

## Session 6 "Eumaeus," "Ithaca," "Penelope" (Chapters 16 – 18)

Episodes 13-15 have prepared us for Return of Bloom and, as I noted last time, that return is to be a true *homecoming*, as Bloom at day's end comes back to 7 Eccles Street and, indeed, to Molly in her bed, the very scene with which Bloom's day began in Chapter 4 (he was boiling water for Molly in "Calypso" as he boils water for Stephen in "Ithaca"). The narrative of that homecoming is rendered in increasingly consolidated fashion as we move from the crowded chaos of "Circe," with its realistic and surrealistic evocations of urban nightlife, through the relative calm of the still-public cabman's shelter of "Eumaeus" to Bloom's actual re-entering of his house in "Ithaca," where he welcomes Stephen into his home for a private conversation.

The keynote of "Ithaca," the novel's second-to-last chapter, is **doubleness**, as the expansive focus of *Ulysses* narrows itself to the interview between Bloom and Stephen and then to the complementary pairing of Molly and Bloom. Images of twos abound: the men are characterized as a "duumvirate" who follow "parallel" courses (544); they are a "keyless couple" (546) whose "preexisting acquaintance" is "proved" by two previous encounters (556); there are two chairs in Bloom's sitting room, marked by "significances of similitude" (580); Bloom beholds himself in a mirror which reveals that he has up to now resembled his "maternal procreatrix" and will in the future "increasingly resemble his paternal procreator" (581); and there are two conversations in the chapter, one between Bloom and Stephen, the other between Molly and Bloom.

The two men do some things side by side, with marked differences: they write in "juxtaposition," but Bloom does so in Hebrew while Stephen writes in Irish (563); they urinate while standing below Molly's window, with Bloom thinking in physical terms and Stephen in sacerdotal ones (577). By contrast, throughout "Ithaca" they do other things face-to-face, in mirror fashion— "Silent, each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces" (577)—as when they "take leave, one of the other, in separation:

Standing perpendicular at the same door and on different sides of its base, the lines of their valedictory arms, meeting at any point and forming any angle less than the sum of two right angles. (578)

More strikingly, doubleness informs the style and tone of the episode, which is written in the catechistic form of question and answer, and which extends the Joycean technique of two-eyed perspective that we have discussed throughout the series. This perspective is seen in the yoking of