

Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*

**Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*:
The Curse of Kabbalah
Volume 7**

John P. Anderson



Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton

Joyce's Finnegans Wake: The Curse of Kabbalah Volume 7

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Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida • USA
2013

ISBN-10: 1-61233-189-0
ISBN-13: 978-1-61233-189-8

www.universal-publishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Anderson, John P., 1939-

Joyce's Finnegans wake : the curse of Kabbalah / John P. Anderson.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59942-858-1 (v. 3 : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-59942-858-X (v. 3 : alk. paper)

1. Joyce, James, 1882-1941. Finnegans wake. 2. Cabala. I. Title.

PR6019.O9F548 2008

821'.912--dc22

2010004565

By the same author and published by Universal Publishers:

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Joyce's Finnegans Wake: The Curse of Kabbalah

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Volume 6

To Mercedes Marian [“Sadie”] Hughes Anderson,
Granddaughter the Magnificent

To those frustrated by the difficulty of FW:

Ancient Chinese saying: Clear Water No fish.

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Section I: Introduction

This volume is the seventh in a series. It assumes you have read the first six volumes by the same name. For a review or a starter kit, see Section X herein for materials on FW generally, Kabbalah and Joyce's theories. These are repeated from earlier volumes.

This volume attempts to decode on a word-by-word basis chapter 2.4 of *Finnegans Wake*, a very short chapter ending part 2, summarize parts 1 and 2, and decode chapters 3.1 and 3.2 of Part 3.

The first volume in this series covers chapters 1.1 and 1.2, the second 1.3 and 1.4, the third 1.5 and 1.6, the fourth 1.7, 1.8 and 2.1, the fifth 2.2 and the sixth 2.3.

I hope my decoding efforts will help you enjoy the riches of Joyce's last literary blessing, a blessing 17 years in the making. My intent is to explore Joyce's novel as an art object, to examine how it works as art using the theories of esthetics developed by Joyce himself. I call it a novel, but it fits in no known category other than wisdom literature.

Section XI Debts and Methods contains information on sources, abbreviations, capitalization, meaning of parenthesis and such matters. I am not an academic, do not use footnotes and do not scour all of the literature to find out if someone else has already said the same thing or the opposite of what I am saying.

There is plenty of FW to go around. Analysis of FW is not a zero sum game. It was designed so that analysis of its meaning would be an infinite series; some analysis makes more possible. FW's depth is astounding. Like its god, it is an infinite source of meaning. It exalts connections, any kind of connection. FW suggests these remaining connections are background radiation from the destruction of a primordial unified and infinite structure known as ES god by a big bang set off by a succeeding and seceding T'ZTZ god.

Section II: Summary of Chapter 2.4

In Chapter 2.4 spirit imperialists attack love. Love, particularly the spontaneous kind, is an outpost of freedom and more possibilities. That outpost is a threat to the status quo regime of the imperialists and puts its central committee on alert.

The imperialist control effort focuses on the two main sources of spontaneous love, the natural nurturing tendency of human females and the giving spirit of Jesus. Jesus' loving charity was involuntary and streamed out of his very nature just as the lactating nurture of the mother does for her child.

What is present in love but missing in control is acceptance of people as they are, accepting them acting independently out of their own nature. This is opposed to forcing them to sacrifice by changing to what the controller wants.

One pure expression of this kind of control is the arranged marriage, an institution that often serves political interests. In arranged marriages, control trumps love. The arranged part of the marriage is usually the female. The arranged marriage makes spontaneous love love illicit.

This chapter presents love suffering from control in the context of two arranged marriages laid side by side: of Isolde to King Mark and Jesus to the church. The result in both cases is the same: love fused to death and a relationship barren of new offspring. Joyce's purpose in laying these two arranged marriages side by side is to make that point, to direct the reader's attention to the common results. These common results carry the point of the chapter.

In the story of Tristan and Isolde ["T&I"], the arranged marriage is between an Irish princess Isolde and King Mark of Cornwall [SW England]. Mark is so old he is older than Isolde's father. Isolde is sold for serpent eradication services. The marriage results in a prohibition on the spontaneous love between young Isolde and young Tristan. That prohibition tragically fused love between Tristan and Isolde with death. The ar-

ranged marriage of Mark and Isolde was barren of children but pregnant with tragedy. But it was just politics, kingdom politics.

The other arranged marriage featured in this chapter is of Jesus to the church. The fathers of the early church expressed the relationship of the son of god to the human race as the marriage of Christ to the church, the church as bride to Christ the bridegroom. Alternate choices for bride would have included all humankind or all females but those choices would leave little control for the male dominated church. So in this arranged marriage both the bride and the bridegroom are male, making it a same sex arranged marriage. And there is some cruising and there are plenty of dedicated bachelors and beta buggers in this chapter. And this same sex marriage is bound to be barren and does not bring new offspring. In the process Christ's radical new message of independence and sexual equality is snuffed out.

In order to promote this arranged Christ/church marriage, the church fathers edited the stories of Jesus' life in the books that were canonized, that is included in the official Bible. They were edited in order to make consistent the reported life of Jesus and the policies of the church concerning females and independence. For example, the full story of Jesus' relationship with Mary Magdalene could not be included. The scriptural Jesus was not allowed to be what he was naturally, the lover of human females who are by constitution naturally close in spirit to his Kingdom of God. But it was just politics, church politics.

That editing process as to the meaning of Jesus' life tragically fused Jesus' love for mankind with his death. He had to be sacrificed because his father was angry with you and Jesus loved you. Instead of a new and spontaneously independent son, we were left with a watered down version serving the same old fear and dependency mongering and misogynistic father. But it was just politics, kingdom of god politics.

In this chapter Joyce pictures the evangelists as seagulls eating the flesh of fish, fish being a symbol of Christ. As edited,

they left us only the bones, the residue stripped of the flesh. The edited flesh.

The spirit mates in this chapter are King Mark from T&I and Evangelist Mark. Believed to be the first written of the synoptic gospels, the Book of *Mark* as edited reduced the independent and loving Christ to the “suffering servant.” And Tristan died at the Cliff of Pen*mark*, just as the real Christ died at the pen of Mark. Editors, the hated object of Joyce’s early life as an author, fuse the stories. The imperialist editors. So mark the Penmark, the connection between the two stories.

Fused as they are, the story of T&I substitutes for Christ’s lost and secret love life. In the Gospels the evangelists edited out that kind of love, leaving incomplete the picture of Christ. They also edited that kind of love out of their own bachelor lives. The result in Joyce’s version is a voyeur peeping tom interest by the evangelists in the love making of T&I, love making being prohibited to them.

What is prohibited becomes pornographic, an interest that combines sexual interest with aggression rather than mature acceptance. This skewing leads in turn to misogyny. And misogyny in turn leads to the female bashing RCC doctrines of original sin issuing from Eve and Mary Magdalene as a whore, doctrines that insinuate [in sin you ate] throughout this chapter. Joyce points the charge of misogyny at T&I god, the god without a mate.

Another common element in the T&I and Evangelist themes is the threat of the new replacing the old, Tristan replacing King Mark and the Son religion replacing the Father religion. This threat is announced at the opening of the chapter. The new replacing the old sponsors Joyce references in this chapter to betas replacing the alpha from Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* and a run-away slave replacing the old king-priest in Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. This element gives us the Eucharist as a totem meal.

With the control attitude in place, there are no new children sired. Isolde has no children despite having one husband and one very active lover and as reported neither does Jesus. As

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proclaimed here by Joyce Gospel, human children or the new in the human experience are the divine purpose of nature.

For Joyce, human females carry the residue of the infinite and independent ES god that is allowed in this world. That is why the spirit imperialists single out females for special doses of limitation and dependence and the missionary position.

Section III: Conceptual Material for Chapter 2.4

Incompleteness

The love and gospel editing featured in this chapter share in first principles the basic theme of incompleteness, of not being all that you can be, of not maximizing your human possibilities. This is a main FW theme and many of its other aspects resound in this chapter:

Fear and dependency leave the human spirit incomplete and short of its manifold possibilities.

T'ZT'Z god is incomplete because in and part of a finite creation and without a mate. The Book of Genesis reports his one nightstand with Eve through His stand-in or deceiver aspect the serpent and with various other human women through His stand-in angels. But T'ZT'Z god's connections with females are incomplete because selfish and transitory.

The experience of Adam and Eve in The Garden of Eden was incomplete because while they ate from the Tree of Knowledge they missed the Tree of Life.

The life of Christ as reported in the Gospels is pressed into the structure of the prophecy in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is incomplete without the New and vice versa. The New Testament is said to “fulfill” the Old.

Since the Gospels are structured as antitype to the types in the Old Testament, in Joyce's theory they lack integrity as art since they are incomplete because they refer to matters outside themselves.

The lives of the four Evangelists are incomplete since they are not married. In Joyce's presentation, they are fashioned as birds [since presented with wings in sacred literature] who seek what is prohibited, a view of T&I's lovemaking. These birds are just that and incomplete as angels. Peter was the first apostle to be married and you will note that there is no Gospel from Peter. So the four evangelists were

Cuckold and Cuckoo

The opening lines are in the form of a poem. In the T&I mode, they would be delivered by the Four Bad Barons to King Mark. They carry a warning of the new replacing the old, Tristan replacing Mark. Their real fear is Tristan replacing them.

The opening lines constitute a proclamation or a *kerygma*, the same form as used for the Gospels. While the Gospels proclaimed "good news," this poem proclaims bad news. The bad news is that Mark is incomplete, is short of the mark, has little bark and what he has is beside the mark. He is to be replaced by the new unless he pays attention to business. The poem chides him as a cuckold, a word derived from the cuckoo. This initiates the bird clan theme based on the traditional presentation of the evangelists with wings.

In modern English the word "cuckold" generally refers to the sexual fetish in which a male gains sexual gratification from his female partner having sex with other males, a definitely incomplete form of participation. As a result, the four evangelists are portrayed in this chapter as peeping toms and voyeurs hot on Tristan and Isolde.

Sexual fetish also suggests arousal from a particular body part and is classified as partialism, a concept that is at home in our incompleteness theme. Our evangelist birds will exhibit mazophilia, breast fetish, since in their view the only really valuable female is the BVM, and she is valuable only for her breast milk as shown in many paintings of the Virgin breast-feeding Jesus. The breast fetish is indicated by what the birds

report, the details of breast stroking, and what they don't report, sexual union.

Cuckold often happens to the old:

The Old and the New

In this chapter the spirit imperialists continue to arrange marriages as sales, the sale of young girls to older men, a theme still relevant in some quarters in the United States. The young **Isolde** is sold by the King of Ireland to the old King of Cornwall in exchange for Tristan's services eliminating an Irish based serpent that terrorized the kingdom. The potentially new spirit represented by Jesus is sold by the Evangelists to the church in an interpretation controlled by an old attitude about females. The incomplete old controls the new potential for more.

Joyce marries the theme in this chapter to the ideas in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* ["T&T"] and Frazer's *The Golden Bough* ["TGB"]. This takes us to the cave alpha and betas, the totem way of resolving conflict and controlling sex and to Frazer's old priest at Nemi who can be replaced in combat by an escaped slave with the golden bough. In each of these venues the new struggles to achieve independence and renewed spirit of life by replacing the old and the status quo. The opening poem is a taunt of that possibility, Mark being replaced by Tristy.

The love death potion that T&I share is like the contagion aspect of Taboo, once connected always connected, in this case in love and in death. In the Christ story, it is the Eucharist model that brings Christ's love to us but the continuing connection to Christ is only through his sacrificial death on the Cross. By contrast, in Joyce's rendition the last moments of Christ are with Mary Magdalene in the tomb very much enjoying the spirit of life. For Joyce, Christ's golden boughs are his procreative organs, his heart and his penis, while the church's golden *boughs* are their assets in the bank *branch* in Northern Ireland.

The Evangelists have their own alphas and betas. Matthew and John were apostles of Christ but Mark and Luke were not, only assistants to apostles. The Book of Mark has special standing since believed to be the first written. The four Evangelists are alphas to the beta writers of apocrypha, those books not allowed in the canon. This is the totem pole of sacred literature.

Opening Quark

The opening is in the form of a poem with a famous first line: "Three quarks for Muster Mark." From this poem physicist Murray Gell-Mann picked up the word quark, which he used as his word for certain fundamental subatomic particles. This is how Joyce was smuggled into the standard model of subatomic particles.

So the fundamentals start us off, and the fundamental is control, here in the form of an attempt at control of a possible takeover of the old by the new. The youth coup must be stopped.

The introductory material is a taunting reminder of the threat of replacement of King Mark by a younger Tristan. In the family aspect of our story, this would be the replacement of HCE by his sons. In the religion aspect, it would alert the Father God to watch out for replacement by the Son God.

This opening poem is so bad as poetry that you should remember it when we reach the rape of Brigit, the Celtic patron of poetry. I think Joyce meant for this opening to be considered a rape of poetry.

Tristan and Isolde and King Mark

The basic story takes the shape of the primal horde. The alpha is King Mark and the beta coming on is Tristan. They are to compete for Isolde, the blond. The counterparts for Mark and Tristan in the story of religion are TZTZ god and Christ. You will note resemblances to the story of Finn, Diarmuid and Grainne featured in the last chapter.

As retold by Joseph Bedier, the T&I story goes like this. Mark is the King in Cornwall, southern western England, headquartered at Tintagel Castle. His sister Blanchefleur is married to King Rivalin, the King of Lyonesse or Scotland, no doubt arranged. King Rivalin is killed by Duke Morgan, so Tristan [means born in sorrow] is born fatherless from Blanchefleur. And his mother dies soon.

The orphaned Tristan is raised in Scotland by Faithful Rohalt but is kidnapped by Norwegian merchants. They encounter bad weather on the way home with their captive and, believing the weather and the captive are related, stop in Cornwall to let him off [this doesn't make sense since home to Norway from Scotland is north and Cornwall is the southwestern most point of England and is well south of Scotland].

Coming ashore, Tristan convinces the Cornwall Lords that he is of noble training by cutting up a stag in a new and better way. This knowledge is apparently the mark of a gentleman and an early SAT. He is taken into the service of King Mark, who grows to love him as a son. So at this point Tristan is in Cornwall, and the elderly King Mark has and apparently has had no queen, a point Joyce seizes on for this chapter.

Over in nearby Ireland, the King and the Queen have a child Iseult the Fair, a blonde of great beauty. As usual, the question is who gets the blonde. Based on an old victory and agreements made then, the Irish King demands tribute from King Mark and sends his giant Morholt to enforce the tribute requirement. The Irish King is married to Morholt's sister [apparently she is smaller] and Iseult the Fair is their child. The tribute, to which Joyce refers, rotates: one year 300 pounds of copper, the next 300 hundred pounds of silver, next the same of gold. In the fourth year the tribute is "300 youths and 300 maidens, of fifteen years of age, drawn by lot among the Cornish folk." Note the assumption in this presentation that youths would be male. On this visit, Morholt demands the young males and females, who of course represent the future of and the spirit of life in Cornwall.

Tristan overcomes Morholt the enforcer in one on one combat but in the process receives a wound laced with poison [foreshadowing other poison]. Mortally wounded, he is put out in a brier to die at sea, but luckily the brier floats over to Ireland. There Isolde the Fair finds him on the beach, cures him with her magic herbs not knowing who he is or that he killed Morholt, who of course was her fiancée. He was also her uncle, and the marriage must have been arranged.

While Tristan was in Ireland having his poison-laced wound healed by Isolde, he pretended to be someone else and went by the name Tantris, which reverses the first and last parts of his name. Reversed, it would mean sorrow in birth [remember the Garden of Eden punishment of greater birth pains]. In normal sequence as Tristan it means born in sorrow. Tristan makes it back home to Cornwall before anyone in Ireland figures out who he is.

King Mark is not married and the four bad Barons, who are interested only in their own welfare, convince Mark to seek a wife and heir so Tristan his favorite will not become king. Apparently the King did not seek a wife on his own motion. These Barons are the junior or beta males in action and, as we shall see, the four Evangelists who prefer a weaker Christ. They want as Mark's replacement a very young and thus weak king's son, not the brave and independent Tristan.

A swallow brings a strand of golden hair and a superstitious Mark accepts that as a sign of what he should do. Mark sends Tristan to find the maid of the golden hair, which of course turns out to be Isolde the Fair, the very girl who cured him. Note that King Mark sends for the blonde based on what the bad Barons urge and based on the auspices of birds. This is an early version of a dating service.

Tristan kills the dragon threatening the Irish kingdom and wins her "hand." But he takes her not for himself but for King Mark. Even after she recognizes him as Tantris, Isolde is put out that Tristan did not come for her personally. So much for feminine consistency.

On the ship bringing Isolde from Ireland back to Cornwall and arranged marriage to King Mark, Tristan and Isolde drink the love potion meant for King Mark and Isolde. They fall in love and consummate the desire of their sexual organs for each other.

The version used by Richard Wagner in his opera by the same name starts differently. From wikipedia:

***Tristan had been allowed to leave, but had returned with the intention of marrying Isolde to his uncle, King Marke. Isolde, in her fury at Tristan's betrayal, insists that he drink atonement to her, and from her medicine-chest produces the vial which will make this drink. Brangaene [her maid] is shocked to see that it is a lethal poison.

At this point Kurwenal appears in the women's quarters saying that Tristan has agreed after all to see Isolde. When he arrives, Isolde tells him that she now knows that he was Tantris, and that he owes her his life. Tristan agrees to drink the potion, now prepared by Brangaene, even though he knows it may kill him. As he drinks, Isolde tears the remainder of the potion from him and drinks it herself. At this moment, each believing that their life is about to end, they declare their love for each other. Their rapture is interrupted by Kurwenal, who announces the imminent arrival on board of King Marke. Isolde asks Brangaene which potion she prepared and is told that it was no poison, but a love-potion. Outside, the sailors hail the arrival of King Marke.

In the Wagner version, the relationship of love and death is more complex. Thinking that they have drunk death poison, Tristan and Isolde release themselves to passion, which they think is voluntary. However, they have in fact drunk the love potion, which suggests the survival instincts honed by death. From this point on, they are together only in the night, the location for the Schopenhauer-inspired merger of all in unity of the Primal Will.