is cast into the framework of the total universe," just as it is cast into the mythical framework of *The Odyssey*. One critic finds in parallax Joyce's injection into his book of the contemporaneous theory of relativity, with its "liberating implications . . . in the physical, psychological, and moral spheres," and also feels that Joyce, by his emphasis on parallax, is "subtly urging as much self-consciousness in our observations of others as astronomers exercise in astral sightings."

These critical insights have only the most general kind of validity, because, like the connections frequently made between parallax and the simultaneous observations of Stephen and Bloom, they are made in the absence of detailed local surveys which *Ulysses* requires in order to establish the relationship of a single motif to other elements in the novel. Without such local surveys, any meaning or significance attached to parallax must be based on simplistic ideas about the use of association in *Ulysses*.
and the way in which the novel's motifs are used to "symbolize" something.

What must first be understood about any motif in Ulysses, whether a word, a phrase, an image, an idea, or an object, is that it has no determinate significance in itself before it is given one in the novel. There are no allegorical, philosophical, or psychological assumptions, no automatic symbolic gestures attached to parallax or any of the scores of such motifs as Sweets of Sin, Plumptree's Potted Meat, "Plasto's high grade ha," "La ci darem," that appear again and again in the course of the novel. As S. L. Goldberg notes in his excellent study of Ulysses, The Classical Temper (1961), "For Joyce . . . the way in which art is symbolic has no necessary connection with the systematic employment of 'symbols' in the ordinary sense, of images or words whose meanings are to be discovered only outside of the work of art and then attributed as meanings of the work itself. The meanings of which a work (or an incident in it, or an image) is the symbol are created in, and by, the art itself. . . ." 6

The purpose of this investigation is to determine the meaning and significance of the parallax motif created in, and by, the art of Ulysses. It will demonstrate that parallax develops meaning on a number of
levels at once through Joyce's mixture of realism and symbolism. The three chapters constituting the body of the investigation represent, for purposes of analysis, what have been distinguished as three levels of meanings for parallax, even though, as will be seen, these "levels" are integrated by an immensely complex artistic technique that defies attempts to keep them clearly differentiated.

The first of these chapters considers parallax as a character motif, a detail, first appearing in and conforming to the realistic surface of Bloom's inner monologue, whose meaning is what it tells us of his crucial problems of identity. The following chapter traces parallax as an integral part of the symbolic complex, which lies outside of Bloom's perceptions, surrounding the emblem of crossed keys in a circle, symbol of, among other things, paternity and homerule, two major narrative themes. The last investigative chapter will consider parallax as a symbol of the process of the reader's apprehension necessitated by the artistic form and technique of the novel itself, a process in which character, theme, and structure relate to produce the final vision of Ulysses.

As mentioned above, all of the meanings of parallax in Ulysses, from realistic detail to pervasive symbol, are integrated by an art that is fantastically complex. Levin's dictum of 1941, that in Ulysses Joyce "hedged
himself in with far more complicated conditions and far more rigorous restrictions than any school of criticism would ever dare to exact," is still true. The basic principles of Joyce's technique, however, as a result of fifty-five years of intense critical study, are now generally understood. It is a technique that is fundamentally dramatic and uses three principal devices: the inner monologue, the parody, and the quasi-dramatic format of "Circe." Each of these devices is used to develop the meaning of parallax, and it will facilitate the detailed study which follows to consider first the nature of each.

The first three appearances in the novel of the word parallax come in Bloom's inner monologue. Like all the inner monologues in Ulysses, Bloom's is filled with words, phrases, and images, all of which are used as motifs of characterization often compared to the Wagnerian leitmotif. They are "means of representing and defining the individual character by expressing the personal centres from which his feelings and thoughts radiate and to which they are constantly returning." Parallax, then, as a character motif in Bloom's inner monologue, has its primary meaning in the thoughts and feelings it represents for Bloom. Unless we understand how and why Bloom thinks and feels about it as he does, we will have
little basis for considering parallax in its more pervasive thematic and symbolic meanings.

When Joyce repeats a thematically important word like parallax, he is first of all reporting a resurgence of that word in the character's mind, and this is done without comment or interpretation. Character motifs are given meaning which is developed through association and juxtaposition with other motifs, and that meaning must often wait hundreds of pages for a tenuous juxtaposition to become a direct association. It is through associations and references that Joyce brings a significant pattern to what would naturally be a chaotic psyche, and in doing so defines his characters.

Even in the parodies, as in "Oxen in the Sun" where the narrative action and the thoughts of the characters are revealed through a series of parodies of literary styles, we are given a kind of indirect inner monologue. In spite of the obvious artifice of these parodies, motifs such as parallax are collected there just as they have been collected by the characters in earlier inner monologues, and we find the shape of the emotional field in both monologue and parody to be the same. For example, in "Lestrygonians" parallax is directly associated in Bloom's mind with "metempsychosis," a word that Molly has asked him to define for her earlier in the day.
Two hundred and fifty pages later, in a literary parody of DeQuincey which acts as an indirect inner monologue of Bloom, parallax is again associated with metempsychosis and Molly in a manner consistent with the psychological pattern first established in "Lestrygonians."

In the quasi-dramatic "Circe" episode ("quasi-dramatic" because it is more expressionistic or phantasmagoric than psychological), motifs continue to be collected and associated in emotional patterns created in earlier inner monologues. For instance, in "Circe" parallax is directly associated in one of Bloom's dramatic fantasies with "K11" of the Kino's twelve-shilling trousers, a development of the earlier and rather tenuous juxtaposition of parallax and K11 in "Lestrygonians." (K11, as we will see, like metempsychosis in the previous example, has important characterizational and thematic associations with parallax.)

One function of all the devices, then, the inner monologue, the parody, and the dramatic fantasy of Circe is, as Stanley Sultan observes, to bring about "the removal of the author, the creation of a dramatic fiction." But all of them have another function besides patterning the emotions and attitudes of characters through associational motifs: they also develop a pattern of references and associations which lies
outside of the characters' perceptions. Both patterns are based on the same motifs and the same associations, but one reveals the preoccupations and perceptions of the characters, and the other reveals a web of symbols which relates characters, themes, and structural values in the novel as a whole. The principle is difficult to describe without illustrations from the novel and will become clearer in the detailed analysis to follow. It is enough to say here that the inner monologue and its less direct variations, the parody and the dramatic fantasy, use motifs such as parallax to fulfill the general probability of character and local specification, while at the same time expressing a higher thematic and symbolic purpose in the informing presence of the author.

Relating parallax to the general probability of Bloom's character will lay the groundwork for the thematic and symbolic meanings of parallax discussed in Chapters III and IV. In dealing with the thematic and symbolic meanings of parallax, this study inevitably must deal with two issues central to the meaning of the novel as a whole: the meeting and union of Stephen and Bloom and the aesthetic behind the unusual form and technique of the novel. Parallax is related to both of these in important ways, and in fact represents the way in which the meeting of Stephen and Bloom is given meaning and
significance by the artistic process through which they are brought together. The various and often opposing theories of the meaning of Stephen's meeting with Bloom will be discussed in Chapter III in relation to parallax and the crossed-keys symbol, but the final evaluation of that meeting will be deferred to Chapter IV, where parallax is related to the form and technique of the novel. It will be the final contention of this study that one of the major themes in the novel is the writing of the novel itself, and that the significance of the meeting of characters or anything else in the narrative action can be understood only in light of the aesthetic behind Ulysses.

Some critics have complained that the informing presence of the author is too obtrusive—that Joyce has overly contrived his material using artificial correspondences and techniques, such as in the musical analogies in "Sirens," the literary parodies in "Oxen in the Sun," and the eighteen fragmented episodes in "Wandering Rocks." These techniques, says Goldberg, are "a purely specious patterning of the material, an extrinsic imposition of casual shape. . . . such control is only pattern, not form; it must infuse and shape the reality it helps represent or it means nothing."¹ Hugh Kenner in Dublin's Joyce has compared the novel as a whole to a
sort of mechanical "superbrain"; a "tessellated mosaic belonging to a world of gears and sidewalks, of bricks laid side by side, of data thrust into a computer and whirled through permutations baffling to the imagination but always traceable by careful reason."\(^{15}\)

This study is not intended to vindicate *Ulysses* of charges that it is overworked. The study will, if nothing else, demonstrate the rigorous and immense complexity of the artistic technique at work in the novel. But the study will also show that the meaning of parallax in *Ulysses* evolves dramatically from the life represented in the novel, and that even in its most symbolic role, parallax reflects and gives significance to that life. Tracing the role of parallax in the novel will show that to see *Ulysses* as little more than mechanism is to miss what is of real value in Joyce's masterpiece. It is a novel deeply human, not without something like the faith in the image of man as the supreme vehicle of expression which we find in all great writers, such as those from the two historical perspectives Ellmann associates with parallax in the novel, Homer and Shakespeare.
NOTES


4 Mark Littman and Charles A. Schweighauser, "Astronomical Allusions, Their Meaning and Purpose, in *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly*, 2 (Summer 1965), 239.


10 Cf. Levin, p. 89.

11 Goldberg, p. 255.

13 Sultan, p. 142.


CHAPTER II

PARALLAX AND BLOOM

As a motif which functions in Ulysses to characterize Bloom, parallax represents his opposing impulses to account for the universe by both scientific and religious means. As a scientific concept, parallax represents to Bloom a way to gain an objective, conceptual control of a universe of apparent chaos, one whose God, by virtue of the nineteenth century's turn to scientific rather than religious accounts of order, has retreated behind a mechanical, self-governing flux of phenomena. But because Bloom's understanding of scientific principles in general, and of parallax in particular, is severely limited, a scientific, conceptual view of the universe for him must perforce prove unsatisfactory. As a result, parallax takes on for him a mysterious and spiritual quality and elicits from him his need for religious faith and the control which comes from the invoking of a supernatural agent to subdue the forces of chaos.

Bloom's need for control, and thus his need to elucidate the concept of parallax, results largely from the present disarray of his marriage to Molly. It is a marriage
which, in the eleven years since the death of their infant son Rudy, has experienced an almost complete abatement of sexual relations, and its infertility is on this day to be climaxed by Molly's infidelity with Blazes Boylan, whom Bloom considers "The worst man in Dublin" (p. 92). More specifically, parallax as a means of scientific control is connected to Molly, her infidelity, and Bloom's lack of a son through an equation in Bloom's mind between Molly and the material world of phenomena. In this equation Molly is identified with various astral bodies for the purpose of reducing her behavior to objective, verifiable facts of nature. At the same time, in its role as a word of religious power and invocation, parallax is connected to Bloom's identification of Molly with Mary, "the everlasting virgin" (p. 414), "star of the sea," "a beacon ever to the storm-tossed heart of man" (p. 346), and to Bloom's desire to see the rebirth of his dead son Rudy in the form of Christ, identified with Stephen.

These two opposing attitudes which Bloom adopts in regard to his marital and paternal problems are in conflict up until the end of the novel's penultimate episode, "Ithaca." The present chapter's discussion of parallax as a character motif will conclude by noting that, in the novel's literal narrative, Bloom's attitude toward parallax and Molly's adultery remains divided between a
phenomenological resignation and a religious hope and is therefore ambivalent. This ambiguity, like the one resulting from the literal meeting of Stephen and Bloom to be discussed in Chapter III, will be clarified in Chapter IV, where, as mentioned before, parallax is considered as a symbol of the artistic form and technique of the novel and thus as a symbol of the way in which the novel's literal material achieves symbolic resolution.

To the casual reader, the initial appearance of parallax in Bloom's inner monologue (p. 154) is simply one more example of his preoccupation with natural phenomena and the scientific principles behind them. It is a preoccupation that often results in an artless puzzling over simple facts, gadgets, and concepts of popular scientism and that, as in the case of parallax ("I never exactly understood"), proves Bloom again and again to be limited in understanding. In "Lotuseaters" Bloom, in trying to account for the phenomenon of floating bodies in the dead sea, shows his scientific understanding to be so limited that he cannot comprehend Archimedes' law: "Because the weight of the water, no, the weight of the body in the water is equal to the weight of the. Or is it the volume is equal of the weight? It's a law something like that" (p. 72).

To the extent that parallax represents Bloom's interest in popular scientism, it may be said to mark him as
a typical middle-class working man who has inherited an implicit faith in the ability of science to disclose the order and structure of a chaotic universe. The "bourgeois Bloom" point of view has its most extreme exponent in Hugh Kenner, who in *Dublin's Joyce* insists that "Bloom's constant scientific preoccupation with principles he can never quite remember and inventions he can never manage to perfect is simply his way of making overtures toward his ideal . . . ." That ideal, Kenner says, receives a total irony from Joyce, who has created in Bloom a portrait of "industrial consciousness," "a low-powered variant on the mode of consciousness that imparts substantial form to the book." In this view, Bloom is seen as a parodic combination of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, representing science, perfectability, aesthetic detachment, as well as middle-class sentimentality and "the more complacent forms of emotional self-indulgence."

To find in parallax only an example of Bloom's bourgeois scientific mentality, however, is to simplify both the characterizational value of parallax and the character of Bloom. We can agree that part of Joyce's intention is to parody the attitudes and values of a modern bourgeois industrial civilization through Bloom, "The distinguished scientist Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft" (p. 304), in some ways a pathetic version of the need to proceed
"energetically from the unknown to the known" (p. 697) by way of "The scientific" disposition (p. 683), just as Stephen is in many ways a parody of "The artistic" disposition, proceeding "syllogistically from the known to the unknown . . . " (pp. 683, 697). But as Sultan points out, Bloom's scientism is "marked by a singular intensity and sincerity" that distinguishes him from any type of ordinary man, and nowhere is that singularity more evident than in his preoccupation with parallax and in the importance he seems to give to its elucidation. The value that parallax has for Bloom can be determined only by considering parallax in its dramatic context, in the position it occupies in the total scheme of interests and preoccupations on June 16, 1904.

On this day that Bloom suspects will be the first real occasion of Molly's sexual infidelity, it is to be expected that practically everything in Bloom's thoughts will relate directly or indirectly to that impending event, and parallax is no exception. In its first appearance parallax comes in one of Bloom's self-imposed distractions from the thought of Boylan, in this case the thought that Boylan might be venereal:

If he . . .
O!
Eh?
No . . . No.
No, no. I don't believe it. He wouldn't surely.
No, no. (p. 154)
It is no accident that in the associative process that immediately follows Bloom should land upon the word "parallax," or that parallax should then be directly associated with Molly:

Mr. Bloom moved forward raising his troubled eyes. Think no more about that. After one. Time-ball on the ballast office is down. Dunsink time. Fascinating little book that is of Sir Robert Ball's. Parallax. I never exactly understood. There's a priest. Could ask him. Par it's Greek; parallel, parallax. Met him pike hoses she called it till I told her about transmigration. O rocks! Mr. Bloom smiled O rocks at two windows of the ballast office. She's right after all. Only big words for ordinary things on account of the sound. (p. 154)

After he decides that madness lies in thoughts of Boylan, Bloom considers the time (one of his other preoccupations up until and even after 4:30, the time of Boylan's afternoon tryst with Molly) by looking at the timeball on the ballast office which, because it has fallen, indicates some time after one. The ballast-office clock is regulated by the Dunsink observatory, and that reminds him of the former Royal astronomer Robert Ball, his book The Story of the Heavens (on Bloom's bookshelf at home [p. 708]), and the discussion of parallax in that book. Parallax in turn recalls Molly's ignorance of the word "metempsychosis" earlier that morning and her irritated expression at its being a large, unpronounceable word (p. 64).
What is first of all important in this appearance of the word parallax is that, like Dunsink time and Ball's book on astronomy, it represents a retreat from anxiety over the Molly/Boylan affair to a more detached consideration of facts and principles. It represents a pattern we have already seen in "Hades" earlier, where Bloom avoids the anxiety which comes upon seeing Boylan from the funeral carriage by gazing mindlessly at his fingernails and then considering the principle behind the softening of Molly's flesh over the years:

Worst man in Dublin . . . My nails. I am just looking at them: well pared . . . Body getting a bit softy. I would notice that from remembering. What causes that I suppose the skin can't contract quickly enough when the flesh falls off. But the shape is still there. Shoulders. Hips. Plump. Night of the dance dressing. Shift stuck in the cheeks behind.

He clasped his hands over his knees and satisfied, sent his vacant glance over their faces. (p. 92)

In both examples, to mollify his initial anxiety over Boylan, Bloom turns to thoughts of "ordinary things" and the principles behind them so that he can gain an objective control (in the case of parallax, the fact that he does not even pretend to understand it as a principle, in fact even disparages it, will be important in the discussion of religion below). Also in both examples, after gaining that control, he manages to think of Molly in complimentary terms: "She's right
after all"; "the shape is still there." He smiles at the ballast office, and in the funeral carriage he wears the vacant glance of satisfaction.

The pattern in these two narrative incidents exemplifies Bloom's tendency to scientism and phenomenology as a way to control the anxiety caused by his present marital situation, threatened beyond his control by Boylan the usurper. It is a pattern in which Bloom justifies the actions of Molly by setting her and Boylan in the world of nature and the natural in humankind. As Sheldon Brivac has pointed out in his psychoanalytical study of Bloom, Bloom's interest in phenomena and the material world (and by extension the scientific principles which explain them) is closely related to his interest in Molly:  "Both [the material world and Molly] attract him because of their tendency to change, and Bloom is finally reconciled to his wife in 'Ithaca' because her infidelity is as 'natural' as any other change in the material world." In "Ithaca," Bloom will complete the pattern we have seen in the two examples above, arriving at an "equanimity" in which Molly's infidelity is seen to be "As natural as any and every natural act of a nature expressed or understood executed in natured nature by natural creatures in accordance with his, her and their natured natures" (p. 733).
We have seen that parallax, in its first appearance in the novel, is connected to this pattern of "equanimity," albeit very loosely. In its second appearance a few pages later, parallax is again by association and juxtaposition used to show Bloom's moving nearer to the phenomenological justification of Molly's adultery. Again he arrives at the thought of parallax through the association with the timeball and the Dunsink observatory and contemplates going to the observatory to ask a Professor Joly about the meaning of parallax. But he decides that it would be an embarrassment to be so obvious in his ignorance, and like the fox in the fable, he disparages the word as a "waste of time," as he did before, because it represents something "ordinary": "Gasballs spinning about, crossing each other, passing. Same old dingdong always. Gas, then solid, then world, then cold, then dead shell drifting around" (p. 167).

The thought of a "dead shell" reminds him of the full moon Mrs. Breen has told him of earlier (p. 157), and this leads him to thoughts of a week before and some suggestive handplay between Molly and Boylan:

Wait. The full moon was the night we were Sunday fortnight exactly there is a new moon. Walking down by the Tolka. Not bad for a Fairview moon. She was humming: The young May moon she's beaming, love. He [Boylan] on the other side of her. Elbow, arm. He. Glowworm's la-amp is gleaming, love. Touch. Fingers. Asking. Answer. Yes.
Stop. Stop. If it was it was. Must.
Mr. Bloom, quick breathing, slowlier walking,
passed Adam's court. (p. 167)

Bloom's resignation here is not convincing, for "quick breathing" indicates anything but acceptance; but his "must" is an attempt, which will occur with increasing frequency as the day proceeds, to justify Molly's behavior in the same natural context as the "Same old dingdong always" of the gasballs he has associated with parallax a few seconds earlier.

The chain of association in this passage creates important connections between Bloom's desire to understand parallax, natural and inevitable processes of nature ("ordinary things"), the moon as an example of a natural process ("Gas, then solid, then world, then cold, then dead shell drifting around."), and Molly ("the young May moon she's beaming"). It has been said that parallax, as a scientific concept, is connected to Bloom's need to control his anxiety over Molly by explaining her adulterous behavior as natural and inevitable. His identification here of Molly with the moon satisfies the same need and, coming at the end of the associative chain beginning with parallax, makes the connection between parallax and Molly's infidelity more defined than the one established in the first appearance of parallax.
This connection becomes clearer if we know that Molly's identification with the moon in this passage is only one of a number of associations and direct identifications in the novel of her with astral bodies, most of them made by Bloom. Other moon identifications come in "Calypso" where Bloom considers Molly's garters to be the same violet as a "Night sky moon" (p. 57), and in "Ithaca" where he makes an extended comparison between "the moon and woman" (p. 720), "woman" here referring to Molly, since Bloom sees all women in terms of her. She is also frequently identified with stars. In "Cyclops" Joe Hynes, referring to her upcoming musical tour with Boylan, calls Molly "the bright particular star" (p. 319); in "Sirens" Bloom, repeating the lyrics to a song that has just been sung in the Ormand Hotel bar, associates Molly with the stars in "But look. The bright stars fade. O rose! Castille" (p. 286) (she has before this been identified many times with Lenehan's "Rose of Castille" riddle as a result of her Spanish heritage and her identification with the Virgin Mary); in "Oxen in the Sun" she becomes "a queen among the Pleiades" with "starborn flesh" (p. 414); and finally, in "Ithaca," in what is generally taken to be a cosmic signal of the moving of Stephen closer to Bloom's humanity by way of
Molly, she is symbolized as "the stargroup of the Tress of Berenice" (p. 703).

These are only a few of Molly's identifications with astral bodies; but they suggest, like the identification of Molly with the moon we have been considering in the second appearance of parallax, that parallax interests Bloom in the way it does because as a principle by which the distance and position of astral bodies may be measured (he shows in "Ithaca" [p. 698] that he is aware of that general meaning) it can be used to measure Molly the moon or Molly the star(s). Bloom, then, by associating parallax, astral bodies, and Molly, is attempting to satisfy himself that his marital situation is under control by using a scientific principle to explain a natural phenomenon. His "equanimity" in the face of Molly's adultery, his lack of vindictiveness against both her and Boylan in "Ithaca," is attributed to, among other things, "the apathy of the stars" (p. 734).

Because Bloom does not "exactly" understand the concept of parallax, his need to get control of his life through conceptual, scientific principles which can explain away the phenomena around him, including Molly in her identification as the moon or a star which might be measured and accounted for by parallax, cannot be realized. Parallax, therefore, also has a religious
significance for him, hinted at in the very first appearance of parallax when Bloom, after recognizing his ignorance of the exact meaning of the term, sees a priest and considers asking him what it means ("There's a priest. Could ask him" [p. 154]). In a religious sense, parallax is also a part of Bloom's need for control, but a control which comes from the invocation of a supernatural force which will restore to him a son and allow him to identify Molly with the Virgin Mary. Stuart Gilbert's insight almost fifty years ago that "The oriental in Mr. Bloom is ever in quest of the Word, and just as any son may be the Messiah, so any word of mystery--why not Parallax?--might be the Word Ineffable,"¹⁰ is perhaps as close as any critic has come to understanding the religious significance of Bloom's preoccupation in Ulysses with parallax.

That significance is easily overlooked because of the fact that parallax is a scientific term and because Bloom everywhere rejects religions as superstitious and chooses instead the way of the secularist--reason, practical morality, civic-mindedness. He does not believe in "the existence of a supernatural God" (p. 634), he tells us in "Ithaca." For him, as we have seen, every phenomenon must have a natural cause. He believes himself to be at the opposite pole from those who subscribe to "formless spiritual essences" (p. 185) like A. E., whom
he considers "Dreamy, cloudy, symbolistic" (p. 166). He is in his role as a detached and reasonable secularist when he calms Stephen, who shows fear at a crack of thunder, assuring him that it is no "rumour" of an angry Nobadaddy as Stephen fears, but simply "all the order of a natural phenomenon" (p. 395).

It is sometimes apparent, however, that Bloom's dismissal of supernaturalism is a mask for abiding fears that (to alter Stephen's words in A Portrait) there is a malevolent reality behind those things he says he does not believe in. A notable example of this masking comes in "Calypso" when, after a momentary vision of a Zion wasteland, "a dead sea in a dead land, grey and old," which seems at first like a divine admonition for the sterility of his marriage, he shakes off the initial horror that has "seared his flesh," hurries home, and checks off his reaction to getting up on the wrong side of the bed and a lack of exercise (p. 61). His attempt to understand Archimedes' law as it applies to floating bodies in the dead sea, quoted earlier, may be a later attempt to rationalize the same vision.

When he dismisses parallax as mere sound, overelaborate for the "ordinary" thing that it represents (p. 154), he is resisting a religious impulse, the "quest of the Word." The terms of his dismissal, besides
indicating his desire to agree with Molly in such matters and to justify what is only natural in human behavior, also indicate that he is placing the word in what Northrop Frye calls the "charm" or "spell" tradition, the use of words primarily for non-conceptual, musical, or incantatory purposes. This tradition has its origins in magic and ritual and is thereby closely associated with religion and the invoking of supernatural powers. As Gilbert notes, parallax seems to possess a quality in Bloom's mind similar to that of the Word, which, in both Jewish and Christian religious traditions, subdued the primeval chaos and was everywhere used to combat the forces of anarchy in the lower world.

The religious or charm character of parallax brings on the revolt of Bloom's intelligence against the hypnotic power of commanding words. We have seen a similar pattern in "Lotuseaters" (an episode filled with images of drugs, potions, and enticements from various charms, consistent with the Homeric parallel) when, during a communion in St. Andrew's church, he considers the words of the ritual: "Good idea the Latin. Stupefies them first" (p. 80). In "Sirens" (another episode of charm from which Bloom must escape) he rationalizes the power of music, another form of hypnotic sound, by reducing it to mathematics: "Musemathematics. And you think you're listening to
the ethereal. But suppose you said it like: Martha, seven times nine plus X is thirty-five thousand, Fall quite flat. It's an account of the sounds it is" (p. 278). "It's an account of the sounds it is" echoes almost exactly the terms of his dismissal of parallax, and connects parallax to music and "the ethereal."

But Bloom cannot always escape the charm in parallax. In "Circe," an episode in which Bloom experiences a wide variety of hallucinations which act as psychic purgations of the guilt and anxiety that have pursued him through the day, his grandfather Virag appears in one of his visions as a representative of what Kenner calls "Bloom's efforts to maintain a guiltless detachment" in the face of temptations in the brothel. Virag is in the process of reducing the whores to the order of phenomena in the manner of Bloom when he shouts the word "Parallax!"; after which he nervously twitches and adds, "Did you hear my brain go snap? Polly syllabax!" (p. 512). Gilbert has pointed out that Leonora Piper (a well-known medium of Joyce's day) when coming out of a trance would often say, "'Did you hear something snap in my head?' and nervous twitching accompanied the process." This sudden interruption of Bloom's attempt to gain a scientific detachment in the brothel indicates clearly that parallax is not a word that Bloom can consider with any real scientific objectivity.
He gives himself up entirely to the charm or religious character of parallax in "Oxen in the Sun," an episode in which parallax as a word of religious power and invocation is explicitly related to Molly's infidelity and to the infertility of Bloom's marriage resulting from the death of Rudy. It is an episode that is made up of parodies of English literary styles, and, as mentioned earlier, it often functions as an indirect inner monologue. Parallax appears there in a DeQuinceyesque reverie of Bloom following his sullen thoughts of being sonless: "There was none now for Leopold, what Leopold was for Rudolf" (p. 414). In that reverie are joined together a large number of motifs, many of which have been associated with parallax in its earlier appearances. Analysis of the reverie requires a lengthy quotation beforehand.

The voices blend and fuse in clouded silence: silence that is the infinite of space: and swiftly, silently the soul is wafted over regions of cycles of cycles of generations that have lived. A region where grey twilight ever descends, never falls, on wide sagegreen pasturefields, shedding her dusk, scattering a perennial dew of stars. She follows her mother with ungainly steps, a mare leading her fillyfoal. . . . They fade, sad phantoms: all is gone. Agendath is a waste land, a home of screech-owls and the sandblind upupa. Netaim, the golden, is no more. And on the highway of the clouds they come, muttering thunder of rebellion, the ghosts of beasts. Huuh! Hark! Huuh! Parallax stalks behind and goads them, the lancinating lightnings of whose brow are scorpions . . . Ominous, revengeful zodiacal host! They moan, passing upon the clouds, horned and capricorned, the trumpeted with the tusked, the lionmaned, the giant-antlered,
snouter and crawler, rodent, ruminant and pachyderm, all their moving moaning multitude, murders of the sun.

Onward to the dead sea they tramp to drink, unslaked and with horrible gulpings, the salt somnolent flood. And the equine portent grows again, magnified in the deserted heavens, nay to heaven's own magnitude it looms, vast, over the house of Virgo. And, lo, wonder of metempsychosis, it is she, the everlasting bride, harbinger of the daystar, the bride, ever virgin. It is she, Martha, thou lost one, Millicent, the young, the dear, the radiant. How serene does she now arise, a queen among the Pleiades, in the penultimate antelucan hour, shod in sandals of bright gold, coifed with a veil of what do you call it gossamer! It floats, it flows about her starborn flesh and loose it streams emerald, sapphire, mauve and heliotrope, sustained on currents of cold interstellar wind, winding, coiling, simply swirling, writhing in the skies a mysterious writing till after a myriad metamorphoses of symbol, it blazes, Alpha, a ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus.

This passage is, of course, a highly stylized and ingenious representation of Bloom's essential reverie, made up of mythical, religious, and astrological elements, and the role of parallax in it is not easy to determine. Parallax is only one of a number of character motifs, all of which are collected here in emotional patterns already created or hinted at in earlier inner monologues of Bloom. The most important thing to keep in mind is that this reverie or vision is occasioned by Bloom's melancholy over his sonless state, and that it involves the corruption of paradise, the murder or sacrifice of the son, and the promise of a rebirth of the son through the agency of "the bride, ever virgin." When parallax is related to
the entire pattern of action and the identities and character motifs which make it up, it will be seen to be a combatant of the forces of rebellion and chaos responsible for the corruption of paradise and the murder of the sun, and therefore in its climactic appearance as a supernatural or religious word of charm.

The paradise corrupted in this vision is identified with Molly. In the beginning of the vision, she is "a mare leading her fillyfoal" ("filly" suggesting "Milly," her daughter, who often serves as a surrogate for her mother in Bloom's mind), and she fades phantomlike from her paradisical "sagegreen pastures" in the coming darkness. Those pastures become the Zionist retreat, Agendath Netaim, that Bloom has seen advertised that morning (p. 60) and which is associated with Molly frequently in the novel, most importantly in "Ithaca" (pp. 734-35). Molly and Agendath Netaim represent a paradise or promised land and are quickly corrupted in a vision of wasteland similar to the one discussed earlier which shakes Bloom with horror (p. 61). Here, as there, the wasteland represents the infertility of his marriage following the death of Rudy.

The corrupting forces have become the "zodiacal host," the stars which have come with the darkness to blot out the "golden" sun of paradise or Molly. They
represent rebellious and revengeful powers of anarchy and recall the host of Lucifer and the corruption of another paradise. On one level they represent the passage of time, the eleven years of sexual inactivity between Bloom and Molly since Rudy's death (there seem to be eleven members of this zodiacal host). But among these "murderers of the sun" is also Bloom himself, who has earlier accepted responsibility for Rudy's unhealthy constitution (p. 96), and who, just before the second appearance of parallax, symbolically blots out the sun with his little finger (p. 166). Boylan (in many ways Bloom's surrogate) is also suggested, as he has been associated with venereal disease, as we have seen, and in that sense is a murderer of fertility, and therefore of the son.

The appearance of parallax with these murderers is inevitable for several reasons. It has been associated with Bloom's blotting out of the sun and with the possibility of Boylan's venereal disease mentioned above, in each case following directly after and leading to Bloom's justification of Molly's infidelity, acting, we have seen, as a kind of scientific solution to Bloom's anxiety. Parallax here is not used in any way scientifically, even though the vision is full of stellar identities. As a power against the rebellious murderers who have corrupted paradise, parallax is a word of mystery
or invocation found in the sinister side of the charm tradition in which Frye says words "are normally powers pushing our enemies into a lower state of existence." In the Christian scheme of Bloom’s vision, parallax represents the Word of God and is here being used to drive to the west or to death the enemies of paradise in order to create the possibility of redemption through the rebirth of the murdered son.

Parallax is also corporeal and phallic, goading with "lancinating lightnings." It suggests the sexual nature of God's relationship with Mary, "the everlasting bride," identified with Molly through her surrogates Milly and Martha. After parallax has driven the sun-murdering host into the ocean of the west, "metempsychosis" (the word directly following parallax in its first appearance, as we have seen) brings about the final transformation of Molly from a mare leading her fillyfoal to the blazing star of Alpha (also known as Aldebaran) in the triangle of Taurus, "harbinger of the daystar" or sun (son). Consistent with a phallic parallax, Molly's transformation is described in a manner suggesting sexual activity. A veil "flows about her starborn flesh . . . winding, coiling, simply swirling, writhing" ("simply swirling" recalls the "seaside girls" song associated with Boylan and thus adds to the sexual connotation here).
The issue of this metaphorical impregnation promises to be the sun or dawn, as Alpha suggests; in the religious scheme it is to be Christ, as "the bride, ever virgin" suggests. That Stephen is intended in Bloom's mind to represent the potential resurrected son of his vision is emphasized in the passage immediately following. There, as Ellmann points out, Stephen identifies himself with Christ when he boasts of his ability to recall the phantoms of his youth: "If I call them into life across the waters of Lethe will not the poor ghosts troop to my call? I... am lord and giver of their life" (p. 415). The connection between parallax, Alpha or Aldebaran, and Christ is made more directly in "Circe" when Bloom answers Callinan's question about the parallax of Aldebaran with "K11" (p. 488), which, as Robert Day points out, is among other things related to cabalistic doctrines associating K with 11 as a symbol of resurrection.

In Bloom's attitude toward Molly and his lack of a son, parallax in this appearance, then, is at its climax as a representative of Bloom's religious or superstitious impulse and represents the opposite impulse from the one it represented as the "Same old dingdong always" of the phenomenological world. In Bloom's quasi-religious vision, parallax is involved in supernatural or miraculous rather than ordinary or natural circumstances and serves
not to reduce Molly to natural phenomenon through scientific objectivity but to save her from infertility and corruption by transforming her into the virgin womb out of which will come the redeeming son.

These two impulses represented by parallax are in conflict, as mentioned, until the end of the novel's penultimate episode, "Ithaca," in which parallax makes its final appearance and in which Bloom is said to achieve an "equanimity" in the face of his marital anxieties. This equanimity seems to combine both the scientific objectivity and the religious hope we have seen Bloom seek through parallax in regard to Molly's adultery and infertility. He "abnegates" his anxiety by setting Molly and Boylan into the world of natural phenomenon, a world that is essentially amoral and based on "adaption to altered conditions of experience" (p. 733) and in which Molly becomes "expressive of mute immutable mature animality" (p. 734). In the same passage in which Bloom sees Molly as immutable animality, the other side of his equanimity is seen in the attitude with which he kisses her posterior just before falling asleep. He kisses her as if she were "redolent of milk and honey," and this description, along with the following one of her as "plump mellow yellow smellow melons," reflects the religious hope that we have noted elsewhere by
associating her with the land of promise, Agendath Netaim, and its "immense melonfields" (p. 60).

Not so much a synthesis of any kind, this opposition of attitudes seems to remain an ambivalence in Bloom's character, one that is reflected, as it should be, in the final appearance of parallax. Bloom is explaining to Stephen stellar phenomena and pointing out various constellations, emphasizing the vastness of the universe. Stephen has just before described the night sky as "The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit," and Bloom's scientific explanation is intended to contrast their respective artistic and scientific dispositions. But Bloom's explanation is curiously dual in effect: it seems to be both objective and affective in tone and, in fact, exemplifies the style of the episode as a whole (the style of "Ithaca" will be discussed at more length in Chapter IV). He speaks

of the parallax or parallactic drift of so-called fixed stars, in reality evermoving from unmeasurably remote eons to infinitely remote futures in comparison with which the years, threescore and ten, of allotted human life formed a parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity. (p. 698)

Coming at the end of a scientific "meditation" in which there are poetic touches such as "the infinite lattiginous scintillating uncondensed milky way," parallax is qualified by the stars it is used to measure. They
may be measured as though "fixed," but in reality they have infinite pasts and futures which make man's life one of "infinitesimal brevity." Heavenly infinity contrasted with human brevity is the essence of religion, and the Biblical echo in "the years, threescore and ten" makes it clear that Bloom is revealing again a divided attitude toward parallax, one objective, rational, and the other, religious, hopeful, humble. Thus Bloom's attitude toward parallax in its last appearance is consistent with the one he has manifested throughout the day, and it supports the ambivalence we have noted in his "contrarieties of expression" of Molly as animality and as the promised land (p. 734).

We have seen that parallax as one of Bloom's personal preoccupations is representative of his twofold attitude toward not only science and religion, but also, more important, toward his marital situation. As a character motif, parallax is an excellent example of the way in which words, images, and objects in Ulysses are used to define and develop character through reference, association, and juxtaposition. Relating parallax to the general probability of Bloom's character, however, is only the first step in determining the meaning of parallax in Ulysses. The references and associations we have noted thus far serve only as the groundwork for
the thematic and symbolic meanings of parallax created through references and associations lying outside of Bloom's perceptions and in the informing presence of the author. But it should be stressed again that the higher, more pervasive thematic and symbolic meanings of parallax in *Ulysses* are consistent with, in fact grow out of, the meaning of parallax as a character motif; and that the ambivalence we have noted in regard to Bloom's attitude toward parallax and his marital situation will be resolved or at least clarified when these other thematic and symbolic meanings have been investigated.
NOTES


2Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, p. 173.

3Ibid., pp. 167-68.

4Ibid., p. 173. Kenner's views in Dublin's Joyce are generally considered to be overstated and narrow. A. Walton Litz remarks in "Joyce," The English Novel: Select Bibliographical Guide, ed. A. E. Dyson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p. 355, that Kenner's approach "will strike many readers as a dogmatic distortion of the complex and often paradoxical attitudes which inform Joyce's major works. By insisting upon an irony that is almost wholly critical and destructive, and by limiting the range of Joyce's human sympathies, Kenner has produced a portrait of the artist that many readers will find at variance with their own responses to the works." For a more detailed and authoritative refutation of Kenner's view, see Goldberg's The Classical Temper, pp. 100-44.

5Sultan, p. 105.

6It is now generally agreed that Boylan, given the evidence in the text, is Molly's only other lover besides Bloom (e.g., Fr. Robert Boyle, S.J., "Penelope," in Hart and Hayman, pp. 410-15). It is my contention that Bloom knows this, despite his list of possible lovers (p. 731), a contention supported by the fact that Boylan is the only person that Bloom seriously considers in that regard throughout the novel.

7O'Connell, p. 300, notes that one of Ball's contributions to astronomy "was the measurement of the parallax of a star known as 61 Cygni, which helped establish the value of measuring stellar distances by means of parallax." Barbara DiBernard, in "Parallax as Parallel, Paradigm, and Paradox in Ulysses," Eire-Ireland, 10, No. 1 (1975), 69ff., argues that parallax as defined in Ball's book shows "startling" affinities with the use of parallax in Ulysses.

See DiBernard, pp. 71-77, for a discussion of Molly's identification with both the goddess and the planet Venus.

Gilbert, p. 200.

Stephen tells Cranly in their discussion of religion that he imagines "there is a malevolent reality behind those things I say I fear." A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), p. 243.


Gilbert, p. 332n.

Frye, p. 131.

The identifications of Molly with Mary are numerous. "The Rose of Castille" riddle has been mentioned. Others come in Molly's birthday, Sept. 8, the Nativity of Mary, and in the concentric circles of her lamp in "Ithaca" (pp. 702, 736) where, as Tindall and others have pointed out, Molly is at the center of the rose in Dante's scheme of heaven in Paradiso. See A Reader's Guide to James Joyce (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1959), pp. 225-26.


CHAPTER III

PARALLAX AND THE THEMES OF PATERNITY AND HOMERULE

We have seen the values attached to parallax as a character motif, values related to Bloom and determined by the position of parallax as a natural detail within the psychologically realistic patterns of Bloom's inner monologues. The aim of the present chapter is to investigate parallax in the context of the novel as a whole and to establish for it the pervasive thematic and symbolic values only hinted at in the limitations of Bloom's perceptions. The primary concern in this chapter is with the symbolic value of parallax in relation to the novel's two most important narrative themes: paternity and homerule. Parallax is related to these themes in two important ways: 1) through its connection with the emblem of crossed keys within a circle, perhaps the novel's most complex and significant symbol, both of the meeting of Stephen and Bloom (or the theme of paternity) and of Bloom's re-establishment of sexual dominance in the wake of Molly's infidelity (or the theme of homerule); and 2) through its implied presence as a scientific concept illustrated in three important narrative incidents.
involving Stephen and Bloom: their simultaneous observations of the matutinal cloud, of Shakespeare's face in a mirror, and of Molly's lamp from Bloom's garden.

It should be pointed out that the thematic and symbolic values established for parallax in this chapter are extensions of the basic values already established for parallax as a character motif in Chapter II. We have seen that parallax is associated in Bloom's mind with the rebirth of his dead son Rudy and with a solution (scientific and religious) to his marital difficulties, and therefore we may note that parallax, as a character motif, has already aligned itself with the themes of paternity and home-rule. The connections to be established in this chapter between parallax, the symbol of crossed keys, and the three narrative incidents mentioned, all of which take place outside of the characters' preoccupations and perceptions, demonstrate the ways in which a motif such as parallax is used by Joyce to express a thematic and symbolic purpose in the novel as a whole, while at the same time fulfilling the general probability of character and local specification as a natural detail. Since this chapter deals with the themes of paternity and home-rule, it will be helpful to begin with a brief discussion of their importance to the novel as a whole.
It is generally agreed that the narrative and symbolic thrust of the novel is "a continuous movement towards a preordained event, the meeting of Stephen and Bloom." The drawing together of the two men is often called the paternity theme and emphasizes Stephen's search for a transsubstantial father and Bloom's for a transsubstantial son. Their meeting seems to represent one of complementary dispositions or social forces, of citizen and artist, or scientist and artist, or pragmatist and mystic, and they are drawn together as "the fundamental and the dominant. . . . the greatest possible ellipse, Consistent with. The ultimate return" (p. 504). Much of the meaning of Ulysses, the critics agree, is to be found in the meeting of Stephen and Bloom.

Exactly what significance that meeting has, however, is a point of great debate. Although this debate is not central to the study at hand, it will concern us in that parallax is a symbol of that meeting. Therefore, after the significance of parallax in relation to the themes of paternity and home rule is established, an evaluative survey of the widely divergent critical views on the significance of the meeting of Stephen and Bloom will be made in the light of what parallax seems to suggest as a symbol of that meeting. This survey will end the chapter, and an ambiguity in the significance of parallax in relation
to the themes of paternity and homerule will be noted and deferred to the following chapter.

The theme of homerule, of Bloom's reassertion of sexual authority in his now adulterated marriage, is necessarily bound up with the theme of paternity. As the investigation of parallax as a character motif has shown, Bloom's desire to regain a son in the form of Stephen is tied to his desire that Molly should become the pure and willing vessel, the promised land regained. The homerule theme, by including Molly as a necessary third element in the meeting of Stephen and Bloom, makes her a qualifier whose final soliloquy completes a kind of trinity of character that constitutes Joyce's whole view of humanity. Parallax, because of its connections with the symbol of crossed keys and the theme of paternity, is a symbol informing the theme of homerule.

The symbol of crossed keys is the novel's central symbol, both of paternity and of homerule, and because it is the most important of the connections between parallax and these two themes, it is the place to begin this chapter's investigation. The emblem of crossed keys within a circle, on a naturalistic level, is the design that Alexander J. Keyes, tea, wine, and spirit merchant, wishes to use as an advertisement in a "par" (or paragraph) in Freeman's Journal, and it is Bloom's job as an
advertisement canvasser to secure a three-month subscription for the ad from Keyes ("just a little par calling attention. . . . Longfelt want" [p. 121]). The emblem is, as Bloom and everyone else in Dublin knows, a symbol of homerule for the Isle of Man, a "longfelt want," both in Ireland and, more important for the reader of Ulysses, in Bloom's house. For the reader also the emblem of crossed keys is a symbol of the eventual union of the keyless citizens Stephen and Bloom (both of whom are without keys throughout the day--Stephen having turned his over to Mulligan, Bloom having left his at home in a pair of trousers), also a "longfelt want," as we know, and a requisite, it appears, to Bloom's marital stability.

The crossed-keys symbol is ubiquitous in the novel, taking various guises. It makes its first appearance in the very first sentence of the novel in Mulligan's "bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed" (p. 3), and the paternity theme, accordingly, also makes its first appearance. The razor and mirror, besides corresponding to Mulligan the surgeon and Stephen the artist ("the cold steelpen" and "the cracked lookingglass" [pp. 6-7]), also correspond to Bloom and Stephen: "The scientific. The artistic" (p. 683). The crossed-keys symbol permeates, in spirit at least, the entire last episode as the "X" within a circle of the astrological
sign of "Gea-Tellus, fulfilled, recumbent, big with seed," identified with Molly at the end of the penultimate episode (p. 737).³ That Molly should be "fulfilled" and "big with seed" emphasizes the theme of homerule and paternity. Thus the symbol of crossed keys begins and ends the novel and is used everywhere to represent the themes of paternity and homerule, and parallax, as we shall see, is one of its most important satellite symbols.

The first and most obvious connection between parallax and the crossed-keys symbol is to be found in the syllable "par" (what will seem here like an artificial connection will prove to be more intrinsic at a later point in the discussion). "Par," we recall, is juxtaposed with parallax in the first appearance of parallax in the novel (p. 154): "Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax." For the attentive reader, "par" will recall the "par" of Keyes and thereby the crossed-keys symbol; and because of the "par" in "parallax," the connection, at this stage purely a matter of wordplay, is made obvious.

But there is more wordplay in this passage. "Parallel" also contains a "par" and is thus connected to both the crossed-keys symbol and parallax. "Parallel" here anticipates the "parallel course" that Stephen and Bloom follow on their way from the cabman's shelter to Bloom's house in "Ithaca" (p. 666). But this "parallel course"
really begins in the first six episodes in the novel, where we see the sequent morning activities of Stephen and Bloom before the two men are presented simultaneously in episode seven, "Aeolus" (their movements in these episodes, like their micturition at the climax of "Ithaca," are "first sequent, then simultaneous" [p. 703]). Significantly, at the very beginning of "Aeolus," two trams, "a doubledecker and a singledeck"--the married Bloom and the single Stephen?--are described as swinging to the down line to glide "parallel" (p. 116). It has been suggested by Avron Fleishman that the "parallel course" which Bloom and Stephen follow exemplifies Joyce's theme that "Relationships are at best the maintenance of a constant distance, as in parallel tracks. . . . The absolute at the outset, then, is the isolation--the non-combining nature--of the individual human being."

5

The relationship between "parallel" and "parallax," however, if we look beyond the verbal wordplay in "par," suggests that the courses of Stephen and Bloom are to cross at some point, not to remain forever parallel, as Fleishman would have it. A highly significant relation between the two words, and one which also includes the symbol of crossed keys, exists in the Greek definition of parallax (hinted at in "Par, it's Greek") as the mutual inclination of two lines to meet in an angle. It seems clear that the
juxtaposition of "par," "parallel," and "parallax" (which for Bloom represents a simple chain of verbal association) is intended by Joyce to connect the symbol of crossed keys with the novel-long movement of Stephen and Bloom toward (or alongside) one another, culminating in a crossing or meeting. It also seems clear that parallax is intended to be the symbol of that crossing or meeting (the "x" at the end of parallax is a visual support of the word's meaning as the meeting of two lines in an angle, and also, of course, supports the association of parallax with the symbol of crossed keys).

Here, as they say, the plot thickens. To understand exactly how parallax is meant to represent the crossing of the lives of Stephen and Bloom, we must now turn once again to the association of parallax and metempsychosis, discussed earlier in regard to parallax as a character motif. Parallax and metempsychosis, as we have seen, are associated in Bloom's mind on two occasions, the first of which is the passage we have just considered: "Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax. Met him pikehoses she called it. . . . ." This association reaches its climax in "Oxen in the Sun" where parallax, in Bloom's archetypal vision of the reborn son, has precipitated Molly's "wonder of metempsychosis," her identity with the Virgin Mary, and her role as a harbinger for the daystar, or sun/son. What
this association suggests for Bloom, and what Joyce goes
to great lengths to suggest throughout the novel, is that
paternity and homerule are possible only through the
agency of parallax, and only then after some kind of
transformation or metempsychosis has taken place.

To return to the first juxtaposition of parallax and
metempsychosis, we can see that Joyce has Bloom consider
"Greek" not only because it connects parallax and parallel
with the crossed-keys symbol but also because an additional
Greek meaning of parallax is "change" or "alternation,"
not unlike, it seems, the meaning of "met him pikehoses."
The two Greek meanings of parallax, then, combine the
ideas of convergence and transformation. The fullest
significance of this combination of ideas symbolized by
parallax must wait for discussion in Chapter IV, where
convergence and transformation will be discussed in terms
of the novel's artistic principles and the overriding
theme of the novel, the writing of the novel itself. For
now, it remains to point out a few of the more important
ways in which Joyce establishes the metempsychotic or
transformational character of parallax in relation to the
themes of paternity and homerule.

The connection between parallax and metempsychosis
obviously suggests a relation between metempsychosis and
the crossed-keys symbol and, therefore, between
metempsychosis and the themes of paternity and homerule. Joyce establishes this relation immediately in the opening scene of the novel in the already mentioned "bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed." Mulligan is mocking the Eucharist in attempting to transform the lather into the "body and soul and blood and ouns" of the "genuine Christine" (p. 3). Mulligan's travesty, through the "genuine Christine," anticipates the Stephen/Christ identity made, as we have seen, by both Bloom and Stephen in "Oxen in the Sun." The bowl of lather, the prototype of the crossed-keys symbol, thus suggests from the beginning that paternity and homerule are possible only through a miraculous transformation, and the Christian images establish the dominant set of identities involved.

Bloom the Father, Stephen the Son, and Molly the Virgin Mary (represented as the bowl, the vessel of virgin birth) require the idea of metempsychosis as a theme in the novel (just as Bloom recognizes a need for the idea in his desire for a son and marital harmony); so, of course, do those other more conspicuous but less intrinsic identities taken from the Odyssey, all the identities together making the themes of paternity and homerule assume mythic and epic proportions. The Christian identities allow Joyce to integrate more closely parallax with the thematic and symbolic scheme of the novel, while at the
same time allowing him to reflect that scheme in miniature in the character (or in the mind) of Bloom.

For Bloom we have seen that parallax is both scientific and religious in value. The Christian identities he gives to Molly and Stephen are particularly conducive to the function Bloom sees in parallax in each of its values. When he thinks of parallax scientifically, as a way to account for Molly's behavior, he identifies Molly with an astral body, a star or the moon. Stars, as we have seen, are related to Mary, as is the moon in its chastity, and thus Bloom's identity of Molly with Mary makes the religious value of parallax complementary to the scientific in the identities involved. The association between parallax and astral or celestial bodies also makes the identification of Stephen with Christ conducive to Bloom's conception of parallax. The close association between the rebirth of Christ and sunrise, besides supporting the religious and astronomical values of parallax for Bloom, allows Joyce to make extensive use of sunrise imagery and of the literal sunrise occurring shortly after Bloom retires to bed.

Several of these examples of sunrise imagery are particularly interesting for their integration of the themes of paternity and homerule and the symbol of crossed keys. In "Calypso" Bloom tells us in an inner monologue
that the title page of *In the Track of the Sun*, a travel-book on the Orient and Near East on Bloom's bookshelf (next to, significantly, *The Hidden Life of Christ* and on the same shelf, it should be noticed, with Bloom's book containing parallax, *The Story of the Heavens*), has a sun-burst on it. He then recalls Arthur Griffith's remark about "the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader: a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the laneway behind the bank of Ireland . . . " (p. 57). The Bank of Ireland had at one time housed "a relatively independent Irish Parliament," and thus was associated with homerule. Like the crossed-keys symbol, the symbol of sunrise is a combination of the themes of paternity and homerule. If Bloom is united with Stephen the resurrected Son, the symbols promise, he will also rule at home.

Before moving on to examine the role of parallax in three narrative invidents involving Stephen and Bloom, a look again at the Kl1 motif will show its relevance to parallax, sunrise, and the theme of paternity. It was pointed out in Chapter II that Bloom's answer to Callinan's question about the parallax of Aldebaran (or Alpha, harbinger of the daystar, identified with Molly/Mary and prophetic of Stephen/Christ) which comes in "Circe" (p. 488) is "K11," a symbol of resurrection in certain cabalistic doctrines, and thus related to parallax, the
sunrise, and the themes of paternity and home rule. The Kll motif has been discussed in relation to Bloom's character, even though it is doubtful that Bloom could be aware, even subliminally, of its cabalistic associations. It is even more doubtful that Bloom could be aware of the fact, though there is no doubt that Joyce is aware, that "K" echoes "Keyes" and that 11, besides corresponding to Rudy's age had he lived and thus to Stephen as Rudy's surrogate, also suggests the two keys which will cross in the event of a meeting or union of Stephen and Bloom, a crossing brought about through parallax.

Now that the basic relationships among parallax, the crossed-keys symbol, and the themes of paternity and home rule have been established, there remain three important narrative invidents involving Stephen and Bloom which Joyce obviously meant to be illustrations of the scientific concept of parallax. These incidents are ways of emphasizing relationships between not only Bloom and Stephen, but also between Stephen and his mother, Bloom and Molly, and Stephen, Bloom, and Molly. In the Introduction, it was mentioned that these incidents have often been pointed out as examples of parallax, but done so only in the most general fashion and without the justification which comes from having noted the values of parallax as a character motif and as a symbolic element integrally
related to the symbol of crossed keys and the themes of paternity and homerule. It is only in the light of the values of parallax that have been noted in this study thus far that the implications of the concept of parallax in the three narrative incidents about to be discussed can have any real meaning.

The first incident involves the simultaneous sighting by Stephen and Bloom of a matutinal cloud. The cloud has been seen by Stephen from Sandycove (p. 9) in episode one and by Bloom near his home (p. 61) in episode four. This incident, first of all, is parallactic in that it involves the observation of a celestial object from two different points (although a cloud is not exactly a celestial object and Bloom and Stephen are neither at opposite ends of the earth's surface or of its orbit). This sighting, as are the two other parallactic incidents discussed below, is intended to "fix" or to relate the two observers for the reader. It also serves to strengthen the idea of Stephen and Bloom as complementary characters by making them two figurative eyes in the same figurative head. More important, the cloud is associated with their respective anxieties: Stephen's guilt and grief over his mother's death and Bloom's barren marriage.

For Stephen, the cloud covers the sun and makes the sea a dull green, "a bowl of bitter waters"7 like the
bowl of green bile at his mother's bedside during her dying illness. It is a "bitter" bowl because of the grief and the guilt Stephen feels at not having knelt to pray for his mother at her bedside when she had asked him to. At the "reapparition" of the cloud in "Ithaca" (p. 667), Stephen cites its reappearance as the reason for his drunken collapse in "Circe" (Bloom, typically, explains Stephen's collapse to him in phenomenological terms). When Stephen says the cloud is "no bigger than a woman's hand," he is alluding to the appearance of the ghoulish apparition of his mother in "Circe" (pp. 579-82) and her accusing and punishing finger ("God's hand"); she has revealed herself as a manifestation of the dio boia, or "hangman god" (cf. p. 213).

For Bloom, the cloud also comes to cover the sun, to deflate his image of the Zionist promised land, Agendath Netaim, and is followed by the grey, horrible vision of a wasteland, already discussed in Chapter II. It is a vision the images of which evoke the barrenness of his marriage, one in which, as we know, the son has been covered, not with a cloud, but with the grave. Just as the cloud represents Stephen's principal anxiety and looks forward to his climactic hallucination of his mother in "Circe," so it represents Bloom's principal anxiety and looks forward to his climactic hallucination
of Rudy in "Circe" (p. 609), where Rudy is described, significantly, as holding a "slim ivory cane" with a "white lambkin" peeping out of his pocket. The cane suggests Stephen's ashplant as well as Christ's staff; the suggestion of the lamb is obvious.

Another important narrative incident illustrating the concept of parallax is the gazing of Stephen and Bloom at the face of Shakespeare in a mirror in Bella Cohen's brothel in "Circe." That they should both see the face of Shakespeare is, first of all, another example of the telepathic exchange begun in the incident of the matutinal cloud. Second, it links them as artists. Stephen, of course, is everywhere the youthful bard of promise, and Bloom, though it is not often recognized, is, despite his scientific turn of mind, not without artistic imagination: "There is a touch of the artist about old Bloom," Lenehan tells us in "Wandering Rocks" (p. 235).

More important, Shakespeare represents to Stephen a solution to the problem of paternity which has since A Portrait greatly troubled him. He is loath to accept Simon Dedalus as a paternal figure, having come to believe that only a vulgar biological distinction can make Simon that. The father represented by the church, of course, Stephen has also rejected years ago. His rejection of the church for the creed of the artist is the primary
theme of A Portrait. The upshot of his eccentric and highly ironic theory of the relationship of Shakespeare the man to his plays, which he expounds to Lyster, Eglington, A. E., and Mulligan in the National Library, is that Shakespeare is both son and father by virtue of his art, that the artist has solved, in effect, the age-old problem of paternity, "a mystical estate" founded upon "incertitude, upon unlikelihood" (p. 207), through his art: Shakespeare is "the father of all his race" (p. 208). Stephen as hopeful artist thus strongly identifies with what he feels to be the artist's solution to paternity. He has already, at the end of A Portrait, expressed his desire to create art, "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race," and it is then that he calls upon Daedalus, "Old father, old artificer," the prototype of the artist, to stand him in good stead. 10

More particular to the theme of paternity in Ulysses is the fact that Stephen's description of Shakespeare to those in the National Library bears a striking resemblance to Bloom. Shakespeare was overborne by a woman in a ryefield, as Bloom was overborne by Molly on Howth among the rhododendrons (pp. 176, 782-83). Like Shakespeare, Bloom has lost a son, and like Shakespeare he has been cuckolded (p. 212). The idea of cuckoldry is explicit in the image of Shakespeare seen in the mirror,
described as "crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall." The image of Shakespeare, then, represents both Stephen and Bloom, and once again relates parallax to the themes of paternity and homerule by existing in a parallactic relationship to Stephen and Bloom, the two observers.

The final and most important narrative incident of parallax involving Stephen and Bloom occurs in "Ithaca" and is often taken to be the climax of the novel. It is a climax in which Stephen, Bloom, and Molly are supposedly joined in a mystical union of three as the two men gaze up at a "visible luminous sign" of Molly's lamp in the second-story window from the penumbra of the garden below. Molly is a mysterious "invisible person" whose presence is only implied, but more strongly than in either the cloud or the Shakespeare incidents. She seems, in fact, to be the raison d'être of their all being together. As Stephen and Bloom gaze they are silent, "each contemplating the other," and as a crowning ritual of their union they urinate, as mentioned before, in the manner of the narrative which has brought them together--"first sequent, then simultaneous" (p. 703). As they urinate, simultaneously they observe "a celestial sign," what is often taken to be a cosmic enactment of their union through the mediation of Molly: "A Star
precipitated with great apparent velocity across the firmament from Vega in the Lyre [Stephen, the artist] above the zenith beyond the stargroup of the Tress of Berenice [Molly] towards the zodiacal sign of Leo [Leopold Bloom]" (p. 703). Symbolically, at least, union by way of Molly has been achieved for Stephen and Bloom.

The parallactic incident involving Stephen and Bloom in the garden is the final symbolic negotiation of the themes of paternity and home rule. The keyless citizens have crossed, they are in the garden or promised land, and they are joined through parallax and the mystery and illumination of "Marion (Molly)" who, like Mary at the center of the rose in Dante's scheme of heaven, abides within the "series of concentric circles" of her lamp.¹¹

But there remains a serious difficulty in considering this symbolic negotiation commensurate with the naturalistic details and events in the novel. The meeting of Stephen and Bloom, like the character of Bloom, as we have seen, is ambiguous in this regard. Because the central symbol of Ulysses, the crossed keys in a circle and all its symbolic adjuncts, parallax being one, is prophetic in nature, we expect at the novel's end to see it fulfilled, to see a literal resolution of the progenitorial anxieties of Stephen and Bloom, to see them united transsubstantially as father and son, and to
see the resolution of Bloom's eleven-year hiatus in complete sexual relations with Molly. But when we come to "Ithaca" where both of these things are to occur, it strikes us that there is a disparity between the prophecy in the symbols and the narrative actuality; that in spite of the transformations of Stephen and Bloom into mythical or archetypal figures and cosmic forces such as stars and comets, all of which seem to support the predicted symbolic resolution, what happens literally seems to be at odds with what happens symbolically. A quick look at some of the literal details will show that the symbols are everywhere deflated in the actual narrative.

The most obvious deflation on a literal level of the crossed-keys symbol is Bloom's failure to secure the three-month "par" from Keyes. As a deflation of the union of Stephen and Bloom, this failure is reiterated in the fact that Bloom, feeling "the incipient intimations of proximate dawn," does not remain in the garden after Stephen's departure to watch the "apparition of a new solar disk," that symbol of revival and resurrection that has continually been associated with the theme of paternity: with a sigh Bloom returns inside to retire (pp. 704-05). The sun/son symbol receives additional deflation when we discover that the title page with the sunburst in In the Track of the Sun is missing (p. 709).
There are other literal details which militate against the idea of a literal union of much consequence. Stephen is, to say the least, unresponsive to Bloom's generosity and concern. Like the blind stripling Bloom helps across the street in "Lestrygonians" ("Do you want to cross?" [p. 180]), Stephen is reticent and not particularly grateful for Bloom's assistance home from Bella Cohen's. In fact, at times he seems to be blatantly offensive, such as when he sings to Bloom the song about the murder of a Christian boy by a young Jewess (pp. 690-91). His polite refusals of Bloom's "counterproposals" about Italian lessons for Molly and future dialogues between himself and Bloom (refusal in silence) are a further indication of the unlikelihood of anything approaching a father/son relationship, transubstantial or otherwise. Bloom realizes in Stephen's attitude the "problematic" nature of the affair, the "irreparability of the past" and the "imprevidibility of the future," which he illustrates by recalling the "clown in quest of paternity" (Stephen) at Hengler's circus and the florin marked for return, both of which, as he sadly concludes, are negative in conclusion (p. 696). The "irreparability of the past" and the "imprevidibility of the future," along with "the painful character of the ultimate functions of separate
existence," Bloom realizes, make any significant union with Stephen impossible.

The deflation of the crossed-keys symbol and the sunrise symbol is also a deflation of the theme of home-rule. The resolution of Bloom's paternal anxieties is the necessary requisite for his re-establishment of sexual relations with Molly, and the uncertainty of one spells the uncertainty of the other. The home-rule sun has not risen for Bloom, and it is missing from his book. And, of course, the home-rule sun rising in the northwest is automatically deflated by its literal impossibility. We also learn in "Ithaca" that in the contents of Bloom's drawer there is "a sealed prophecy (never unsealed) written by Leopold Bloom in 1886 concerning the consequences of the passing into law of William Ewart Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886 (never passed into law) ... " (p. 721).

Other details negate the likelihood of home-rule at Bloom's house. Little it seems has changed when Bloom returns home. His "murder" of the suitors by his abnegation of envy and jealousy and his final "equanimity" in the face of Molly's adultery are not, for one thing, without a financial concern for "an imminent provincial musical tour, common current expenses, net proceeds divided" (pp. 732-33). And this "equanimity" is not
markedly different, albeit less anxious, from the dis-
position he has shown concerning the adulterous liaison
at earlier times in the day ("Had to be" [p. 734]), nor
is it necessarily any sort of final victory. His kiss
upon her "plump mellow yellow smellow melons" (p. 734),
often taken to be a symbolic gaining of the promised land
(via the melons of Agendath Netaim), is not especially
significant on a literal level, but is typical, as he
admits to the nymph in "Circe," of his bedroom behavior
for years ("Adorer of the adulterous rump!" as Bello
calls him [p. 530]). The sign of his "postsatisfaction"
for this kiss, "a proximate erection" (p. 735), echoes
the "proximate dawn" (p. 704) which did not fully rise
for him either, and along with the fact that in bed
he lies, as usual, in his fetal position next to Molly,
"the manchild in the womb" (p. 737), does not support
a homerule-for-Bloom theory.

In trying to account for the discrepancies between
the realism and symbolism in Ulysses, critics have tended
to divide, rather than synthesize, the facts from their
symbolic potentials. Some literal-minded critics find
the meeting of Stephen and Bloom "fortuitous and unim-
portant, a demonstration of modern keylessness or the
existential position of man." Other critics, like
Tindall, relying too heavily on the symbolism and the
parallels, see Stephen as a result of the meeting with Bloom becoming humanized, discovering mankind, prepared by "the fundamental and more charitable understanding" of life that Bloom and Molly give him to go off and become an artist, while Bloom comes home, given equanimity through Stephen, to lie next to Molly, "the melon-bearing earth, and true Agendath. . . . the Promised Land." One way out, as always, is to claim that the discrepancies between the realism and the symbolism are part of a built-in ambiguity which falsifies any attempt to reconcile the symbols and the anti-climactic nature of the narrative. Others, notably Empson and Wilson, make unwarranted assumptions about events in the future fates of the characters, after those of the novel have ended, and suffer from what Ellmann calls "a desire . . . to detain the characters a little longer in their fictional lives."

But to find Ulysses an existential exposé of "modern keylessness" does not explain in what sense the keys are crossed, i.e., in what sense Stephen and Bloom have merged or united. Nor does the view of a literal resolution in the lives of Stephen and Bloom through the spirit of Molly (the "ITHACANS VOW PENELLOPE IS CHAMP" theory) explain the literal negation of symbols and parallels we have noted. The "explanation" of both the religious-
scientific duality of Bloom's character and that same duality (or one essentially similar) in the meeting of scientific Bloom and artistic Stephen will be the purpose of Chapter IV of this study. There the concept of parallax will be considered as a symbol of the view created by the art of Ulysses in which these and other dualities present in the novel are resolved.
NOTES

1Gilbert, p. 57.


3Perhaps the most subtle references to the crossed-keys symbol come in references to Mananaan Maclir in Ulysses, especially the one in "Circe" (p. 510) where he utters the word "Aum!" Gilbert observes (pp. 191-92) that "The knowledge of this word was the first step, according to mystics of the east, to knowledge of that still higher word, which rendered him who came to possess its key nearly the equal of Brahmātma himself. That ultimate word was engraved in a golden triangle and preserved in a sanctuary of which Brahmātma alone held the keys. Thus Brahmātma 'bore on his tiara two crossed keys, symbol of the precious deposit of which he had the keeping.'" It should be pointed out that Brahmātma's secret Word is similar to parallax in "Oxen in the Sun," where, as we have seen, it also becomes a word of power.

'The passage beneath the first newspaper heading in "Aeolus" is, I believe, highly symbolic. "The hoarse Dublin United [suggesting the theme of union] Tramway company's timekeeper" is Joyce himself, here calling for a beginning of the movement of Stephen and Bloom (and by implication Molly) toward a union. "Rathgar" is the location of The Three Patrons church where Stephen and Bloom have both been baptized (p. 682). "Three" is significant, for it suggests the presence of Molly in this double baptism. We know that Molly is associated many times in the novel with the Virgin Mary and that Bloom was baptized this second time "with a view to his matrimony" (p. 776). "Tenenure" (or Roundtown) is where Mat Dillon's is located and where Bloom first met Molly (p. 275); it is also where he met Stephen at the age of five (p. 422). "Sandymount Green" suggests the walks on Sandymount strand of Stephen and Bloom and in "Nausicaa" is associated with the Roman Catholic Church of Mary, Star of the Sea (Molly) (p. 346). These connections are much too heavily associated literally and symbolically with all three characters to be coincidence.
69

6 Fleishman, p. 383. Cf. Pater's comment on human isolation in The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1900), p. 239: "Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed around for each of us by that thick wall of personality which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world."


7 Hugh Kenner, in Hart and Hayman, pp. 353-54, argues that the sea is a dull green for Stephen only because he is nearsighted, having broken his glasses the day before.

8 See above, p. 28. That the matutinal cloud destroys Bloom's vision of a promised land is ironic in that the cloud recalls the pillar of cloud which led Moses to the Promised Land (see Professor MacHugh's rendition of J. F. Taylor's speech in "Aeolus," p. 143). That Moses, however, never actually entered the Promised Land is an important point to consider in the themes of kinship and homerule, because it suggests that Bloom, identified on more than one occasion with Moses (e.g., p. 676), will not enter his promised land (Molly) and will therefore not see the rebirth of his son.

9 Robert Adams negates the significance usually given to the many telepathic parallels, such as the ones which occur in "Proteus" and "Hades" involving the more or less simultaneous thoughts of Stephen and Bloom about navelcords (pp. 38, 112) and drowning (pp. 50, 114), when he says, "looked at a second time [the telepathic parallels] are seen to be tangential and fleeting similarities, growing out of the fact that Stephen and Bloom have lived for the last twenty-two years in the same medium-sized city, at about the same level" (Surface and Symbol: The Consistency of James Joyce's Ulysses. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962, p. 98). The Shakespeare incident, however, can hardly be called "tangential and fleeting" and lends support to the contention that Joyce purposely created telepathic parallels between Stephen and Bloom to emphasize their eventual meeting. For an interesting example of Joyce's subtle wordplay in establishing telepathic parallels see Leo Knuth, "Joyce's Verbal


14 Kain, p. 159.

CHAPTER IV

PARALLAX AND THE ARTISTIC VISION IN ULYSSES

Ulysses stands as a monument to what Mark Schorer calls "the supremacy of technique" in literature. In fact, as the novel progresses, the technique becomes increasingly visible and tends to arrest our attention from the narrative movement, compelling us to concentrate on the novel's artistic design. In a way, therefore, Ulysses requires its reader to view it from two points of observation simultaneously. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the term parallax as a symbol of such a dual mode of apprehension and of a synthesis in a single, simultaneous view of the novel's apparent conflict of interests between narrative content and formal technique.

The apparent conflict of content and technique has been described by William Schute and Erwin R. Steinberg in terms of the degree to which Joyce has called attention to the novel's formal technique: "If the early sections of the novel are designed to suggest that material is being translated directly from life to the printed page, episodes ten through seventeen work in the opposite direction: again and again the reader is reminded that he is
reading an intricate, highly artificial construct. It is as if, having brought us into the most intimate contact with the worlds inhabited by Stephen and by Bloom, he wishes now to exile us from those worlds, to force us to see them from a more disengaged perspective."² Although accurate about the increasingly visible technique from episode ten on, these critics have failed to note the true beginning of the visible technique.

It is actually in episode seven, "Aeolus," that Joyce's technique first becomes visible as something more than what has been up to this point a very natural combination of limited third-person narrative and inner monologue. "Aelous" begins with, and continues throughout the episode, a series of parodic headlines above sections of narrative. The tone and point of view of the headlines cannot be ascribed to anyone in particular, certainly not to the very objective third-person narrator of the first six episodes. The headlines begin in a very dignified manner, "IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS" (p. 116), and become, as the episode progresses, comical and idomatic: "SOPHIST WALLOPS HAUGHTY HELEN SQUARE ON PROBOSCIS. SPARTANS GNASH MOLARS. ITHACANS VOW PEN IS CHAMP" (p. 148). These headlines serve as our first warning that the view of the novel's content presented so far may not suffice indefinitely,
and they foreshadow the parody of styles in "Oxen in the Sun" as well as the growing visibility of technique from "Aeolus" on.

In addition to the beginning of a visible technique, "Aeolus" also marks the beginning of the "parallel course" of Stephen and Bloom. We have for the first time a narrative in which Stephen's and Bloom's day is simultaneous in occurrence, having been sequential in the first six episodes. It is in "Aeolus," too, that Bloom first catches sight of Stephen--"Wonder is that young Dedalus the moving spirit" (p. 147). They have begun their "parallel course" which will tend toward the parallactic angle completed, as we have seen, in "Ithaca."

The beginning of the technique in "Aeolus," which will increase in visibility as the novel progresses, will also reach its climax in "Ithaca." The question/answer format in "Ithaca," which Joyce labeled "Catechism (impersonal),"³ is the climax of the novel's stylistic and technical development, and nowhere is the reader's consciousness of the novel as artistic design more pronounced. In design "Ithaca" is a long way from the natural inner monologues in the earlier episodes. As if to remind us of the gradual emergence of the technical artifice at its climax in "Ithaca," Joyce returns suddenly to the inner monologue in the following and final
episode, "Penelope," the most natural and artless episode in Ulysses. It is clear that we are meant to recognize fully the distinction between the novel's content and technique, between its representative life and its art. This recognition is of utmost importance to the meaning of parallax as a symbol of the double view necessitated by the novel's formal technique and to the meaning of the novel as a whole.

This simultaneous drawing together of Stephen and Bloom and the climax of the novel's technical development necessarily put the evaluation of the significance of one in terms of the other. We cannot find the significance of the meeting of Stephen and Bloom, or any other narrative event, except in terms of the novel's formal technique. We must view the narrative content in terms of both its literal, realistic meaning and its artistic meaning created and developed by Joyce's technique. The synthesis of these two views will be illustrated by considering Joyce's simultaneous use of realistic details and symbols, specifically the use of the emblem of crossed keys as a symbol of the meeting of Stephen and Bloom in "Ithaca."

The creation of symbolic meanings in natural details is an aspect of the novel's technique, as we have seen in Chapter III, that seems to produce a symbolic
negotiation of narrative events incommensurate with natural details of those events. Problems of interpretation we have noted in the meeting of Stephen and Bloom and in Bloom's re-establishment of homerule are a result of apparent discrepancies between the novel's symbolic and realistic levels of meaning. The "union" of Stephen and Bloom and the resolution of Bloom's eleven-year hiatus in complete sexual relations with Molly are supported symbolically but denied literally.

The crossed-keys symbol is the supreme example of a symbol in the novel which is full of promises of an ideal future, symbolizing as it does the ideals of atonement and paradise. As a literal detail, of course, it is simply a design carrying local associations of homerule which Bloom goes to the library to find and which he spends half a day unsuccessfully trying to sell to Keyes as an advertisement. Seen only in terms of the narrative movement, the crossed-keys emblem lacks the significance it has as a symbol created by the formal technique. Conversely, seen as a symbol only, it lacks the significance its value as a realistic detail gives it in terms of the narrative content. The emblem of crossed keys will serve as an example of the parallactic synthesis of the novel's realistic and symbolic meanings and, by extension, a synthesis of the novel's narrative movement and its formal
technique. It will also prove to be itself a symbol in the novel of that very synthesis and therefore related to parallax as a symbol of the dual mode of vision involved.

If we return to the "Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax" passage, we will find evidence to support the contention that the emblem of crossed keys is a symbol of the synthesis of the novel's narrative movement and its formal technique. The passage, as mentioned, marks the first appearance of the word parallax in the novel; these five words have already been related to the themes of paternity and homerule. "Parallel" refers to the "parallel course" of Stephen and Bloom, "parallax" to their crossing or meeting, and "par" to the emblem of crossed keys as a symbol of their union and the resultant homerule of Bloom.

If we re-evaluate these five words in terms of the novel's synthetic view of narrative content and formal technique, we can explain their association in terms of the dual mode of apprehension leading to that view. "Parallel" signifies the apparent duality of the novel's content and technique which, like the course of Stephen and Bloom, runs along parallel lines to "Ithaca."5 "Parallax" signifies the system of observation to be employed by the reader in which the duality or "parallel" of content and technique becomes two points of observation and combine or meet in a parallactic angle to produce a
single view of the novel's subject matter. "Par it's Greek" signifies the quality of that single view and establishes, again through the "par" of Keyes, the emblem of crossed keys as a symbol of the union of the novel's representative life and its art.

The quality of the novel's view of life, what we will call its artistic vision, is defined in the word "par." "Par" is not Greek as Bloom supposes (it is Latin), but its meaning of "equality" and the implications it has of seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, as Arnold assures us, are. It is a good word to describe Joyce's view of life in *Ulysses*. We know that Joyce found Homer's epic "beautifully all-embracing in its vision of human concerns" and that he considered Odysseus the only "all-round man" in literature before Bloom. This "equality" in "par," then, refers to the view of life Joyce admired in Homer and through which Joyce intended to "Hellenise" Ireland and Irish art by the writing of *Ulysses*. This artistic view embodies what Goldberg describes as "a responsive openness to life, a firm grasp on the centrally human, a respect for the present reality we all share, an allegiance to the objective, and a mistrust of the metaphorical or naturalistic 'realities' abstracted from the total complexity of human experience."
The way that Joyce avoids the "metaphorical" or artistic view that loses contact with the objective and the "naturalistic" view that denies the objective world any centrally human value is by emphasizing both narrative content and formal technique. On the one hand, the novel calls for an empirical, scientific view like Bloom's; there is an overwhelming accumulation of facts and natural details which seem to be ordered in the random, fragmented manner of the natural world. On the other, the novel calls for a formalized, creative view, like Stephen's, in which everything in the novel is intended to fit into a simultaneous conceptual pattern which has been shaped by the artist's mind.

The synthesis of these two views, and therefore of the narrative content and the formal technique, occurs in "Ithaca," where, as mentioned, the technique is most visible. There we find the baldest and most extensive factual details about Stephen and Bloom, while at the same time we find an overwhelming number of symbolic implications created by the novel's technique. We have discussed the symbolic meaning of the two men's parallactic star-gazing and Molly-gazing, a symbolic fulfillment of the prophetic crossed-keys symbol; there are hundreds of other symbolic elements, such as the imagery surrounding their drinking of the "massproduct, the creature
cocoa" (p. 677) and their "exodus" from kitchen to garden (pp. 697-98).

The co-existence of literal details in the narrative content and symbols in the artistic design produces a view of both the actual and potential, the real and the ideal, the movement of life and its stasis in an artistic design which recreates it and gives it expressive value. We see both the symbolic potential created by art for a spiritual union of Stephen and Bloom and the literal probability that they depart from one another without having experienced a union any more significant than the fact that they have recognized even more strongly than before the nature of their own individual isolation. More than producing an irony which might come from such a discrepancy, this double view produces "a responsive openness to life." The formal technique, including the symbols, the literary parodies, all the mythical and historical parallels, unfetters the "facts" in the novel and releases "all the infinite possibilities they have ousted," the possibilities Stephen wonders about in "Nestor" (p. 25).

By the time we get to "Ithaca," the parallactic view necessitated by the novel's technique has made us aware of a significance in their meeting that neither Stephen nor Bloom can have any inkling of. Each of them,
and Molly in "Penelope," is, as Goldberg says, "in the last analysis separated by the ineluctable isolation of every individual soul," each unable to reach out to the other and establish meaningful communication. But we can see beyond the immediate human situation of Stephen, Bloom, and Molly to a world where they are no longer isolated, to the world of *Ulysses* where immediate human situations are enlarged and interrelated because they converge with all the meanings created for them by the novel's technique.

The world of *Ulysses*, then, is a world in which art becomes the symbol for the value of life. The formal technique of the novel, the novel's art, is not, however, a final value of life in itself, but a symbol of that value. Just as the emblem of crossed keys is both a literal detail and a symbol, the art of *Ulysses* is one which partakes of the reality it signifies and expresses it as articulately as it can be expressed. The internal references and cross-references in *Ulysses* to the art of *Ulysses* that we have been considering and the increasingly visible artistry from episode to episode are thematic. They force us to become aware of the novel's artistic design before we can understand anything about the novel's representative life. They emphasize the value of art in expressing the significance of reality, in bringing to
life (not just to the life represented in the novel, but to life everywhere and always, to the "centrally human") a significance which, but for the artistic vision, would lie unrecognized.

Parallax, then, as a symbol of the method of dual apprehension by which we arrive at the novel's final synthetic vision of narrative content and formal technique, cannot in itself represent the value and meaning of Ulysses. It only suggests the way in which we as readers must view the novel if we are to find its value and meaning. That value and meaning come in the "equality" of view symbolized by the crossed keys within a circle. That view in small is represented by Bloom's attempts through parallax to "fix" Molly in a view both scientific and religious and by the scientific and artistic views of Bloom and Stephen in "Ithaca" as they gaze upward at the heavens and at Molly's light in a window. In terms of the novel as a whole, it is a view in which the two "keys" of the novel, the narrative content and the formal technique, are no longer incongruities that divide our aesthetic responses between what is real and ideal or actual and potential. They have become two points of observation from which we can truly account for the position of the object of our view: the novel itself.
NOTES


3See the table of episodes in Gilbert, p. 30.

4A stylized version of Bloom's account to Stephen of the advertising virtues of the crossed-keys ad in "Ithaca" (p. 683) is highly suggestive about the relationship between realistic and symbolic meanings in Ulysses. For a discussion of Joyce's inheritance of Symbolist and Naturalist resources within a modern literary tradition already widened by such writers as Mallarmé, Eliot, and Proust, see Edmund Wilson's chapter on Joyce in Axel's Castle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931).

5I am aware that "parallel" may also refer to the Homeric parallels in the novel, but the Homeric identities, not really essential to the novel, have no place in this discussion. It is interesting to note, however, that "parallel" is "par" plus "allel," one letter away from "allele," which is any group of possible mutations in a gene, together the two parts of the word representing the idea of "equality" in transformation, the kind of transformation that goes from an Odysseus to a Leopold Bloom. The "parallel" or transformation allows, according to Kenner, "that people who are shaping their lives by one story will be unwittingly enacting many others; it follows too that they may change a role for the corresponding role in some analogous plot, and may do this with no real discontinuity" (Hart and Hayman, p. 343).

6Ulysses on the Liffey, p. 159.

The theme of Hellenization in the novel's narrative first appears in "Telemachus" where, after finding mockery in Stephen's last name, "an ancient Greek" (p. 3), Mulligan sarcastically wishes that he and Stephen could "do something for the island. Hellenize it" (p. 7).

Goldberg, p. 32. See Goldberg, pp. 32-39, for a discussion of what he calls Joyce's "classical temper."

Goldberg, p. 178.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated, if nothing else, the complex meaning that can be generated by a single word in *Ulysses*. It has distinguished three levels which are integrated and arranged in a hierarchy beginning with natural detail and ending in pervasive symbol. The word parallax begins as a natural detail which acts as a character motif to reflect its allotted dimension of Bloom's inner life. A level above character, parallax becomes a symbol informing the two major narrative themes of paternity and homerule. Finally, above narrative theme, parallax becomes a symbol informing the novel's overriding theme of the writing of *Ulysses* itself and of the relationship between the novel's representative life and its artistic design.

In each of these levels of meaning, parallax represents a dual vision: Bloom's in the first, a combination of Bloom's and Stephen's in the second, and the reader's in the third. The way in which parallax achieves its meaning of dual vision in each case results from two conditions, one prior, the other developmental. Part
of the meaning of parallax in *Ulysses* is prior to the novel and resides in the scientific meaning of parallax as a trigonometric measuring system used to determine the distances of celestial bodies by viewing them from two points of observation simultaneously. The more important part is developed through the novel's complex laws of association and correspondence whereby parallax and the concept of a dual vision are related to the novel's characters and themes.

In the first level of meaning, parallax serves as a natural detail, a word appearing in and conforming to the realistic psychological patterns of Bloom's inner monologues. As a character motif, the word parallax represents for Bloom both a scientific and a religious view of his wife's adulterous behavior and of his lack of a son. In the scientific view he identifies Molly with astral bodies and uses the word parallax to consider her objectively, reducing her behavior to a set of phenomena in the amoral, natural world. He also uses the word as a religious word of mystery and invocation to view Molly with religious hope, idealizing her as the Virgin Mary who will act as the pure vessel of the reborn son, identified with the Christ-like Stephen. Because Bloom alternates throughout the novel between a scientific and a religious view, his attitude toward
his marriage and the state of paternity, when seen in terms of the realistic narrative, remains ambivalent.

The second level of meaning is an extension of the first and involves the same kind of dual view. In a pattern of associations and correspondences which lie outside of Bloom's perceptions and which are thus to be realized only by Joyce and the reader, parallax becomes a symbol of the union or meeting of the artistic and scientific views of Stephen and Bloom. Parallax becomes such a symbol in two principal ways: as the concept behind three narrative incidents involving the simultaneous viewing of an object (a matutinal cloud, Shakespeare's face, and Molly) by Stephen and Bloom, and through its association by way of the syllable "par" with the emblem of crossed keys, a contextual symbol of the meeting of Stephen and Bloom (the theme of paternity) and of Bloom's re-establishment of sexual normality in his marriage (the theme of homerule). This "union" of views and the implications it has of paternity and marital stability regained, even though it is supported symbolically by parallax, the emblem of crossed keys, and other symbolic elements in the novel, is strangely denied by literal details and events in the realistic narrative.

This duality involved in the novel's realistic and symbolic meanings forms the basis for the third level of
meaning for parallax in the novel. At this level parallax symbolizes the dual vision produced in the reader by an apparent conflict between the novel's narrative content and its formal technique, finally two points of observation from which the reader must view the characters and events presented in the novel. This dual vision is necessitated by an artistic technique which increases in visibility as the novel progresses and which tends to arrest the reader's attention from the narrative movement and to draw attention to the novel's artistic design. Both the climax in the narrative movement and in the development of the formal technique occur in "Ithaca" where the actualities and the symbolic potentials in the meeting of Stephen and Bloom are synthesized in a single vision. The final parallactic view in the novel is therefore the reader's; it is a view in which the immediate human situation of the characters is enlarged and interrelated through Joyce's artistic technique. By emphasizing the dual nature of the art of Ulysses and the unified nature of its view of life, symbolized by parallax, Joyce makes as his most important theme in Ulysses the union of life and art, a union in which art becomes a symbol of the value of life.

Two important convictions should arise from this study of the parallax motif in Ulysses. The first is
that no motif in *Ulysses*, whether a word, phrase, image, idea, or object, can bring with it to the novel any automatic significance; its significance is created by the art in the novel and can be determined only after the nature of that art is fully understood. The second is that *Ulysses* is a novel which is peculiarly self-regarding, a novel which goes to great lengths to call attention to its own method of composition and which makes its great theme the power of art to express the full significance of life in its perennial condition. The meaning of parallax created by the art of *Ulysses* leads us to the center of that great theme.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


