CHAPTER FIVE

SPATIAL CYCLES:
II—THE CROSS

I: SUCH CROSSING IS ANTICHRISTIAN
OF COURSE (114.11)

Just as the minor cycles of *Finnegans Wake* are typified in and defined by the great cycle of the whole book, so the many cross-symbols are all variants of a pair of great archetypal crosses stretching across the total structure. These are the two meeting points of the radically opposed orbits of Shem and Shaun which I have been discussing in the previous chapter. As with the circles, so with the crosses: Joyce is not content simply to suggest the abstract idea of nodal points at which contraries meet, but makes every effort to lay out the evolving material in a structural pattern which will reproduce the spatial image as closely as possible in terms of the physical disposition of the pages of the book.

The source on which Joyce calls most particularly is Plato’s *Timaeus* but in fact the Yeatsian context of the most obvious allusions to it suggests that Joyce actually came to the *Timaeus* through *A Vision*. Whatever his direct source may have been, Joyce treated the Platonic theme as he did Vico and Blavatsky and used the theories for all he was worth. The description in the *Timaeus* of the creation of the World-Soul, if not the archetype of this particular mystic symbol in western literature, is at least one of its most important early appearances:\footnote{Plato, *The Timaeus*, ed. with notes by R. D. Archer-Hind, London, 1888, pp. 111-13.}

Next he cleft the structure... lengthwise into two halves, and
laying the two so as to meet in the centre in the shape of the letter X, he bent them into a circle and joined them, causing them to meet themselves and each other at a point opposite to that of their original contact: and he comprehended them in the motion that revolves uniformly on the same axis, and one of the circles he made exterior and one interior. The exterior motion he named the motion of the Same, the interior that of the Other. And the circle of the Same he made revolve to the right by way of the side, that of the Other to the left by way of the diagonal’. (36 B, C)

It is clear that *Finnegans Wake* is woven out of two such strands of World-Soul, represented by the Shem–Shaun polarity. There are two extremes to the function of this polarity, between which the line of development swings to and fro: when their orbits are in close proximity they war with each other and—at a moment of exact equilibrium—even manage to amalgamate, while at the other extreme there is total incomprehension and a failure to communicate, symbolised by the point of farthest separation of the orbits. The two structural meeting-points are at the coincident beginning and end, I.1 and IV, and at the centre, II.3—that is, diametrically opposed on the sphere of development. The strands spread out from the initial point of contact—the conversation of Mutt and Jeff, who have just met—widen throughout Book I and converge until they meet once more during the Butt and Taff episode, at the end of which they momentarily fuse, only to cross over and separate again during Book III before the final meeting (identical with the first) when Muta and Juva converse. ‘Mutt and Jeff’ and ‘Muta and Juva’ are the same event looked at from opposite sides; the book begins and ends at one of the two nodal points, while, when Joyce has cut the circles and stretched them out flat, the other nodal point falls exactly in the centre of the fabric. Represented in this way, the basic structure of *Finnegans Wake* thus looks rather like a figure 8 on its side, which forms the ‘zeroic couplet’ (284.11) ∞, or the symbol for ‘infinity’.

The divergence of the orbits in the first half of the book (which, it will be noted, coincides with the first dream-cycle) reaches
its extreme at the end of the ‘Anna Livia’ chapter (I.8), where the river has grown so broad that all communication across it from bank to bank has become impossible. The two washer-women, forms of Shem and Shaun, stand isolated as the mute tree and stone; this is the ‘Night!’ of the soul, a total failure to connect. The two were already so distant in the previous chapter (I.7) as to be reduced to the unsatisfactory procedure of hurling abuse from side to side; the communication is still still no more than verbal during the children’s singing-games in the chapter following I.8. Only in II.2 are they close enough to come to blows, while the really cataclysmic conflict does not arise until II.3. This, the longest chapter in *Finnegans Wake*, is the most important of all, the nodal point of the major themes, a clearing-house and focus for motifs. Only Book IV and the opening pages, preparing the way for a new cycle, can compare with II.3 in this respect. In many respects this chapter forms a parallel with the ‘Circe’ chapter of *Ulysses*. They both develop a strong situation which is phantasmagoric, horrific, and bestial in nature; each ends with ariotous exodus late at night; each leads to a vision of lost youth. The crucial visions in Circe’s glass have their equivalent in the images on the Earwickers’ television-screen, and even the symbolic fusing of two faces into that of Shakespeare (U 536) is exactly paralleled by the fusion of the faces of Butt and Taff into that of HCE (349). But above all, each is the central expressionistic development of themes, on to which Joyce made his material converge and toward which he himself worked during the process of composition. The last part of *Ulysses* was drafted before ‘Circe’ was completed, and, except for the short coda formed by Book IV, chapter II.3 was the last part of *Finnegans Wake* to be written.\(^1\)

During the first half-cycle, until the central meeting, Shem’s strand is in the ascendancy. Book I is characterised by an excess of ‘Shemness’ over ‘Shaunness’. The ‘Cad’ or ‘Assailant’ gets the better of his victims; the Letter is written, discussed,

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Spatial Cycles: II—The Cross

and taken very seriously; Shem obviously wins a moral victory in I.7; Anna Livia, who favours Shem, is mistress of all. In Book III the victories are all Shaun’s. The two have crossed over and changed places, as they do in II.2, which is the clearest single-chapter epitome of this overall structure and which contains most of the direct allusions to the Platonic model.

The central passage of II.2—where the marginal notes are allowed to dissolve into the main body of the text before their reappearance with exchange of tone—corresponds to the central point of contact on the sphere of development; here, in a single six-page sentence with neither initial capital nor final stop, Joyce bewilderingly fuses and confuses the personalities of the superior and inferior sons who represent in this instance the superior and inferior elements of spiritual and profane love: Patrick’s love for Ireland and for his God, and Tristram’s for himself and for Iseult. Throughout the book Patrick and Tristram are made to correspond, since each comes twice to Ireland and each has a mission to fulfil on the occasion of the second visit, but in the middle of II.2 they have become inextricably mixed. That in disposing his materials in this way Joyce had the *Timaeus* in mind is made clear by the inclusion of a whole shower of allusions to it. At 288.03, in particular, the creator-artist is said to be ‘doublecressing twofold thruths’—the epical ferged cheque which he foists on the world is rendered doubly ‘Not Negotiable’, a hermetically sealed entity, like Plato’s outline of a ‘taylorised world’ of ‘celestine circles’ (356.10; 191.15). The double-crossing theme is ubiquitous. At 60.33 a Restoration Lord and his Lady cross and turn twice in one of those dances that link Age to Age in *Finnegans Wake*:¹

‘Dauran’s lord (“Sniffpox”) and Moirgan’s lady (“Flatterfun”) took sides and crossed and bowed to each other’s views and recrossed themselves.’

Shaun reminds us of the theme at 305.L1: ‘The Twofold Truth and the Conjunctive Appetites of Oppositional Orexes’, and of course the World-Soul is depicted geometrically in the two circles of

¹ See below, Chapter Eight, I.
the figure on page 293. The circles, 'the wonderlost for world hips' (363.23) are defined as 'that most improving of round-shows', Anna's 'Westend' (292.05). To ensure that his intention shall be quite unambiguous, Joyce makes undistorted use of the terminology of the Timaeus at 300.20, where Shem and Shaun are called the 'Other' and the 'Same' respectively, while the 'Other', as in Plato, is made to move to the left 'with his sinister cyclopses'. These are the 'twinnt Platonic yearlings' (292.30) whose mutual rotation is described as 'spirals' wobbles pursuing their rovinghamilton selves'.

Plato's description continues:

'And he gave supremacy to the motion of the same and uniform, for he left that single and undivided; but the inner circle he cleft into seven unequal circles in the proportion of the double and triple intervals severally, each being three in number; and he appointed that the circles should move in opposite directions, three at the same speed, the other four differing in speed from the three and among themselves, yet moving in a due ratio'.

(36 C, D)

Traditionally 'right' stood in the column of superior things, 'left' in the column of the inferior.\(^1\) Shem is the illegitimate underdog. His association with the left-turning part of the cosmic gyres is taken up again at 462.34: 'quinquisecular cycles . . . showman's sinister', while the whole theme of the Same and Other, the rational and the irrational, the spiritual and the corporeal, is developed still further in Book IV, during the Berkeley–Patrick discussion (611–12). The seven bands of the Other (Shem–Berkeley) are represented by the seven colours of the spectrum, while the unity of the Same, the 'undivided reawlity' of 292.31 returns as the white light of 'Same Patholic' (611.10). Just as the Other, or differentiated band of the World-Soul, revolves within the Same, so the circle of colours is contained within white light, while the rainbow's 'inferiority' is compensated for by the fact that it is the 'inside true inwardness of reality' (611.21). But, in any case, with a more penetrating view the opposition of white light to rainbow

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disappears, and their puzzling identity gives rise to the ‘farst wriggle from the ubivence, whereom is man, that old offender, nother man, wheile he is asame’ (356.12; my italics).

II: DECUSSAVIT EUM IN UNIVERSO

(Justin Martyr)

Plato calls his ‘World-Soul’ the ‘Son of the Father’ and tends to treat it anthropomorphically; Joyce, who can always be relied upon to go much further than his models, identifies his all-too-human Son of the Father, Shaun, with the World-Soul, thus allowing him to subsume even his opposite, Shem, with whom he ultimately comes to be identified, just as white light subsumes the spectrum. In a tremendously creative hour—the rich and extraordinary chapter III.3—Joyce develops the theme of Shaun as the hitherto ‘uncreated conscience of the race’. If any chapter can be singled out for its powerfully seminal qualities then surely this is it. It has too often been supposed that Joyce champions only Shem, while he reviles Shaun, but the text will not support such a reading. The mature Joyce had come a long way since his Dedalian Artist v. Bourgeois days, and he saw much good in common, stupid, handsome, boastful Shaun. When laid out on the orangemound—his ‘corruptive mund’ (300.24)—in the form of a cross (474–5),¹ Shaun functions as Christ at the same time as he stands in for the stupid ass whose crossed back is said to be a reminder of the sacrificial burden it bore to Jerusalem. (Justin Martyr held that Christ was symbolised in the ‘decussation’ itself—the meeting of the spiritual and the corporeal, of time and eternity.) Shaun is himself the peel off the old Orangeman, Earwicker, who, in Part III of the opening prelude, had been ‘laid to rust upon the green since devlinsfirst loved livvy’ (3.23). The four neo-evangelists stand one at each extremity of this vegetating human quincunx and gradually approach its centre, the axis mundi, his ‘neverstop navel’, from which types and forms of everyone and

¹ Cf. ‘crossknoll’ (552.23).
everything in *Finnegans Wake* are to spring. The multiplication sign made by Shaun’s orange-peel figure on the knoll is ultimately identical with the most fertile of all crosses in *Finnegans Wake* which gleams on Anna’s gold-bronze belly:

‘with antifoulng butterscatch and turfentide and serpenwhole and with leafmould she ushered round prunella isles and eslats dun, quincecunct, allover her little mary. Peeld gold of waxwork her jellybelly and her grains of incense anguille bronze.’ (206.33)

One of the most obvious symbolic crosses in *Finnegans Wake* is that which Joyce assigns to the Four Old Men (119.28). This, a quincunx, is defined by five points (as its name implies), the fifth of which—the central point—represents the Donkey on whom they all four ride (557.02). The Donkey is the ‘carryfour . . . their happyass cloudious’, or the crossroads on which they converge (581.22). He is also, among other forms, the trump card placed at the centre of the bridge-table and therefore more important than any of the four suits (476.17). It is well known that the Donkey is always closely associated with Johnny (a form of Shaun) who, at the beginning of III.3, is himself identified as ‘a crossroads puzzler’ (475.03). On page 602, as Mrs. Glasheen points out,¹ the Donkey and Shaun are merged. It is therefore apparent that the figure on whom the Four are converging in III.3 is to be identified with the mysterious Donkey as well as with Shaun.²

With its constant Protean shifts of tone and scene, III.3 is probably the most complex and tortuous chapter of all, even more so than the difficult ‘Scene in the Public’ (II.3) which, unlike this chapter, revolves around a strong central dramatic situation. The way to the midpoint of the cross is a wearying one, for the paths are those of a maze: ‘as hour gave way to mazing hour’ (477.27). The Old Artificer stood Joyce in good stead in more ways than one when the time came to write *Finnegans Wake*. While for many years the rabblemint hissed and accused him of having wrought for material gain and notoriety the obscene

¹ Census, p. 42.
² Cf. the counterpoint of John and the Ass in Tables II and III, above.
Spatial Cycles: II—The Cross

wooden cow of *Ulysses*, Joyce was patiently putting together the all but impenetrable labyrinth of *Finnegans Wake*. The term 'labyrinth' has been applied to the book with tiresome regularity, but there is rather more to the comparison than Joyce's celebrated identification of himself with Daedalus might at first suggest, for Daedalus' maze, the archetype of all works of art for Joyce (as *Finnegans Wake* was to be the ultimate work), was said to be constructed in the form of a quincuncial cross—symbol of the structure of *Finnegans Wake*. The constantly frustrated strivings of the Four to reach the centre of the cross are neatly fore-shadowed in one of the short passages which appear to have been unintentionally omitted from the text of I.6: *'Fors Forsennat Finds Clusium'* (142.24). Lars Porsena's labyrinth at Clusium and Daedalus' on Crete are of course analogous in *Finnegans Wake* and both are concrete, visual representations of the problems which confront the senate of Four in their search for a clue to the real Shaun in III.3. Joyce is careful, as always, to assure his bewildered reader that in constructing the labyrinth he incorporated the essential thread to guide the understanding: 'A coil of cord.' (433.28)

'A posy cord. We have wounded our way on foe tris prince till that force in the gill is faint afarred and the face in the treebark feigns afear.' (278.24).

The supine Shaun's navel is the omphalos-like Stone of Divisions in old Royal Meath in the centre of Ireland, and hence it lies at the centre of Joyce's Irish universe. This stone, on old Uisnach Hill, is named at 476.05: 'the knoll Asnoch'.

The idea of Shaun as the Irish landscape is delightfully extended

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1 Cf. the Daedalian question in one of Joyce's notebooks: 'If a man hacking in fury at a block of wood make there an image of a cow (say) has he made a work of art?', H. Gorman, *James Joyce*, London, 1949, p. 99.

2 See, for example, Sir Thomas Browne, *The Garden of Cyrus*, C. Sayle (ed.), *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1912, p. 163. (It is impossible to determine which edition of Browne Joyce used, but this well known text seems as likely as any.)


4 See also Appendix B.

5 In the first fair copy of this chapter the word 'Asnoch' reads 'Uisnach'; British Museum Add. MS 47484 A, f. 5.
on pages 474–6, which contain some of the best descriptive writing in *Finnegans Wake*. Royal Meath—created when Tuathal the Legitimate cut off a portion from each of the four other provinces at the Stone of Divisions in the second century—formed a fifth, central, and supreme province, making a geographical equivalent to Joyce’s cross with its important central point. Shaun is superimposed on all five provinces:

‘Aseared themselves were to wonder at the class of a crossroads puzzler he would likely be, length by breadth nonplussing his thickness, ells upon ells of him, making so many square yards of him, one half of him in Conn’s half but the whole of him nevertheless in Owenmore’s five quarters.’ *(475.03)*

The male figure laid out thus to represent the universe and suggesting the analogy of a human microcosm is of course a very old and well-tried device which was strikingly illustrated in such works as those of Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, where the body is often drawn with Renaissance accuracy over an ancient schema of the firmament. The central point of the human cross thus formed is as often the genitals as the navel:\footnote{1 Sir Thomas Browne, *The Garden of Cyrus*, p. 181; for a series of drawings in which navel and phallus share the honour of forming the central point, see H. C. Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, [Cologne], 1533, pp. CLXI–CLXVI. Joyce had read Agrippa; see Atherton, p. 233; AP 256.}{1}

\footnote{2 See Frontispiece.}{2}


In any case, for Joyce navel and genitals are equivalent; they are contraries—the beginning and the end of birth—
and so coincide. In the diagram on page 293 the navel and genitalia are respectively the upper and lower vertices of the central rhombus. Dolph, with the mystical power which enables him to bring about the coincidence of antitheses, lifts ‘by her seam hem and jabote at the spidiest of her trikkikant . . . the maidsapron of our A. L. P. . . . till its nether nadir is vortically where . . . its navel’s napex will have to beandbe.’

(297.08)

Shaun’s navel, like that of Vishnu,¹ is as much a centre of generation as is Shem’s lifewand, and becomes confused with his phallus throughout III.3. The lascivious and perverted Four are in fact involved in producing an erection from the lethargic Shaun, whose initial slackness seems to be implied in the opening description: ‘on the verge of closing time’.² Shaun’s location on the fuming dungheap, Joyce’s symbol for the fertile primordial Chaos, establishes him as an incarnation of the First Cause—‘take your mut for a first beginning, big to bog’ (287.05)—while his relationship to the Four and their necessary function of calling forth the latent material within him suggests the relationship of First Cause to the four Second Causes. In his James Joyce’s Ulysses, Mr. Stuart Gilbert comments on the navel, presumably with Joyce’s authority³:

‘The Ancients placed the astral soul of man, the ἐνυχή or his self-consciousness, in the pit of the stomach. The Brahmins shared this belief with Plato and the other philosophers . . . The navel was regarded as ‘the circle of the sun’, the seat of internal divine light’ [Isis Unveiled, xlv.] Similarly, Hermes Trismegistus held that the midst of the world’s body is exactly beneath the centre of heaven, and Robert Fludd has written: Mundi circularis centrum est terra: humana vero rotunditas punctum centrale est secundum quosdam in umbilico. This portion of the body, the navel, has, partly for symbolic reasons, been associated by esoteric writers with the source of prophetic inspiration, as when Pythia was styled ventriloqua vates.’

² Cf. French verge.
Furthermore, since Shaun is here to be identified with the ass, we must bear in mind that ‘Ass’ was a name of the Egyptian Sun-God\(^1\); that it is also Old Norse word for God\(^2\); and that Vishnu, with his fertile umbilicus, is himself a Sun-God.\(^3\) The combined phallicumbilical fertility of Shaun is dramatically worked out in the big climax at 499–501, which is plainly orgasmic and is surrounded with sexual suggestion:

‘there’s leps of flam in Funnycoon’s Wick.’ (499.13)  
‘D’yu mean to sett there where y’are now, coddlin your supernumerary leg, wi’that bizar tongue in yur tolkshap, and your hindies and shindies, like a muck in a market, Sorley boy, repeating yursel.’ (499.19)  
‘with all that’s buried ofsin insince insensed insidesofme.’ (499.25)  
‘Act drop. Stand by! Blinders! Curtain up. Juice, please! Foots!’ (501.07)

This exciting moment, led up to be a tremendous acceleration of the dialogue, is the principal focus of the chapter. After the cataclysm, life begins once more to climb out of the womb of absolute zero. Frosty imagery abounds, and it gradually becomes apparent that we have now been precipitated into the Ginninga-Gap of the Eddas.\(^4\) Yawn, perhaps to be identified now with the recumbent Ymir, the original Rime-Giant, then proceeds to describe Yggdrasil, the World-Tree, which, by his choice of language, he manages to relate to virtually every other symbolic tree. Since we are dealing here with the springing of all experience from a First Cause, one of the most important of these other growths is the Tree of Jesse (502.03) which, in mediaeval art, sometimes luxuriates out of the supine Jesse’s phallus, just as the lotus-flower—the ‘family umbroglia, (284.04)—bursts from Shaun-Vishnu’s umbilicus.\(^5\) Allusions to Darwin and the *Origin of Species* carry the family tree further.

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2. Atherton, p. 221.  
4. SK 45.  
Spatial Cycles: II—The Cross

The great tree springing from the centre of the quincunx on the orange-mound of Ireland emulates the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil which grew in the centre of Eden: ‘this tree of... garerden’ (350.02). But the fateful tree planted in Paradise has traditionally been considered a symbolic precursor of the cross-tree placed on Calvary, and so Joyce’s tree is given as much the aspect of a gallows as of a living tree (‘Tyburn’, 504.24). That Christ’s cross is here intended is made apparent by the inclusion of many of the supplementary symbols which Christian iconography frequently associates with the Cross, such as the skull at the foot (504.25) and the sun and the moon above (504.36). Thus a vertical cross has grown out of the centre of a horizontal one; the fertile quincuncial ‘multiplication’ sign is doing its work.

Shaun, crucified on the midden, may seem to form a crux immissa—the now traditional Cross of Christ—as easily as a Cross of St. Anthony. At 377.23 the Four are described as ‘interprovincial crucifixioners’, and since the Christian Cross, when horizontal, is always symbolically oriented toward the east, Johnny (west) is at the lower or earthy end of it, consistent with Paracelsus’ equation of west and the human buttocks.¹ And if Johnny is isolated at the end of the long arm of a cross, we have one amusing enough reason for his continual tardiness: not only is he encumbered with his slow-moving ass, but he has farther to go, like Thursday’s child, Shaun-son-of-Thunder, who makes his long pilgrimage out of the night of Book III.

The Old Men’s cross is most often called a ‘quincunx’. The word is attractive to Joyce because it can readily be made to suggest both a sexual vulgarism and the ‘Tunc’ page of the Book of Kells (folio 124r). This page, bearing part of the text of the Crucifixion—Tunc crucifixerunt XPI cum eo duos latrones—is in fact illustrated in the lower half by a large crux decussata. The allusions to it which are heard again and again throughout Finnegans Wake are always associated with the cross of the Four and with the female organ.² The clearest association of

¹ See Census, p. 42.
² Atherton, pp. 54, 66.
Spatial Cycles: II—The Cross

‘quincunx’, ‘Tunc’, etc., is at 278.Li: ‘Pitchcap and triangle, noose and tincture’. The last word here is plainly ‘quincunx’, and thus the four symbols named are those for Shaun (∧), ALP (△), the ‘Twelve’ (⊙), and the ‘Four’ (×). Mr. Atherton has many interesting things to say about Joyce’s conception of Original Sin as God’s sexual fall entailed in the act of Creating.1 The further implication in his use of ‘Tunc’ seems to be that Christ’s ‘fall’ on the cross, far from redeeming Adam’s sexual fall, is in fact to be identified with it and with the fall of God the Father. Joyce was always contemptuous of Christ’s virginity2:

‘He was a bachelor . . . and never lived with a woman. Surely living with a woman is one of the most difficult things a man has to do, and he never did it’.

By his implied variations on the story of the Gospels Joyce rewrites the New Testament to correspond with the Old even more closely than the mediaevalists could have wished. This cross on the ‘Tunc’ page, already heavily loaded with symbolic significance, is expanded to cosmic proportions in Book IV, where Joyce makes it represent the quincunxes in Plato’s World-Soul. The first word of the paragraph in which the ‘inferior’ meeting of the Same and the Other takes place is in fact ‘Tunc’ (611.04).

The cross with Shaun or the ass at its centre recurs in at least one other important symbolic variation. This is the ‘puss-in-the-corner’ motif. The Skeleton Key glosses the allusion to it at 278.06 as a ‘frightful animal-demon in Irish fairy tale, here suggestive of Finnegans Fear’.3 I can find no evidence of the existence of a legendary demon with such a name and in any case ‘Finnegan fear’ does not seem to be suggested by the context. Much more important, certainly, is the children’s game called Puss in the Corner, in which four individuals occupying the four corners of a room try to run from one corner to another while a fifth, the ‘puss’, on the alert in the centre, tries to rush in to claim a vacated space, so leaving the dispossessed person

1 Atherton, pp. 30–1.
3 SK 147n.
in the middle as the new 'puss'.\textsuperscript{1} (In \textit{Ulysses} Bloom 'plays pussy fourcorners with ragged boys and girls', U 462.) That Joyce had in mind this first-rate symbol of a stable form with a constantly shifting but finite content—the 'seim anew'—is clear from the marginal note 'tinctunc', already quoted, which refers to the text's 'With a pansy for the pussy in the corner'. Other associations of this motif with the Four occur at 43.28:

'village crying to village, through the five pussyfours green of the united state of Scotia Picta'

and at 555.10:

'titanich by tetranoxst, at their pussycorners, and that old time pallyloggass, playing copers fearsome.'

Since the central point is both the ass and the 'puss' of this game, I suspect that Joyce is permitting himself the not unusual indulgence of a rather tortuous pun. 'Puss' as a slang term 'face' is used at least three times in \textit{Finnegans Wake} (86.10, 329.04, 517.17) so that 'puss' and 'ass' are succinctly identified as anatomical opposites coinciding at a point. The crosses in I.1 and IV are the front and back ends of \textit{Finnegans Wake}. (There are strong suggestions of 'ballocks' in the Patrick–Druid discussion and it may be significant that of the ten occurrences of the 'thunderword' motif, the first (3.15) is oral, while the last (424.20) is distinctly anal.) 'Puss' has, of course, other slang denotations, notably 'the female genitalia', which therefore ties 'puss-in-the-corner' even more closely to 'tinctunc'. This whole conceit seems to be an expansion of that other meeting of contraries when Leopold Bloom ends his Odyssey by delivering an 'obscure prolonged provocative melonsmellous osculation.' (U 695)\textsuperscript{2}

III

'I am making an engine with only one wheel . . . The wheel is a perfect square . . . it's a wheel, I tell the world. \textit{And} it's all square'. (\textit{Letters}, p. 251.)

'four . . . was held sacred by the Pythagoreans. It is the perfect square, and neither of the bounding lines exceeds the other in

\textsuperscript{1} See \textit{O.E.D.} under 'Puss', paragraph 5.

\textsuperscript{2} See also below, Chapter VIII, II.
length by a single point. It is the emblem of moral justice and divine equity geometrically expressed. All the powers and great symphonies of physical and spiritual nature lie inscribed within the perfect square . . . ’ (Isis Unveiled, vol. I, p. 9.)

There remains one great archetypal form which Joyce used almost as much as the circle and the cross in constructing Finnegans Wake—that is, the square. As is revealed in the above quotation from a letter to Miss Weaver, he conceived of the form of the book as a square and a circle in mystical combination—showing the characteristics now of one shape, now of the other as the kaleidoscopic effects changed. There is a lot of talk in Finnegans Wake of ‘squaring the circle’ and, conversely, of ‘circling the square’. Earwicker is seen to be riding his ‘bone-shaker’ around Merrion Square (285.F.4)—or is it perhaps Mountjoy Square (460.09)?—or, even more likely, the Phoenix Park, to which all wanderers return. A little strabismus, to which the reader of Finnegans Wake continually finds himself subject, makes all these squares equivalent to the central rhombus of the diagram (293) and, although Dolph says ‘it will be a lozenge to me all my lauffe’ (299.28), Joyce is not content even to let a four-sided figure remain always four-sided, as I shall shortly show. Twice he defines the shape of Finnegans Wake in the motif ‘the scheme is like a rumba round my garden’. The first occurrence of the motif, where Joyce embellishes the scheme with rainbow-mist, old masters, and Rimbaud’s theory of vowels, is in the context of a list of games which the non-conformist Shem refuses to play with the good children: ‘When his Steam was like a Raimbrandt round Mac Garvey’ (176.18)

The second, and more important, occurrence is as the last of four major statements of theme in the passage which opens II.3:

‘while the scheme is like your rumba round me garden.’ (309.07)

The rhythm of the rumba is a counterpoint of three beats against four, and hence a further reminder of Joyce’s playing

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1 See Frontispiece.
Spatial Cycles: II—The Cross

off three cycles against four within the overall design of *Finnegans Wake*.¹ In fact, what Joyce is saying is that the scheme is like ‘three against four’ and that the rhombus of page 293 may be thought of as no more than a triangle accompanied by its own reflection. (It is no doubt significant that Joyce was born in ‘Brighton Square’, which is triangular.) Thus structural figures, like the characters, fold up into each other, as in a conjuring trick, ultimately ending in ‘appoint, that’s all’ (367.30). The garden concerned in this rumba-motif is of course an ideal plot carved from all gardens that ever were—mainly the Phoenix Park, Eden, Karr’s *jardin*,² and perhaps Browne’s luxurious *Garden of Cyrus*, full of rhombs and quincunxes.

Geometric juggling like those which I have been touching on could certainly be carried a lot farther, and probably with considerable profit. If the four-sided scheme is also three-sided, then *Finnegans Wake* is to be identified with Anna’s triangle as well as with Joyce’s square wheel; the combination of triangle and rhombus recurs continually in Joyce’s source-book, *A Vision*—and so on, but I think I have taken this analysis far enough now to indicate in broad terms how Joyce looked at the spatial organisation of his book. In the succeeding chapters I shall go on to examine the kind of detail with which he filled in the spaces.

² Atherton, p. 259.