It is during the half dozen pages at the precise center of this chapter that a girl about twenty years old (the granddaughter of the owner of Garryowen, and so, if she really existed, distantly related to Joyce) first swings one leg back and forth in time with the music emanating from a church service, then gradually reveals more and more of her thighs to a dark stranger, whom she regards as romantic and suffering, and who responds to the stimulation by masturbating. The attitudes and conduct of Gerty MacDowell and Bloom at that point constitute the thematic center of the chapter as well as the middle of the action.

The significance of Bloom’s act is clear in terms of what has been shown about him. The ultimate expression of his attempted “lotus-eating” in the fifth chapter was his plan to masturbate in his bath (83). The act he contemplated is, as mere passivity or the endeavor to ignore his situation by skirt-chasing and letter-writing is not, a precise symbol of total betrayal of his aspirations as both husband and father. He did not fulfil that intention, however, as he reveals in the present chapter (362). And although the subject came up again at the Ormond Hotel, when Miss Douce caressed the beer-pull, Bloom’s gratitude for what he regarded as a proffer to him did not prevent him from leaving the Ormond and thereby rejecting it along with the other “siren songs” in the chapter.
In the present chapter, despite his recent examples of resolution and "heroism," Bloom himself (although under provocation) commits the consummate act of negation. It has a moral as well as a symbolic significance. In a quasi-Biblical recapitulation of the day's experiences in the seventeenth chapter, the encounter with Gerty is referred to as "rite of Onan" (713):

And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and . . . he spilled it on the ground. . . .
And the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him also. (Genesis 38:9-10)

The Code of Jewish Law (Shulhan Aruch) says: "It is forbidden to cause in vain the effusion of semen, and this crime is severer than any of the violations mentioned in the Torah." And when the admonition of the Lord through the prophet Malachi is recalled, Bloom's "spilling" of his seed in the great sin of Onan is seen to be also that turning away from Molly and his unborn son which is the path to destruction.

The masturbation at the center of the chapter is not merely a pathetic and sordid act but a representation, on every level of meaning, of Bloom's self-defeat and self-destruction. Following it and Gerty's immediate departure, the author presents, in a union of Bloom's natural physiopsychological reaction to his act and the significance that act has for the novel, a long passage of inner monologue in which Bloom is far more pathetic than when he feels frustrated, ashamed, and helpless; for he is depressed, resigned, and spiritually broken.

His thoughts follow a now familiar pattern: they revert again and again from the immediate subject, in this case the girl whose name he never learns, to Molly and her affair with Boylan. At one point he decides that Boylan should give Molly money for her favors because she is "worth" it, and then has an even more masochistic train of thought:

Funny my watch stopped at half past four. Dust. . . .
Was that just when he, she?
O, he did. Into her. She did. Done.
Ah! (363)
Although sordid, the reversion to the incident with Gerty that directly follows these manifestations of pandering and masochism intensifies the pathos:

Mr Bloom with careful hand recomposed his wet shirt. O Lord, that little limping devil. Begins to feel cold and clammy. After effect not pleasant. Still you have to get rid of it someway.

Again and again the pattern is repeated. Bloom thinks of Gerty, her two companions, Martha Clifford, the neighbor’s maid, the woman he saw accompanying A. E., Nurse Callan, the novice in the Tranquilla convent, the “girl in Meath street,” the “high class whore in Jammets,” Mrs. Breen, Mrs. Duggan, the aristocratic woman he’d seen in the fifth chapter, and Mrs. Dignam, from whose house he has just come. The catalogue is long, but Molly eclipses the other women right up to his somnolent last thoughts in the chapter, which begin as a tribute to Gerty:

O sweety all your little girlwhite up I saw dirty brace-girdle made me do love sticky we two naughty Grace darling she him half past the bed met him pike hoses frillies for Raoul to perfume your wife black hair heave under embon _señorita_ young eyes Mulvey plump years dreams return tail end _Agendath_ swoony lovey showed me her next year in drawers return next in her next her next. (375)

Combined with thoughts of Molly’s tryst with Boylan is another version of Bloom’s revery of her return to him: “years dreams return” and the Zionist (return) motif, “_Agendath,_” are augmented by “next year,” a fragment of a Passover Seder catechism expressing the exile’s hope of return. Thus the pronoun in “next in her next her next” with which Bloom’s long inner monologue ends refers not to Gerty but to Molly.

The irony of Bloom’s undiminished ardor for Molly lies in the conclusions at which he arrives before this final paragraph. In the paragraph just preceding, in fact, he decides that he will not accompany Boylan and Molly to her concert at Belfast and categorically assents to being supplanted.
Prior to this, he thinks of the hill of Howth and the consummation of their love there, on which he dwelt so fully in the eighth chapter. Only now he concludes, not with a reflection on how far he has fallen ("Me. And me now"), but with the thought that he is foolish to persist in his unrequited love for Molly, that Boylan "gets the plums and I the plumstones" (370). Yet, persist he does. And he does not hesitate to blame himself for having recourse to masturbation because he lacks the simple courage to make love to his wife (367).

The author shows Bloom’s love for Molly to be a fundamental theme of the chapter with the help of "Love’s Old Sweet Song." By this point in the novel, the association between the song and the tryst of Molly and Boylan has been exploited twice (in the fifth chapter and the eleventh). Now the song is no longer simply alluded to by its title; phrases from it are woven into the narrative. The time of the action is "twilight," and at four separate points that term is used to indicate the time. There is repeated mention of the bats, "flickering shadows," and their coming and going occupies Bloom’s thoughts at two points. Finally, Gerty makes the association almost explicit by observing of Bloom: "Perhaps it was an old flame he was in mourning for from the days beyond recall" (358). Although in the most immediate sense Bloom is paralleling the "rehearsal" of it by Molly and Boylan in his own ignominious way ("Still to us at twilight comes Love’s old song"), the song is even more significant of his awareness that they have passed the vital point of their "rehearsal" and, as the end of the chapter so sardonically and insistently states, made him "Cuckoo. Cuckoo. Cuckoo." This awareness combines with the depression that follows his masturbation to bring him to his despondency of spirit.

The song is most significant, however, of his persisting love for Molly. Gerty points out that he is mourning for "an old flame," a "flame" of days that he now feels are definitely dead and beyond recall. As the song itself states, Love’s "old sweet song" is the song Love sang to the lovers’ hearts. Now one of those lovers is deaf to it and to the other lover:
Tho' the heart be weary, sad the day and long,
Still . . . at twilight . . . comes Love's old
sweet song.

The second of the song's two "verses" describes Bloom's devotion:

Even today we hear Love's song of yore,
Deep in our hearts it dwells for ever-more.
Footsteps may falter, weary grow the way,
Still we can hear it at the close of day.
So till the end, when life's dim shadows fall,
Love will be found the sweetest song of all.

The impressive fact about Joyce's use of the song in the present chapter is that at the same time that its lines and his treatment of it represent Bloom's love for Molly and consequent suffering, the associations it brings to the chapter invoke the two specific causes of Bloom's extreme despondency—the lovemaking of Molly and Boylan and his own pseudo-lovemaking.

The first part of the chapter, from its beginning to the point where Gerty leaves the scene and the novel, is very different in both style and subject from Bloom's inner monologue. Characterized by critics as "dime-novel" or "penny novelette," and plainly a parody of pretentious sentimental fiction, its style suits a point of view very close to and sympathetic with Gerty.

The style is not merely suitable however; it is the author's vehicle for delineating Gerty's character and the significance of her principal action. In the first place, she is a pathetically obnoxious girl. The technique employed to show this is precisely that employed in portraying Father Conmee and the anonymous narrator of Barney Kiernan's: ironic touches in her speech or thoughts and in the language of the sympathetic narrator. Thus, her
artificial coyness is revealed simply in the way she is introduced; she is mentioned by one of her companions and the narrator asks, "But who was Gerty?" The narrator then speaks of her "winsomeness," but the specific description contains details like:

Her figure was slight and graceful, inclining even to fragility but those iron jelloids she had been taking of late had done her a world of good much better than the Widow Welch's female pills and she was much better of those discharges she used to get and that tired feeling. (342)

And criticism can be little more overt than that contained in the description of Gerty's eyes:

Why have women such eyes of witchery? . . . It was Madame Vera Verity, directress of the Woman Beautiful page of the Princess novelette, who had first advised her to try eyebrowlein which gave that haunting expression to the eyes . . . and she had never regretted it. (342-43)

Her vanity, hinted at here, is revealed again and again. She cries before a mirror "nicely," in moderation; and "You are lovely, Gerty, it said." She has "a languid queenly hauteur," and feels that one of her "innate refinement" was wronged for not being born a noblewoman. She uses ointments, cosmetic preparations, and treatments of every kind for every part of her body.

More objectionable than her vanity are Gerty's spitefulness and jealousy. Her companions twit her about having lost the interest of a neighborhood boy, and her thoughts about them are painstakingly vindictive (343, 344). She accuses Cissy Caffrey of vying with her for Bloom's attention, although Cissy's attitude toward Bloom is clear: "—Wait, said Cissy. I'll ask my uncle Peter over there, what's the time by his conundrum."

In contrast to Cissy during that incident, Gerty "could see him take his hand out of his pocket" as the other girl approaches, and observes that he changes from a "passionate nature," "fascinated by a loveliness that made him gaze,"
to a "distinguished-looking," grave gentleman, and that his voice has "a cultured ring."

Not only interested in Bloom, Gerty is clearly fully aware of what she is about with him from the moment she lifts her skirt in order to kick the ball to the twins (350). She is a mildly libidinous girl, as Joyce suggests early in the chapter with smiling irony:

As for undies they were Gerty's chief care and who that knows the fluttering hopes and fears [italics mine] of sweet seventeen (though Gerty would never see seventeen again) can find it in his heart to blame her? (344)

And as Bloom correctly infers, she is approaching her menstrual period. Because of a combination of nature and circumstances, she undertakes her inversion of Nausicaa's modest confrontation of Odysseus' nakedness. She finds satisfaction in the fact that he is looking at her legs and not those of her companions. She puts on her hat in order to be able to observe him from beneath the brim:

And swung her buckled shoe faster for her breath caught as she caught the expression in his eyes. . . . Her woman's instinct told her that she had raised the devil in him. . . . (354)

She sees him remove his hand from his pocket when Cissy Caffrey approaches and return his hand to his pocket. And, as soon as the others leave, she accelerates her performance:

She looked at him a moment, meeting his glance, and a light broke in upon her. Whitehot passion was in that face. . . . At last they were left alone . . . and she knew he could be trusted to the death, steadfast, a sterling man, a man of inflexible honour to his fingertips [!]. His hands and face were working and a tremor went over her. She leaned back far to look up where the fireworks were . . . and there was no-one to see only him and her when, she revealed all her graceful beautifully shaped legs like that . . . and she seemed to hear . . . his hoarse breathing . . . because Bertha Supple told her once in dead secret and made her swear she'd never about the gentleman lodger . . . that had pictures cut
out of papers of those skirt-dancers and highkickers and she said he used to do something not very nice that you could imagine sometimes in the bed. (359)

Finally she limps off to join the others, and Bloom recomposes his wet shirt. She is exactly like "those skirt-dancers and highkickers" for whom she has contempt, and her hero, her ideal lover, is exactly like the lodger.

Gerty is fully aware of what she is doing and what Bloom is doing, yet her awareness is of a strange order. She succeeds in filtering from it every element of reality she finds unpalatable, in deluding herself about herself and the world about her. Thus, when she mentions the "highkickers" and the man masturbating in the bed, she also says:

"But this was altogether different from a thing like that because there was all the difference because she could almost feel him draw her face to his and the first quick hot touch of his handsome lips. Besides there was absolution so long as you didn't do the other thing before being married. . . ." (359)

There is no difference, and Bloom has done nothing to cause her to think he would so much as speak to her. She is able to make such assertions to herself because she is a sentimentalist, because as the very style of the narrative, which does not paraphrase Gerty's thought but renders its essential characteristic, indicates, she sentimentalizes reality, distorts it into a form she prefers. After kicking the ball, and before deciding to swing her legs for Bloom, that is, begin her exhibition, she observes:

"Yes, it was her he was looking at and there was meaning in his look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul. Wonderful eyes they were, superbly expressive, but could you trust them?" (351)

Following this transparent combination of romanticizing about Bloom and worrying about her reputation, she begins to swing her legs (to show him "the bright steel buckles of her shoes") and decides:
Here was that of which she had so often dreamed. It was he who mattered. . . . The very heart of the girl-woman went out to him, her dreamhusband. . . . If he had suffered, more sinned against than sinning, or even, even, if he had been himself a sinner, a wicked man, she cared not. (351-52)

Having identified her ideal lover, betrothed herself to him, and even decided to accept his wickedness, she needs to take only one more step, in time with the development of her exhibition, to the conclusion:

If she saw that magic lure in his eyes there would be no holding back for her. . . . She would make the great sacrifice. . . . There was the allimportant question and she was dying to know was he a married man or a widower who had lost his wife. . . . But even if—what then? Would it make a very great difference? From everything in the least indecent her finebred nature instinctively recoiled. They would be just good friends like a big brother and sister without all that other. . . . (358)

The ridiculousness of Gerty's solution to the problem of an adulterous triangle (which would be so much less "indecent" than what she is doing) is dwarfed by the ridiculousness of her fabricating a problem in the first place.

The whole combination of Gerty's actions, her misrepresentation of them, and Bloom's simple relationship to Gerty is manifested in the climax of the scene:

She was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back he had a full view high up above her knee where no-one ever . . . and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't either . . . and he kept on looking, looking. She would fain have come to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow. . . . And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind and O! then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! . . . (360)

Gerty has succeeded, by a continual process of sentimentalizing, in turning black into white. Almost nothing she believes is true. She is not beautiful, she is not refined, her
companions are not jealous of her, the neighborhood boy does not love her, Bloom does not love her, she is not experiencing a romantic courtship, and she is not pure and virtuous (although she probably is physically a virgin); she is a libidinous girl whose persistent sentimentalizing keeps her from the proscribed normal sexual activity and yet causes her to act scarcely less immorally. Growing older, deluding herself about her own charms, the attitude men have toward her, and the things she does, Gerty seems to have in store for her the emptiness and sterility indicated for Bloom by his masturbation.

The attention given to a vain, petty, and self-deluding girl would hardly be justified were Gerty herself the sole subject of Joyce's parody. He is not breaking a crippled insect on a wheel, however. "Love's Old Sweet Song" is one of the two principal allusive elements in the chapter; the other is the style of Gerty's section. In that style Joyce is parodying not just a general kind of writing but a specific model; and he did his best to identify it when he had Gerty think that

soon the lamplighter would be going his rounds . . . like she read in that book The Lamplighter by Miss Cummins, author of Mabel Vaughan and other tales.

(357)

Turning to The Lamplighter of Maria S. Cummins, first published in 1854, one finds the exact prototype of the style and the charming little character it represents:

It was a stormy evening. Gerty was standing at the window, watching for True's return from his lamplighting. She was neatly and comfortably dressed, her hair smooth, her face and hands clean. She was now quite well,—better than for years before her sickness. Care and kindness had done wonders for her, and though still a pale and rather slender-looking child, with eyes and mouth disproportionately large to her other features, the painful look of suffering she had been wont to wear had given place to a happy though rather grave expression.
Miss Cummins' verbal gifts are suited to her subject and the view of life manifested in the novel. Her style is turgid, coy, pretentious, with at times an almost obscene lack of taste. Joyce's parody is satiric, of course, but it is more a crystallization of the faults of the original than an exaggeration of them.

The faithfulness of Joyce's parody of *The Lamplighter* is important because of the importance of that novel, the first work of a highly successful American writer. A reprint published forty-eight years after the original publication is prefaced by the following information:

Here is an American story for young people which has been in constant demand for almost half a century. At the time of its publication, in 1854, it enjoyed an immediate popularity second only to "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "The Scarlet Letter." . . . Edition followed edition, in this country and in England . . . and how many "Lamplighters" have been issued in the unauthorized and mutilated forms in which the book has too often appeared can be only a matter of conjecture.2

The extreme popularity of *The Lamplighter* is a fact of social history. A very large number of people had sufficiently poor taste and poor judgment to embrace both its prose and its treatment of reality. By showing the insidious quality of sentimentalism in a parody of that book rather than in a general parody of the style of its genre, Joyce has made more pointed his statement about those people. Gerty MacDowell is the ultimate popular development of Flaubert's Emma Bovary, the product of the degeneration of romantic idealism into sentimental wish-fulfilment and self-delusion. She is the representative of all those who, like her, read and enjoyed *The Lamplighter*. And this audience, large enough in itself, is representative of the mass of people blighted by self-deluding sentimentality. It is to make this criticism, familiar in his work, that Joyce parodies *The Lamplighter* and concerns himself with Gerty.

The criticism is levelled not only at individuals, but at their principal institution as well. The chapter has three subjects, not two, which are recapitulated at the end to stress that fact. In the order presented there they are Bloom, Gerty, and, between them, the Star of the Sea Church.
Simultaneously with Gerty's exhibition, the "Lamplighter" narrative presents phases in an evening service at the church. The service is the conclusion of a day-long "men's temperance retreat." At the point in the chapter where the parody ends, all mention of the church service ends. This is a significant association of the two, but there are more significant ones.

The patron saint of the church is the Virgin Mary, and most of the service appears to consist of prayers to the Virgin for deliverance from bibulousness:

They were there gathered together without distinction of social class (and a most edifying spectacle it was to see) in that simple fane beside the waves, after the storms of this weary world . . . beseeching her to intercede for them, the old familiar words, holy Mary holy virgin of virgins. (347-48)

The satiric tone of this first description indicates the subject of Joyce's indictment. Most of the other passages about the church service reiterate the theme of supplication of the Virgin:

And still, the voices sang in supplication to the Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful. (348)

And care-worn hearts were there and toilers for their daily bread and many who had erred and wandered, their eyes wet with contrition but for all that bright with hope for the reverend father Hughes had told them . . . the most pious Virgin's intercessory power. . . . (350)

Refuge of sinners. Comfortress of the afflicted. Ora pro nobis. Well has it been said that whosoever prays to her with faith and constancy can never be lost or cast away. . . . (352)

Queen of angels, queen of patriarchs, queen of prophets, of all saints, they prayed, queen of the most holy rosary. . . . (353)

Joyce is attacking the popular cult of the Virgin. He sees it as that seeking after indulgence of weakness, after feminine, which is to say amoral, intercession with the masculine Godhead, which most of its critics say is behind the development into the second object of worship in the Roman
Catholic faith of a figure mentioned three times in the Gospels. The charge levelled is sentimentalism. The supplication of the Virgin is most insistently associated with Gerty by the repeated blending in one passage, in the same cloying narrative, of the church service and the action involving Gerty (who is a “daughter of Mary”). And Joyce’s indictment points not only at the Church but also at the people, who required the cult and nurtured it, and who, as the passages suggest, delude themselves just as Gerty does about the significance of their actions. They have been willing to believe that however they sin, they “can never be lost”; thus, Gerty is certain that “there was absolution so long as you didn’t do the other.” Stephen speaks in the librarian’s office of “the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe” (205).

During the morning, Stephen paraphrases an epigram from Chapter XXIV of Meredith’s The Ordeal of Richard Feverel for the message of his telegram to Mulligan and Haines. Mulligan reads the telegram in the librarian’s office “joyfully” (197), although he is really annoyed (418): “—The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done. Signed: Dedalus.” Stephen’s use of the moral apothegm is, like Meredith’s, witty, for he is expressing his refusal to meet Mulligan and Haines and pay for their drinking. The serious application of it is made by Joyce in the present chapter. Those who pray to the Virgin for indulgence for petty weakness, like Gerty who romanticizes herself, her actions, and their objects, seek to enjoy the fruits of their frailty without incurring the immense debtorship of moral responsibility for their every act. Joyce has, in the “Lamp-lighter” part of the present chapter, castigated a fundamental fault of his fellow men.

What the sentimentalism Joyce sees as so pervasive in society has to do with Bloom is not difficult to determine. The first clue is that Bloom’s part of the narrative is in his characteristic idiom, not in the sentimental style. The distinction is stressed at the point of transition:
She walked with a certain quiet dignity characteristic of her but with care and very slowly because, because Gerty MacDowell was . . .

Tight boots? No. She's lame. O! (361)

In contrast to the periphrasis, the attempted avoidance of the unpleasant fact, is Bloom's direct statement. It is followed by a frank analysis of what has transpired, one that sees clearly Gerty's motivations ("Thought something was wrong by the cut of her jib. Jilted beauty," "Near her monthlies I expect, makes them feel ticklish"), her ruses ("Will she? Watch! Watch! See! Looked around," "Wait. Hm. Hm. Yes. That's her perfume. Why she waved her hands"), and her character ("Hot little devil," "Go home to nicey bread and milky and say night prayers with the kiddies"). Far more important, Bloom correctly judges the situation and his role in it ("Anyhow I got the best of that," "Suppose I spoke to her. What about?", "you have to get rid of it someway," "Did me good all the same"); it is principally in this respect that he is contrasted with the sentimentalists. He knows that he has failed Molly in "getting rid of it" in meaningless eroticism. He decides that Molly is lost to him, and correctly blames himself for lacking the courage to attempt to win her back by making love to her. He acknowledges that he has incurred the immense debtorship for the thing done. In eschewing sentimentalism, Bloom is in direct contrast to the two other principal elements in the chapter and is superior to them.

It is to Bloom's credit that he is ashamed to return home (373); but his surrender in thought and act to his predicament affirms that despite his apotheosis he is no less the old Bloom, that the revelation at Barney Kiernan's was an elaboration of his character and not the uncovering of a disguise.

His surrender is accompanied by undiminished devotion to Molly and suffering over the loss of her, and by a clear sense of his culpableness in having lost her. For these reasons, it may be premature. He remembers, for the first time in the novel, a dream of the night before which corresponds closely to one twice recalled by Stephen—first in the morning at the very same place, on the beach, and
then, in a context suggesting that Bloom would rescue him from his plight, at the end of the ninth chapter.

In an almost exact duplication of phrases in Stephen's first remembrance of his dream ("In. Come. Red carpet spread"), Bloom articulates the memory of his own: "Come in. All is prepared. I dreamt. What?" (364). He remembers it again just before the end of the chapter, this time recalling Molly's appearance in it:

Dreamt last night? Wait. Something confused. She had red slippers on. Turkish. Wore the breeches. Suppose she does. Would I like her in pyjamas? (374)

The fact that Bloom remembers a dream involving himself and Molly which is plainly analogous to Stephen's dream predicting deliverance suggests, at any rate, that Bloom's love for Molly and his willingness to face reality may enable him to escape the fate to which he sees himself condemned, that his potential power of deliverance of himself and the young gentile has not been dissipated by the behavior of his lower self.

The chronological sequence of parodies of English prose styles that constitutes the body of this chapter makes reading difficult, and the difficulty has no apparent purpose. If Joyce were merely trying to make the form of the chapter correspond to the birth of the new Purefoy baby, that would be scant justification for the device. In the first place the baby is a minor figure in the novel at best, certainly not worth such elaborate treatment. Secondly, birth is not gestation, which is what the device suggests; and not only
does the chapter present less than one hour in the ninth month of the baby's pre-natal period, but he is born half-way through the progression of parodies. Any attempt to validate Joyce's stylistic device in this chapter on so tenuous a basis might more aptly turn to the labor of the infant's mother.

Readers willing to accept a labored association will accept labored art with equal readiness. And, unfortunately, Joyce himself encouraged a painstaking Alexandrian criticism of the chapter by providing an elaborate description of his intentions. In a letter to Budgen he said:

Am working hard at Oxen of the Sun, the idea being the crime committed against fecundity by sterilizing the act of coition. Scene: lying-in hospital. Technique: a nine-parted episode without divisions introduced by a Sallustean-Tacitean prelude (the unfertilized ovum), then by way of earliest English and Anglo-Saxon then by way of Mandeville then Malory's Morte D'Arthur then the Elizabethan chronicle style then a passage solemn uses Milton, Taylor, and Hooker, followed by a choppy Latin-gossipy bit, style of Burton-Browne, then a passage Bunyanesque after a diarystyle bit Pepys-Evelyn and so on through Defoe-Swift and Steele-Addison, Sterne and Landor-Pater-Newman until it ends in a frightful jumble of pidgin English, Nigger English, Cockney, with Bowery slang and broken doggerel. This progression is also linked back at each part subtly with some foregoing episode of the day and besides this, with the natural stages of development in the embryo, and the periods of formal evolution in general. The double thudding Anglo-Saxon motives recur from time to time to give the sense of the hoofs of oxen. Bloom is the spermatozoon, the hospital the womb, the nurse the ovum, Stephen the embryo.

How's that for high?3

Most of the parodies "by way of" which the chapter is presented are good enough to be identified with reasonable accuracy independently of any testimonial by the author; some embody critical comments on the writer parodied; and some are among the funniest passages in the novel. Joyce's letter itself catalogues more than nine parodies, so that they are not the basis of the "nine-parted" structure of
the hospital

the chapter. However, they are not the only allusive elements in it. There is the maze of “links”: back to nine of the preceding “episodes”; with embryonic and evolutionary development; with oxen hooves; and with spermatozoon-womb-ovum-embryo. He has built a labyrinth for his “Oxen of the Sun” like that built by the first artificer, Daedalus, for the minotaur. The slang expression which follows his description, equivalent to “what do you think of that?”, is not the cap to a blatant mocking of his friend, but exultation over having achieved a tour de force. It can be stated categorically that he suggests no purpose for the tangle of interrelations he created.

The labyrinth is even more complex. Hugh Kenner points out that the forty paragraphs of English parodies correspond to the forty weeks of gestation.⁴ And perhaps the most detailed study of a part of Ulysses ever published begins with Joyce’s description of the chapter in his letter and proceeds by close verbal analysis to a delineation of: the nine divisions Joyce mentions; the references back to previous chapters in each division; the correspondence between each division and the foetus in the equivalent month of its development; the recapitulation of the first six divisions-months in the seventh, because in the seventh month “an infant is likely to be born, and live”; and other elements which its author finds, and which suggest to him the analogy with the maze Daedalus built for the minotaur.⁵

However intricate the form of the chapter may be, and as clever as its manifest intricacies are, its “technique” ought ultimately to be functional. To argue that Joyce had to fashion the chapter as he did is to offer an explanation and no more; anyway, he is clearly proud of his links and correspondences. With respect to some of them, the reader has no alternative except to either charge the creator with self-indulgence or admire the range and audacity of his creation; but most of its complexities are, in fact, completely functional.

The action of the chapter begins after the two-page “prelude” mentioned in Joyce’s letter. On the beach Bloom decided to inquire at the National Maternity Hospital about
Mrs. Purefoy (373), and the first incident is his arrival at the hospital, "stark ruth of man his errand." Nurse Callan, his landlady of nine years before, admits him; they talk; and Dixon, the interne on duty, who once treated a bee sting for him, invites him to join a party. Stephen, absent from the novel since the "entr'acte," is one of the company and the most successful in realizing the intent "to be drunken an they might." The group is debating the Catholic prohibition against killing a child to save its mother.

Bloom is evasive when his opinion is solicited, and the "Elizabethan chronicle" parody begins with the example of it cited in Joyce's letter: "about that present time young Stephen filled all cups." Stephen takes the floor. He proclaims a doctrine presented in the librarian's office: that as a poet he is a creator and, therefore, is like God Himself:

Mark me now. In women's womb word is made flesh but in the spirit of the maker all flesh that passes becomes the word that shall not pass away. This is the postcreation. (385)

He follows this with a characteristically scholastic blasphemy: that either the Virgin knew Christ, in which case she denied Him, or she did not, in which case she was spiritually ignorant. And he concludes his discussion of the Virgin with a criticism of the Virgin Birth:

A pregnancy without joy, he said, a birth without pangs, a body without blemish, a belly without bigness. Let the lewd [ignorant] with faith and fervour worship, with will we withstand, withsay.

Stephen's open attack on a fundamental doctrine of the Church, the value of the Incarnation, prompts Dixon to ask facetiously, "why he had not cided to take friar's vows." Completely humorless, "he answered him obedience in the womb, chastity in the tomb but involuntary poverty all his days." His attitude toward the "dio boia" has not changed. He still chooses to "with will . . . withstand,
withsay," and to suffer the consequent punishment "all his days."

More bawdy revelry leads into the topic of cuckoldry, which impels Stephen to echo the betrayal motif of his Shakespeare talk: "Bring a stranger within thy tower it will go hard but thou wilt have the secondbest bed." In a parody of a rebuke to His people by the Lord, in the idiom of the Authorized Version, he makes it clear that he is not speaking of sexual betrayal:

Remember, Erin . . . how thou settest little by me and by my word and broughtest in a stranger to my gates. . . . Therefore hast thou sinned against the light and hast made me, thy lord, to be the slave of servants. Return, return, Clan Milly: forget me not, O Milesian. Why has thou done this abomination before me that thou didst spurn me for a merchant of jalaps [medicine man"] and didst deny me to the Roman [Englishman] . . . ? (387)

As with his claim to semidivinity as "the maker," the absense of capitalization in the repeated "me" reveals that the pronoun is indeed personal. And Stephen’s appeal to his people to “return” to him, the poet-prophet and their true ruler, is followed by a bitter and despairing complaint:

But thou hast suckled me with a bitter milk: my moon and my sun thou hast quenched for ever. And thou has left me alone for ever in the dark ways of my bitterness. . . .

He attempts to paint over his blatancy with talk of the failure of "the wit of the septuagint" to describe the darkness referred to in the ostensible Bible passage (which does contain echoes of passages in Deuteronomy). His deception leads him to observations on another darkness, the state of man before birth and after death (388); and at that point in his stream of defiance, blasphemy, and criticism, a long roll of thunder is heard. The author, Lynch (facetiously), and Stephen himself all agree about its significance. Although unnerved and frightened by the "anger awful"
of the "hammerhurler," Stephen plucks up his courage: borrowing a term from a fellow-rebel, Blake, "the braggart boaster cried that an old Nobodaddy was in his cups." But the author declares that "this was only to dye his desperation as cowed he crouched in Horne's hall."

Having taken the depiction of Stephen out of his hands, the author presents a moral analysis of him in the idiom of John Bunyan, complete with catechism and allegory:

... he had in his bosom a spike named Bitterness. ... But could he not have endeavoured to have found again as in his youth the bottle Holiness that then he lived withal? Indeed not for Grace was not there to find that bottle. Heard he then in that clap the voice of the god Bringforth or, what Calmer [Bloom] said, a hubbub of Phenomenon? Heard? Why, he could not but hear unless he had plugged up the tube Understanding (which he had not done)... And would he not accept to die like the rest and pass away? By no means would he and make more shows according as men do with wives which Phenomenon has commanded them to do by the book Law. (388-89)

It is the familiar picture: Stephen will not accept God, although he has the "Understanding" to acknowledge His power; the divinely created reality, Bloom's "Phenomenon," is the "throb always without" him with which he must live, but against which he will continue to struggle. However, the picture has been augmented. In the first place, the author suggests that to escape from his suffering and ultimate destruction Stephen must find "Holiness," and to find holiness he must be accorded "Grace," the mercy of the God he defies. Secondly, Stephen's refusal to accept the world created by God and lead a normal life is here identified as sin. Finally, to lead a normal life is described as to "make more shows ... as men do with wives." Although it is far more important in the present chapter than in the whole story of Stephen, fornication is an aspect of his sin against God.

The sentences describing Stephen's "Carnal Concupiscence" and the paragraph that follows them are among the funniest passages in the book. But their context reveals that the author is in complete earnest. Stephen's sin in-
cludes not only blasphemy, criticism, and open defiance of God, but a refusal to lead a normal life, to have a wife and children. And the others in the company are equally guilty in this. In the paragraph following the sentences concerned with Stephen, the last paragraph in the moral Bunyan’s manner, the author adverts to them and declares:

This [Carnal Concupiscence] was it what all that company that sat there at commons . . . the most lusted after. . . . For regarding Believe-on-Me they said it was nought else but notion and they could conceive no thought of it. . . .

The three reasons given for the sinfulness of the group are that “Two-in-the-Bush . . . was the very goodliest grot,” that they are protected against “that foul plague Allpox” by a “stout shield of oxengut,” and that they need not worry about “Offspring that was that wicked devil by virtue of this same shield which was named Killchild”—that fornication is enjoyable and they can “shield” themselves against both disease and the conception of a child. “Bunyan” concludes with an unequivocal statement about the nature of their attitude and its consequences:

So were they all in their blind fancy, Mr Cavil [Lynch] and Mr. Sometimes Godly [Madden], Mr Ape Swillale [Costello], Mr. False Franklin [Lenehan], Mr Dainty Dixon, Young Boasthard [Stephen] and Mr Cautious Calmer [Bloom]. Wherein, O wretched company were ye all deceived for that [the thunder] was the voice of the god that was in a very grievous rage that he would presently lift his arm and spill their souls for their abuses and their spillings done by them contrariwise to his word which forth to bring brenningly biddeth. (389-90)

All those at the table have sinned by “their spillings,” that is, committed the sin of Onan, in direct defiance of the divine ordinance to bring forth young, “as men do with wives.”

“Bunyan’s” statement cannot be dismissed as irony or verbal play, for it is an exact reiteration of the threatening
injunction of healthy conjugalitv of the Book of Malachi, 
whose relevance to the novel has already been demonstrated. 
And it is a reflection of the theme of the present chapter 
as well. The chapter has been said to correspond to the 
incident in the 
Odyssey of the slaughter of the sacred 
“oxen” of the sun (Helios). The key to the correspondence 
is the symbolic use of light. The invocation which opens 
the chapter is to “bright one, light one,” and asks for 
“quickening and wombfruit”; there is mention of “bigness 
wrought by wind of seeds of brightness” (383); and 
Bloom’s first sexual experience, that with Bridie Kelley, is 
described in terms of light and the lack of it:

They are entwined in nethermost darkness . . . and in 
an instant (fiat!) light shall flood the world. . . . In a 
breath ’twas done but—hold! Back! . . . She is the 
bride of darkness, a daughter of the night. She dare not 
bear the sunnygolden babe of day. (406)

Light represents fertility and procreation, against which 
the group in the chapter (including “Ulysses”) has sinned 
by its “spilling.” And the use of “Killchild” by Bloom’s 
companions is analogous to the killing of the oxen (“cattle” 
is both more precise and more meaningful) of the god of 
light by Odysseus’ crew. It is the light and darkness symbol­
ism that both creates the Homeric correspondence and gives 
it the thematic function announced in Joyce’s letter: “Am 
working hard at Oxen of the Sun, the idea being the crime 
committed against fecundity by sterilizing the act of 
coition.”

That the author’s Bunyanesque statement is a reflection 
of the theme of the chapter is indicated not only by the 
Homeric correspondence but by the two-page “Sallustian-
Tacitean prelude” with which it opens as well. By virtue 
of its “Latin” idiom, this passage introduces the parodic 
delineation of the development of English. Actually, its 
Latinism is only a matter of words of Latin origin, a few 
Latinate neologisms, and the simulation of the inflected 
character of Latin by an almost impossibly compounded 
volution, phrase within phrase. It is much less important 
as a representation of the alien demi-source of English than
as a means of making extremely cryptic (by its involute syntax) an open declaration, on the first page, of the theme of the chapter. It is, in other words, a “scrambling” device.

The page is almost taken up by the initial paragraph of the “prelude,” which contains only one sentence and one question. Unscrambled, its word-order rearranged, the sentence begins:

Universally that person’s acumen is esteemed very little perceptive concerning whatsoever matters are being held as most profitably to be studied by mortals endowed with sapience who is ignorant of that which the most erudite in doctrine (and certainly by reason of that high mind’s ornament in them deserving of veneration) constantly maintain when they affirm, by general consent, that (other circumstances being equal) . . . (377)

And with the excess verbiage eliminated, this becomes merely: “He is not very wise who is ignorant that the wisest and most worthy men affirm that. . . .” The sage affirmation, which is the important part of the sentence and a key passage in the “prelude,” is more straightforward:

by no exterior splendour is the prosperity of a nation more efficaciously asserted than by the measure of how far forward may have progressed the tribute of its solicitude for that proliferant continuance which of evils the original if it be absent when fortunately present constitutes the certain sign of omnipollent [all-potent] nature’s incorrupted benefaction.

Both the principal social concern and the supreme moral good is “that proliferant continuance,” procreation. The viewpoint is that of Malachi: the greatest evil is the breakdown of the family and the familial line, the greatest good is its preservation. The question that follows is rhetorical. It begins by asking who is unaware that any “exterior splendour” may merely mask a dark degeneration, and that “every most just citizen” must “become the exhortator and admonisher of his semblables.” Joyce is presenting an apologia; he has put on the mantle of Malachi, and he is justifying himself. Thus, it concludes with the observation
that the "most just citizen" may well tremble for the future if the present state of things is so degenerate that a man would be:

audacious excessively . . . to rise affirming that no more odious offence can . . . be than to consign to oblivious neglect that evangel simultaneously command and promise [italics mine; compare the Book of Malachi] which irrevocably enjoined that exalted function of . . . pro-creating [,] with prophecy of abundance or with diminu- tion's menace [,] on all mortals?

Despite the manifest strain of irony in both the form and the burden of the "prelude," there is no doubt that the exaltation of "that proliferant continuance" is sincere within the limits of the chapter; Joyce speaks in his descriptive letter of the crime "against fecundity" of "sterilizing the act of coition." And it may be sincere beyond those limits. Joyce said to one of his sisters, "The most important thing that can happen to a man is the birth of a child," and told a friend that he could not "understand households without children. . . . To leave nothing behind, not to survive yourself—how sad!" 6 Another friend describes how he "wept in his cups when telling of the fertility of his fore-fathers . . . [and swore that] . . . he was still a young man and he would have more children before the end." 7 Even if this is embroidered, it must have some basis in truth. And so Joyce's personal attitude would seem to be in sympathy with the simple and old-fashioned values asserted in the Homeric correspondence, the cryptic "prelude," and the Bunyanesque moral denunciation of the whole group at the table. In any case, the theme of the chapter is literally that having a family is an exalted thing and man's cardinal responsibility, just as Malachi said.

There is no doubt that the revellers violate this moral imperative. As soon as Bloom joins the company, he hears a cry of pain from above, expresses his concern for Mrs. Purefoy to Lenehan, and observes that she will, however, be rewarded "by God His bounty." Lenehan's response is, "Expecting each moment to be her next," the quip he made in Kiernan's during the discussion of the desire of Jews
for male children. In the debate about the Roman Catholic injunction against killing a child to save its mother, the attitude of the company belies any concern for mothers and infants. At one point the drunken colloquy falls into hot controversy, "but the franklin Lenehan was prompt each when to pour them ale so that at the least way mirth might not lack." Stephen breaks in with a protest against the use of "Killchild," and his view is summarily rejected. Costello sings a snatch of a song mocking illegitimate pregnancy (385). When the others upbraid Costello (and Stephen for his judgment on the Virgin Birth, it is suggested), their epithets ("thou got in the peasestraw . . . thou dykedropt [born in a ditch], thou abortion thou"), are the true blasphemy in the context of the chapter. After more of such talk, the author condemns the "carnal concupiscence" of the company, but his statement is addressed to the reader, and the characters continue as they are. Mulligan is portrayed on his way from George Moore's soirée; he meets Bannon, Milly's inamorato, who speaks of her as "a skittish heifer," and they proceed to the hospital in the rain which has followed the thunder of God's voice. (Of this rain, the author remarks ominously that "those in ken say after wind and water fire shall come for a prognostication of Malachi's almanac"). When they arrive, Mulligan becomes once more in the novel the completely negative figure. His cynical joke about setting himself up as a "Fertiliser and Incubator" on a small island is a direct negation of the fundamental principle of procreation for the preservation of the family and the familial line. Then members of the company discuss girls and sexual escapades, Nurse Callan enters to announce the birth of the Purefoy baby and is accused of being pregnant, Mulligan "postulates as the supremest object of desire a nice clean old man," and there are pages devoted to discussion of abnormal births and infants. The predominant characteristic of the conversation throughout the chapter is its persistent correspondence to the slaughter of the sacred cattle of the sun.

Stephen and Bloom are not exempted from the condemnation of the company. It has been pointed out that Stephen protests against the use of contraception. He and Bloom do not laugh with the others at the bawdy humor that
follows the rejection of his protest. However, the reason he will not mock mothers and maternity is probably his sense of guilt with respect to his own mother; and although his protest against "spilling" by the use of "Killchild" explicitly calls it a sin against "the Holy Ghost, Very God, Lord and Giver of Life," he is as guilty of that sin as the others.

Bloom's reason for going to the hospital is "stark ruth of man," pity for Mrs. Purefoy, a reflection, not only of his mercy, but of his persistent concern throughout the novel with maternity. Upon arriving, he feels "with wonder women's woe in the travail that they have of motherhood" and expresses sympathy for Nurse Callan because her fiancé has died and she is still childless; then he declares his concern about Mrs. Purefoy to Lenehan and seats himself, "Woman's woe with wonder pondering"; when the Purefoy baby's birth is announced, he expresses his happiness, and the lack of reverence of the others shocks him. Nevertheless, he is the cardinal sinner among them. Not only has he just come from his "spilling," but it is more significant than any mere sexual escapade of one of the others: it represents surrender of his responsibility to maintain "that proliferant continuance," of his identity as husband and potential father. The others are sinning, but their lives are before them and they are losing no tangible good. Even Stephen's sin against fecundity is only one aspect of his defiance of God. Bloom loves only Molly and "Soon [he is] old." Furthermore, he not only, like Stephen, sins with full knowledge; he sins while exalting maternity and fecundity. Odysseus regards the sacred cattle of the sun with the proper reverence and is innocent of their slaughter. Bloom shares Odysseus' reverent attitude, but acts like the Achaean's sinful, and, consequently, destroyed, crew.

With the thematic burden of the chapter delineated, it is possible to reconsider its formal singularities more favorably. Its correspondence with the cattle of the sun episode of the Odyssey, the first item in Joyce's descriptive letter, is more obliquely drawn than most of the Homeric parallels in
the novel, but is a definite and fundamental vehicle of its theme. The letter speaks of it as "a nineparted episode without divisions introduced by a . . . prelude." If the "episode" indeed has a tenuously drawn representation of each of the nine months of pregnancy, it has quite meaningful "parts" as well, because, following the Latinate "prelude," its action has nine distinct phases. The first is Bloom's arrival at the hospital on Holles Street and the invitation to the party. The second is a description of the party. The third is devoted to Stephen and his pronouncements and ends with the Bunyanesque condemnation of him and all the others. The fourth is a short recapitulation of the situation in the language of "Pepys-Evelyn." The fifth is the "bull" discussion.

Mention of Mr. Deasy's letter on the hoof-and-mouth disease and its successful publication through the agency of Stephen, the "bullockbefriending bard," leads to a spirited and witty discussion of the Papal Bull of the English-born Adrian IV authorizing Henry II to "pacify" Ireland. This first English invasion (1169-1172) is the one spoken of by Mr. Deasy and the occasion of the defeat of Rory, the last High King. The "bull" is described in terms of its bovine homonym—as powerful, tyrannical, and extremely attractive to the Irish women; finally, all the Irish men leave for America in protest. The theme is the familiar one of the oppression of Ireland by England and the Church, and the cowardice of the people (the "women") in the face of it. The theme is not incongruous in the present chapter because the oppressor is unfruitful (the bull is really an ox), and because the discussion is an oblique reinforcement of the Homeric correspondence.

The sixth "part" of the action is the flippant and therefore blasphemous talk about sex, and is appropriately initiated by Mulligan's arrival at the gathering. The seventh is the discussion of childbirth and of abnormal infants and is initiated by the announcement of the birth of the Purefoy baby. The eighth deals with Mrs. Purefoy and her baby and Bloom's memory of Stephen as a little boy. The last begins with Stephen's shouted "Burke's!" and comprises the departure for Burke's public house, the drinking and conversation there, and the dissolution of the group after
the bar closes. Mulligan sneaks away from Stephen (419) to keep a rendezvous with Haines "at Westland row station at ten past eleven" (405), and Stephen facetiously asks for a "plais whear to lay crown off his bed 2 night." When the bar closes at eleven and most of the revellers pursue a fire brigade, Stephen arranges with Lynch to go to "night-town," the brothel district. Bloom has not gone off either, for Lynch asks who he is. Stephen answers him with a flippant blasphemy and, spotting an announcement of Dowie's forthcoming visit, ends the chapter with a colloquial homily parodying the American evangelist.

As Joyce's letter says, the nine "parts" of the chapter proper are not created by arbitrary physical "divisions." Instead, they are a natural delineation of its action. The thematic significance of the number is obvious: the chapter is a celebration of human procreation.

Also functional, both thematically and in terms of the action, is the sequence of parodies of English prose styles. Following the prefatory passage, appropriately in "Latin," the action begins, narrated "by way of" a parody of Old English verse. The sequence ends with Carlyle during the last part of the action, and is followed by the actual conversation of the group, which ends the chapter. It is the talk of well-educated and very drunk young men in 1904, full of slang, imitations of Negro, Scottish, Jewish, and Chinese speech, ellipsis and abbreviations; and it contrasts strikingly with the long series of parodies of earlier and more pleasing forms of English. This contrast is pointed out occasionally in the body of the chapter; for example, the Elizabethan railing against Stephen's blasphemies concludes "to shut up his drunken drool out of that like a curse of God ape." It is the contrast of stark reality. Thus it follows the (infant's) cry "Burke's!" in the ninth "part" (month), and is the language of the emergence of the group from the hospital (womb) into the world outside. The Latinate "prelude," sequence of parodies, and final conversation represents human conception, embryonic development, and birth. The chapter is structurally, and stylistically, a celebration of procreation. In his Homeric analogy, his disposition of the action, and his narrative "technique" as well, Joyce has reiterated the theme of the chapter.
But as a representation of procreation, the parodic history of the language is not worth the fuss it has engendered, and, perhaps, not even worth the effort. It accomplishes a great deal more. Like the nine-part structure, it is a functional element of the narrative itself. A critic has observed that the parodies, unlike those of "a self-effacing parodist—a Max Beerbohm," reveal primarily "himself—Joyce the Jacobean divine, Joyce the Restoration diarist, Joyce the Augustan essayist," etc. They do so because, as Joyce's letter states, the narrative is rendered by way of each parody in turn. Like so much else he has brought into the novel, Joyce is exploiting the subjects of his parodies to tell his story.

On the simplest level, the appropriateness of a large number of them makes a wedding of form and content. The satiric "bull" discussion is couched in the idiom of Swift both because of the Dean's advocacy of the Irish cause and because one of his most scathing attacks on the papacy uses the very same punning device (Section IV of A Tale of A Tub). The account of the rainstorm and the amatory gossip in the idiom of the Restoration diarists, the raillery against Stephen in that of an Elizabethan pamphleteer, Stephen's complaint to his nation "by way of" the Authorized Version, are similar examples of that appropriateness. Still, appropriateness is not necessity. The primary justification of the chapter's unusual principal device is Joyce's special exploitation of the appropriateness of the style of certain writers to certain subjects. A perfect example of this is the Bunyanesque denunciation of Stephen and then of the whole group. The author achieves here what he achieves in the involuted introductory passage: direct statement. Only he does so smoothly and inconspicuously. In precisely the same way, he is able to mockingly castigate Bloom "by way of" the pseudonymous polemical satirist "Junius" (402-3), pay tribute to the family and to parental love "by way of" the sentimental Dickens (413-14), and praise Purefoy as a father in the boisterous idiom of Carlyle (416-17). Each of these direct statements, judgments of Bloom, Stephen, the rest of the company, familial devotion, and Purefoy, must be made for the burden of the chapter to be communicated, just as
the introductory tribute to procreation and apologia for concern about it must be made. Joyce makes each statement through the mask of a style appropriate to it, and a style that is not only a ventriloquist disguise but integral to the chapter because it is an unobtrusive element in a chronological representation of English prose styles.

The cases of correspondence in the chapter enumerated toward the end of Joyce's description, beginning with "This progression is also linked back," warrant little attention. "The double thudding Anglo-Saxon motives [which] recur from time to time . . . to give the sense of the hoofs of oxen" is not only an unsuccessful device but a bit silly. Regarding the links with "foregoing episodes," "the natural stages of development in the embryo," and "the periods of . . . evolution": there are references to other chapters, not only in this, but in every chapter of the novel; babies and foetuses are constantly being discussed by virtue of the chapter's basic theme; and, except for a passing thought Bloom has of Darwin's "missing link" (400), there is no vestigial relic of a past anthropological age. The hospital is made to correspond to a womb, and Stephen's "Burke's!" at least permits Joyce's calling him "the embryo"; but in no meaningful sense is Bloom "the spermatozoon" or Nurse Callan "the ovum."

Nevertheless, the first part of Joyce's letter is a straightforward disclosure of the two important devices in the chapter. The sequence of parodies and the nine-part action are thematically functional, and, at the same time, they are essential elements of the narrative itself.

Although of secondary importance, the Purefoy baby is by no means irrelevant. His imminent birth is the reason for Bloom's presence, expressions of concern for the suffering mother, and praise of procreation. His ultimate advent is a reinforcement of the theme of the chapter. And it is the occasion of some important pronouncements by the author. The eighth "part" begins with a discussion of Mrs. Purefoy "by way of" an affectionate Dickens:
Reverently look at her as she reclines there with the motherlight in her eyes . . . in the first bloom of her new motherhood, breathing a silent prayer of thanksgiving to One above, the Universal Husband. And as her loving eyes behold her babe she wishes only one blessing more, to have her dear Doady there with her to share her joy . . . But their children are grouped in her imagination about the bedside, hers and his, Charley, Mary Alice, Frederick Albert (if he had lived), Mamy, Budgy (Victoria Frances), Tom, Violet Constance Louisa, darling little Bobsy . . . and now this last pledge of their union . . . And Doady, knock the ashes from your pipe . . . and dout the light whereby you read in the Sacred Book . . . and so with a tranquil heart to bed, to rest. He knows and will call in His own good time. You too have fought the good fight and played loyally your man's part. Sir, to you my hand. Well done, thou good and faithful servant! (413-14)

The satiric tone is apparent, but it is a genial and indulgent satire, with no trace of the undercutting irony which Joyce manages so well. Quite appropriately, for Dickens' sentimental idiom masks his own sentiments regarding the family; he himself commends the Purefoys ("pure in faith"), especially "Doady," who reads "the Sacred Book" and obeys its injunction.

Purefoy is the author's chief concern here because he and not Mina corresponds to the men in the chapter. The reader has learned already (401) of his devotion to Mina, mocked appropriately by one of the "slaughterers of the oxen," and of his paternal activity:

Her hub fifty odd and a methodist but takes the Sacrament and is to be seen any fair sabbath with a pair of his boys off Bullock harbour . . . trailing for flounder and pollock and catches a fine bag, I hear. (391)

The difference between Purefoy and the revellers is clear, and the contrast between him as a husband and father and Bloom's failure in both respects is pointed. Joyce presents a complete statement of his attitude toward Purefoy when he calls him the "remarkablest" father in the novel and
accords him singular and enthusiastic praise, "by way of" the idiom of Carlyle:

By heaven, Theodore Purefoy, thou hast done a doughty deed and no botch! Thou art, I vow, the remarkablist progenitor barring none in this chaffering allincluding most farraginous chronicle. Astounding! In her lay a Godframed Godgiven preformed possibility which thou hast fructified with thy modicum of man's work. . . . Thou art all their daddies, Theodore. Art drooping under thy load, bemoiled with butcher's bills at home and ingots (not thine!) in the countinghouse? Head up! . . . Dost envy Darby Dullman there with his Joan? A canting jay and a rheumeyed curdog is all their progeny. . . . Copulation without population! No, say I! Herod's slaughter of the innocents were the truer name. . . . Twenty years of it, regret them not. With thee it was not as with many that will and would and wait and never do. Thou sawest thy America, thy lifetask, and didst charge to cover like the transpontine bison. (416)

And in this pronouncement which concludes the progression of parodies there is no trace of even genial satire. Although the passage is a parody, the burden of "Carlyle's" panegyr-ric is so clearly the culmination of Joyce's thesis that even Thomas Carlyle's characteristic enthusiasm may be said to be adopted with thorough sincerity. Explicitly condemning both the young men, who perpetuate Herod's slaughter of the innocents, and Bloom, who will and would and waits and never does, Joyce has made a final restatement of the chapter's theme.

Purefoy is all the author says. Unlike the young revellers, Boylan, Dollard, Power, and so many others in the novel, he has a family. And unlike Simon Dedalus, Richie Goulding, the sailor in the sixteenth chapter (shelter) who has not been home for seven years and does not know his son's whereabouts, the money-lender Reuben J. Dodd who gave a man two shillings for saving his son's life, Bob Doran, Denis Breen, the childless Mr. Deasy, Martin Cunningham, and Mr. Lyster, unlike even Dignam, who finally succumbed to alcoholic saturation, he fulfils his responsibility to his family. In fact, Purefoy is the only character in the novel who does so—who is a good husband and father.
In the Latinate “prelude” to the chapter, Joyce declares that each man’s fulfilment of that responsibility is the sole basis for the prosperity of the nation. The fact that the men in the novel are the “citizens” of an impoverished captive country whose marriage and birth rates had been falling for half a century cannot be coincidental. Depicted again and again as without public courage, dignity, accomplishment, or hope, they also fail as fathers and husbands. The insistence on man’s responsibility to effect “that proliferant continuance” is not merely an element in the present chapter. Philosophically primitive, theologically simplistic, and politically obvious, it is nevertheless the principal assertion about the nature and conduct of man made thus far in this highly sophisticated novel.

Incapable of the ideal conduct of Purefoy, Bloom nevertheless understands its value. This difference from the men of the decaying society about him is what makes him the chief subject of the novel: what happens to him is worth relating because his fate at least is still to be determined. Analogous to Bloom as a man, Stephen as an artist may or may not realize his desire. The destinies of both are clearly related; and the climax and resolution of their compound story follows the decisions they make in the present chapter. There are some good omens: Stephen is the “bullockbefriending bard”; Bloom’s daughter works in Mullingar, a cattle-market town; and he himself worked in a Dublin cattle market, and has his scheme for a tramline for cattle; above all, the darkening sky which Stephen considered ominous during his meditation on the beach, and the “drouth” Bloom spoke of a few pages later, in his first moments in the novel, have been resolved in a fructifying rainstorm.

As the chapter opens, Bloom has just come from committing the consummate sin of onanism, his conduct on the beach after his apotheosis at Barney Kiernan’s constituting an eloquent statement that he is indeed “no one” as well as “Zeus.” His reverence for maternity and procreation is revealed as early as the sixth chapter (cemetery) to be a reflection of his awareness of his situation. Estranged from Molly, cut off before and behind, he must win back his wife and effect “that proliferant continuance” to save himself. His love for Molly and desire for a son, which have
persevered until now, are undiminished. Nothing “could ever efface the image of that voluptuousness,” the author says during this chapter; and on the very next page, Bloom expresses bewilderment that:

a child of normally healthy parents and seemingly a healthy child and properly looked after succumbs unaccountably in early childhood (though other children of the same marriage do not) . . . (412)

Nevertheless, on the beach he surrendered to his predicament and relinquished his aspiration. Thus, when he expresses inwardly his objection to the derisive treatment of maternity by the others, the author roundly denounces him “by way of” the scathing Junius:

But with what fitness . . . has this alien . . . constituted himself the lord paramount of our internal polity? . . . It ill becomes him to preach that gospel. Has he not nearer home a seedfield that lies fallow for the want of a ploughshare? . . . The lewd suggestions of some faded beauty may console him for a consort neglected and debauched but this new exponent of morals and healer of ills is at his best an exotic tree which, when rooted in its native orient, throve and flourished and was abundant in balm but . . . its roots have lost their quondam vigour. . . . (402-3)

The cause of Bloom’s outrageous conduct, his alienation from Molly, is the chief subject of attack. Her adultery is excused if not justified, and he is mocked again and again for pretending to be a messiah, to regenerate others (“a censor of morals,” “pelican,” “preach that gospel”).

Despite his sinfulness, Bloom is still messianic. The concern for Mrs. Purefoy that takes him to the hospital is called “stark ruth of man”; entering the room, Mulligan notices the sardines and bread on the table and him simultaneously, and they are called “loaves and fishes”; less overt is the suggestion of the Last Supper in his pouring ale for Lenehan who, having directly caused his “crucifixion,” is analogous to Judas.
It has been pointed out that, in the context of the Book of Malachi, Bloom as Messiah should lead himself to a reunion with his wife and “turn his heart” to his son. Shortly after Junius’ denunciation, he faces his predicament. “Ruminating, chewing the cud of reminiscence,” he “beholdeth” himself as a boy, and as a young salesman for his father bringing home “many a commission to the head of the firm seated . . . in the paternal ingle.” Then “the young knighterrant recedes”; “Now he is himself paternal and these about him might be his sons.”

The passage is a reiteration of the idea of the familial line, the “proliferant continuance,” which is presented in the sixth chapter in Bloom’s thoughts about Rudy’s coffin and his father’s deathbed. His father is dead, and the young men are not his sons. He is neither the son nor the father of his vision. In the phrase used when he recognized his situation in the earlier chapter, “nobody owns” him. By now, he has become fully aware of the relationship between his familial isolation and his alienation from Molly (onanism), for his “rumination” continues with the prostitute Bridie Kelly, his first sexual partner:

Together . . . they hear the heavy tread of the watch as two raincape shadows pass the new royal university. Bridie! Bridie Kelly! He will never forget the name, ever remember the night, first night, the bridenight. They are entwined in nethermost darkness, the willed with the willed, and in an instant (fiat) light shall flood the world.

But his youthful relationship with “the whore of the lane” (as he called her at the end of the eleventh chapter) was “Carnal Concupiscence,” and so:

Did heart leap to heart? Nay, fair reader. . . . She is the bride of darkness, a daughter of night. She dare not bear the sunnygolden babe of day. No, Leopold! Name and memory solace thee not. . . . No son of thy loins is by thee. There is none now to be for Leopold what Leopold was for Rudolph. (406-7)

The next paragraph depicts the journey of Bloom’s soul “over regions of cycles of cycles of generations that have
lived,” to a view of Molly and Milly. But there is no re-
union: “They fade, sad phantoms: all is gone. Agendath
is a waste land. . . .” And the paragraph ends with a
depiction of the “murderers of the sun” tramping to the
Dead Sea, the symbol in the fourth chapter (kitchen) of
absolute sterility, to attempt to slake their thirst.

Feeling so powerfully the bleakness of his situation and
prospects, Bloom does not reassert his claim on Molly, but
instead gives up any hope of having a son; he understands
that the way of Bridie Kelly is fruitless, onanism, and
sees Molly as lost to him. And overtly, although not con-
sciously, he seeks a substitute in Stephen. During the ride
to the cemetery, he thought of Dedalus as “Full of his
son” and envied him. At the beginning of the present
chapter, he gives three reasons for staying with the boister-
ous company: he is tired, they are treating him well, and
“he bore fast friendship to sir Simon and to this his son
Stephen.” Two pages later, his attitude is more manifest.
Rudy is mentioned, then:

and now sir Leopold that had of his body no manchild
for an heir looked upon him his friend’s son . . . and as
sad as he was that him failed a son of such gentle cour-
age (for all accounted him of real parts) so grieved he
also in no less measure for young Stephen for that he
lived riotously with those wastrels and murdered his
goods with whores. (384)

This passage at the beginning of the chapter joins with one
at the end, which expresses the crystallization of Bloom’s
attitude toward Stephen, to straddle the chapter. He is
thinking of a party attended by himself and Molly during
their youth:

And yonder about that grey urn where the water moves
. . . you saw . . . Floey, Atty, Tiny, and their darker
friend with I know not what of arresting in her pose
then. . . . A lad of four or five in linseywoolsey . . .
is standing on the urn secured by that circle of girlish
fond hands. He frowns a little just as this young man
does now. . . . (415)
Bloom’s bald association of the young Stephen and Molly is followed almost immediately by Stephen’s cry “Burke’s!” and the exodus of the revellers from the hospital. At the bar, Bloom witnesses Mulligan’s sneaking away and Stephen’s inquiry about a berth for the night. When the other revellers chase the fire brigade and Stephen and Lynch arrange to visit a brothel, Lynch notices a third party:

Whisper, who the sooty hell’s the johnny in the black duds? Hush! Sinned against the light and even now that day is at hand when he shall come to judge the world by fire. Pflaap! [The fire brigade.] Ut implerentur scripturae. (420)

Stephen has mentioned both aspects of Bloom’s identity. Bloom has, in terms of the symbolic meaning of “light” in the chapter, “sinned against the light,” and he is the messiah come “in order that the scriptures may be fulfilled.” The combination of phrases from Isaiah 66:15 and 16 (“the Lord will come with fire,” “by fire will the Lord judge”) in Stephen’s statement reinforces the messianic identification.

Bloom has sinned against the light, and his attitude toward Stephen does not affect his sin. Stephen is not his son. This is a simple fact, and an uncompromising one. If he is to implement the fulfilment of the scriptures, the promise of Isaiah and Malachi—if he is to rescue both Stephen and himself—he must turn Stephen’s heart to his “father” and reunite himself with his family.

Regarding Stephen, the author has presented in the chapter a concise recapitulation of the “father” aspect of his self-destroying dilemma: Stephen’s complaint against his country and his Church, and his defiance of God. He has also explicitly stated that Stephen can achieve the “flight” that will save him only by worshipping God (finding “holiness”), and that he can do so only with God’s grace. This is not a surprising religious doctrine but, introduced in a novel, it prescribes a surprising development in the action—the dramatic representation of the granting or withholding of grace. Such a representation is possible in *Ulysses*, however, because its principal character has been identified
as the Messiah, the agent of God’s grace. That Bloom is on a messianic errand in his pursuit of Stephen is indicated ironically, not only in Stephen’s flippant identification of Bloom, but in the parody of Elijah-Dowie with which he ends the chapter. Stephen’s mock-sermon is inspired by an inquiry from Lynch about Dowie, one that echoes the inquiry about Bloom that directly precedes it. In the context the “Elijah” of the last words of the chapter can only be Bloom, and the sinner addressed in the sermon can only be Stephen himself, the rebel against God. The italics are my own:

Christicle, who’s this excrement yellow gospeller on the Merion hall? Elijah is coming. Washed in the Blood of the Lamb. . . . Come on, you triple extract of infamy! . . . The Deity ain’t no nickel dime bum-show. I put it to you that he’s on the square and a corking fine business proposition. He’s the grandest thing yet and don’t you forget it. . . . You’ll need to rise precious early, you sinner there, if you want to diddle the Almighty God. . . . He’s got a cough-mixture with a punch in it for you, my friend, in his backpocket. Just you try it on. (420-21)

Neither deliverer nor infidel is aware that Stephen’s flippant blasphemy is the exhortation of the one to the other. But the chapter ends as Bloom, conforming to the prediction of Malachi Mulligan at the end of the first part of the novel, covets Stephen, and prepares to follow him to nighttown.

Bloom has achieved understanding of the interrelation of the two elements of a man’s family. His unconscious substitution of Stephen for the son he has lost hope of having, the product of desperation, is a bizarre manifestation of yearning for the family he sees denied him, of undiminished service to the absolute value that constitutes the chapter’s thematic burden. This aspiration to the good on the part of the sinner Bloom, which distinguishes him from the other sinners in the chapter (and in the novel), may have its reward, for his pursuit of his projected foster-son takes him to nighttown. And since the familyless man who has put away his wife and spilled his seed is also the bearer of divine grace, the desperate impulse of the one Bloom to create a false family is the instrument for advancing the
action to the critical point in the novel at which the other Bloom, potential deliverer of both familyless man and "fatherless" boy, contends with the place of sterile brothels, the city of the night.

6. Quoted from *James Joyce*, p. 212. The sister is Eva Joyce, the friend, Louis Gillet.
8. Levin, p. 106.