Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*
Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake:*
The Curse of Kabbalah
Volume 3

John P. Anderson
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*Finding Joy in Joyce: A Reader's Guide to Joyce's Ulysses*

*The Sound and the Fury in the Garden of Eden*

*The Poltergeist in William Faulkner's Light in August*

*Faulkner's Absalom Absalom: Uncertainty in Dixie*

*Flaubert's Madame Bovary: The Zen Novel*

*Conrad's Victory: Resurrection Lost*

*Conrad's Lord Jim: Psychology of the Self*

*Conrad's Heart of Darkness: Rebirth of Tragedy*

*Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus: Gestapo Music*

*Joyce's Finnegans Wake: The Curse of Kabbalah*  
*Volume 1*

*Joyce’s Finnegans Wake: The Curse of Kabbalah*  
*Volume 2*
To Linda, without whom nothing is possible
Isolation is the first principle of artistic economy.  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Kabbalist’s most fundamental axiom . . . [the real] God in and of Himself is completely hidden and unknown to man.  
Drob, *Symbols of the Kabbalah*

But what struck me immediately was that the whole point of Oriental wisdom and mythic themes is that you are not in ex-ile—that the god is within you. You can’t be exiled from it. All that can happen is that you can fail to know it, that you don’t realize it, that you haven’t found a way to open your consciousness to this presence that is right within you.  
Campbell, *Myths of Light*
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Section I:
Introduction

Protocol

This volume is the third in a series. It assumes you have read the first and second volumes by the same name. Since FW exalts independence, Section III repeats part of the introductory conceptual material contained in the first volume in order to enable this third volume to at least partially stand alone.

This volume attempts to decode on a word-by-word basis all of chapters 1.5 and 1.6 of Finnegans Wake, as the first volume does for chapters 1.1 and 1.2 and the second for chapters 1.3 and 1.4. I hope my decoding efforts will help you receive some of the riches of Joyce’s last literary blessing on all mankind, 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.

See Section VII Debts and Methods for 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 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. It is, like its god, an infinite source of meaning. It exalts connections, any kind of connection. FW suggests these remaining connections are background radiation from a primordial unified and infinite structure destroyed by a big bang.

Kabbalah Primer

This primer is just to get you started for the summary in Section II. There is more on Kabbalah in Section III and more than that in the first volume.
The creation doctrines of Kabbalah are known as the *Tzimtzum* theory of creation [“TZTZ”]. In the TZTZ theory, the original creation of our universe occurred within a formless ur-unity in which ES [Ein Sof— that literally means “nothing without end”] god was all and all potential was merged in god. ES god itself was all, and nothing could or did exist separately. The ur-unity god merged everything everywhere at all times. The essential characteristics of this god are unlimitedness and unity.

This ES god made a hole or void in the ur-unity especially for the TZTZ creation. ES contracted and deposited in this hole its own opposite, namely a bounded experience, a limited and separate experience, a universe separate from ES. That experience is our universe.

In this separated TZTZ creation everything is finite, so it *inevitably* features death and limitation and evil. This creation also *inevitably* came with its own god, a limited, secondary and finite kind of god who has human death for his morning coffee. This limited demiurge god, this TZTZ god, has several masks. They include the thunder god which scared primitives and the Jehovah of the Hebrew Scriptures who sent curses as well as blessings.

TZTZ god is dependent for existence on a limited and separated TZTZ creation and its signature system of opposites. Meanwhile ES god—the infinite, unified and now purified of the finite—remained concealed behind its creation, and unknowable and unreachable. It remains independent of the limited TZTZ creation. It lives on and on in infinity and unity.

Mankind and the TZTZ god of this worldly experience are interdependent: that the god/mankind interdependence takes the form of participation: in early cave culture male alphas practiced fear and dependency on other cavemen and women just like the thunder god did on them [and the Old Testament god did on the Hebrews]; and that the only way to fundamentally change the god of this world is to be an independent human not afraid of death, to be different from the fear and dependency group, and seek the infinite ES god even though knowing you can never get there.

What humans can do better is described as *Tikkun Olam*, a sewing-based term that means putting things back together. FW is the bible for that effort. It is a monumental stitch in time that can help save nine times nine . . . . If this process is completed, if the Kingdom of God inherits the earth, then all will merge back into ES god of unity and infinity and TZTZ god will be out of business.
Section II:
Summary

Chapters 1.5 and 1.6

In chapters 1.3 and 1.4 [covered in Volume 2] the dead sought to become one with Osiris. This effort was part of a reduction process originating in the curse of Kabbalah, the curse which was explored in chapters 1.1 and 1.2 [first volume]. In this reduction process, repetitive and cyclical patterns from the past and continuing fear and dependency restrict new and independent possibilities.

Reversing course, Chapter 1.5 features expansion, **One becoming Many.** The spirit of the female principle registered in ALP’s letter or “mamafesta” hatches the expansion. This chapter honors creativity in literature along with the human female capacity for giving birth to new human potential. With this conjunction of female and literary creativity, Joyce brings out of the closet his official middle name Augusta.

Reversing course again, Chapter 1.6 brings back the forces of reduction, **Many becoming One.** Instead of the female hatching the new, here the male spirit smothers new offspring in favor of the one already existing, the repetitive one that looks and acts like big Daddy.

Made up of twelve questions and answers, the male spirit avatar Shaun answers in chapter 1.6 for others, even for Shem, as part of this reduction. Compared to the free form Mamafesta in chapter 1.5, the writing in chapter 1.6 is consigned to question and answer, the limiting and authority based form of communication Joyce first used in Ulysses. These questions and answers explore various sources of reduction and limitation in our human experience.

The beginnings of the chapters signal the process of expansion or reduction. In chapter 1.5, the one mamafesta about the female spirit is given more than one hundred different and creatively inspired titles. In chapter 1.6, the first series of questions takes up 13 pages, but the hundreds and hundreds of actions boringly described in the series are repetitive functions of the male spirit. And the reductive answer is just the name of one militaristic male, Finn McCool.
The new from the feminine spirit can reach for the infinite, but the repetitions from the male spirit are stuck in the circles of the finite. Highlighting this contrast, these two chapters feature two very different processes, the maternal process and the excremental process, the mother’s womb in chapter 1.5 and the colon in chapter 1.6. The mother releases the new child and the colon the same old waste.

Shem the Penman, the child of ALP, brings plurabilities in art. He shares the female spirit, and his literary works, including the mamafesta, are important new possibilities. By contrast, Shaun is the headliner for what the colon releases, which is always the same, old and smelly. The ultimate plagiarist, the colon just reduces whatever came in and releases the same old copy. No copyright for the colon.

For expansion, infinity is our source and Aristotle and Krishna are our guides. The Kabbalah ultimate god Ein Sof means without end or infinite. For reduction, TZTZ god is our source and original sin is the guide. TZTZ means finite. Eve is featured in both: as the first seeker of ES god status and as the TZTZ god-branded source of original sin.

Aristotle’s concept of the infinite is a series that is always seeking more to be included. But the series is and can never be completed; it always remains finite and just potentially infinite. Joyce hides Aristotle in these chapters under the name Harrystotalies, a Joyce logos that suggests stories and totals that continue to grow like body hairs. Continue that is until death.

In Hindu legend Krishna’s coming to many Gopi girls individually and exclusively but simultaneously in the middle of the night in the middle of the woods is an example of One at work as Many. Krishna impregnated them with independence. This example is a very important one, inducing independence in the normally stay at home and desperate milk women wives. In Joyce’s version, the Gopi girls leave home and move to Boston, the home of the free. Their husbands are left holding the milk buckets.

In the expansion process, the spirit of the one ES becomes many series of the new trying to reach beyond the finite of this one life: human mothers producing new children different from the parents; artists creating new possibilities in art; the independent Christ saving many from the fear of death. These series are never complete just as, in the example Joyce uses, the sum of new human literature can never equate to the divine logos.

While the power of the new fuels expansion, the reduction process runs on repetition. Vico cycles repeat. Reduction artists plagia-
rize. According to the RCC, all persons born of a human mother participate in Eve’s original sin, the same and repetitive original sin. The serial criminal TZTZ god continues to issue curses. Many different types of food are reduced to one excrement in colon inspired chapter 1.6.

The concept of “participation” observed in the thinking of many natives [by the anthropologist Levy-Bruhl—mentioned in the text] provides a vehicle for Joyce’s process of repetitive reduction. In participation, the man is his totem animal the tiger and the animal is the man. This kind of thinking reduces independent individuality and the potential for the new since the man in question is in some sense a tiger and moreover a typical tiger.

Participation in Chapter 1.6 takes the form of Shaun’s influence on the answers seemingly coming from 12 different and independent sources. Shaun reduces the answering parties to one voice. His form of reprocessing is reduction to repetition, those big “r” words reminding us of Hebrew ARAR for curse. Combining A or Aleph for ES god and R or Resh for TZTZ god, ARAR is a picture of K theosophy, the finite stopping the infinite.

So here is a summary of contrasts in these two chapters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1.5</th>
<th>Chapter 1.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleph</td>
<td>resh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One becomes many</td>
<td>many become one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female spirit</td>
<td>male spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Womb</td>
<td>colon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinity</td>
<td>finite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since for Joyce all stories are the same story, these chapters continue to tell the same story told in chapters 1.1 through 1.4. That story is about the relationship between mankind and the powers that be.

Style and Content

Joyce’s masterful synergism of style and content continues. The theme and variation structure continues to provide unity within vari-
Joyce’s synergism approaches that of music, in which form and content are one.

Considering these two chapters together, the principal nature of the combination is contrast, the contrast of opposites—expansion of the new under the female spirit and reduction of the repetitive to one under the male spirit.

Opposites are by nature in friction. Schooled by Bruno, we should also treat them as containing the impetus for reconciliation. As subject becomes structure, this opposition pairs these chapters and leads FW into the next two chapters, which will also affect that same friction and reconciliation. This placement gives the last four chapters of Part I an ABBA structure, or perhaps I should say an ARRA structure: Reconciliation friction friction reconciliation.

In Chapter 1.5 the unique one becomes many individuals. The mamafesta as the source of possibilities earns a seemingly endless number of creatively different names, a series Joyce just keeps adding to. The mamafesta itself is a paragon of flexibility. It appears in many different versions throughout FW. A fluctuating narrator suggests multiplicity. An embedded list of creative literary artists keeps the series of the new going.

The effort of TZTZ god to control human possibilities reveals itself in the question and answer format in chapter 1.6. In that format, Shaun as the answer man controls the shape of truth. Here the method is the message.

Section 1.6 includes a tale about Burrus and Caseous, the names suggesting butter and cheese as partially independent forms of dependence-inducing mother’s milk. The language used by Joyce takes on the characteristics of butter; like dependent humans, the words change shape and spread easily.
Section III:
General Conceptual Materials

Let me repeat from Volume I [with a small amount of revision and new material] the rough summary of conceptual materials relevant to understanding FW. Those who wish to avoid repetition can skip to Art and the Ultimate in this section III at page 40.

Major Points

The foundation of FW is the curse of Kabbalah, namely the deliberate restriction on the potential of humans by the secondary and limited god of this world [TZTZ god]. This curse serves to create human fear and dependency that in turn restricts human possibilities.

This curse on human potential restricts individuality and produces uniformly limited and secondary persons described in FW as “here comes everybody.” Lacking individuality, they are incomplete. This restricted condition is experienced most forcefully in sleep during which voluntary free will and consciousness are off line. Joyce uses the human night experience in order to capture the essence of this limited condition, a condition that plagues most of mankind during the daytime as well as at night. Joyce called FW the “Book of the Night.”

Like dreams, FW has its own language delivering a manifest content derived from conscious experience and a latent or hidden content derived from the unconscious. The manifest content consists of Joyce selections from the entire collective of conscious human experience. The latent content hidden in the repressed unconscious of the race is the curse, the knowledge that the god of this world is death. As latent content distorts the dream, the curse operates as a black hole to distort the presentation in FW.

The curse is hidden, repressed and latent, because it causes fear, particularly the fear of death. We try to forget about our inevitable death. We joke about it but don’t make friends with it. If we had to consciously recognize that TZTZ god wants us to die, then the fear of death would be increased exponentially, perhaps to an unmanageable anxiety.
The Garden of Eden myth as interpreted by RCC tries to convince us that humans are responsible for their own mortality and death is “natural.” However, Joyce interprets the Garden of Eden, Babel and other Genesis dream-like myths to teach us that TZTZ god wants humans to be small and especially wants our early death. That god reduced maximum human longevity from a thousand to 120 years. Coming first in Hebrew Scriptures, Joyce treats these myths as illustrative of the most elemental aspects of the man-god relationship.

Despite the curse, every person every new day can “wake” up to additional human possibilities. With sufficient courage to overcome the fear of death, each can wake up at their own wake. These continuing possibilities point to the primary and unlimited god in Kabbalah [Ein Sof or ES]. To this god, independent and courageous human individuality is the ticket.

Kabbalah

First, what in god’s name is Kabbalah? Or Cabala or Cabbalah or Kabala? And what is Madonna doing studying Kabbalah? Should you be? A connoisseur of ideas himself, Joyce bought into Kabbalah for use in FW because it supports his emphasis on independence as the ultimate human value.

Kabbalah [sometimes abbreviated as “K”] is first of all a theosophy, that is an attempt at knowledge of ultimate matters, knowledge of the celestial powers that be in relation to mankind and what that means for mankind’s future. Understanding god is primarily aimed at predicting the human future. And in K that understanding is to be gained through mysticism, which is a version of the protestant principle of everyman finding his own god.

At the present time K is gaining traction among a broad range of spiritual seekers and showing up in the “New Age” sections of bookstores. Its popularity is based on its intuitively satisfying explanation of the unsatisfactory human experience in this world and because in this age the mystical approach means “me.” With the K approach, the Sunday school god turns out to be a sadist.

And don’t lose interest just because this is new age and about “god.” Everyone believes in a god as a first cause. The only question is what god or the gods are like. A benevolent shepherd or energy without purpose or an impersonal will force igniting the big bang for fun? And what does that mean for me? This has always been and
remains the ultimate issue, divining the future for the good and bad produced by god. For eons mankind has sacrificed to gods in an effort to secure a better future. Living in a world apparently filled with accident and coincidences, mankind has yearned for knowledge of or better yet control of the future. In the Hebrew Scriptures, one premium version of this control was filling the future with manifold offspring just like daddy, chips off the old block.

K has been nurtured over centuries in Jewish mystical circles. Mystical means that individuals independently intuit this truth themselves and do not receive it in dependent instruction at the feet of others. It is attained by independent personal intuition often during isolated meditation. While it is a “received” tradition, it is flexible enough to allow for subjectivity and individual differences. Doctrine has shifted significantly over time. There has been no K Inquisition. And it has been free of the responsibility of consistency. True to this tradition, Joyce uses his own customized version of K. He cherry picks.

Kabbalah was known to followers as the “Hidden Church of Israel,” the inward spiritual and mystical church. It claimed to hold access to the “light of a secret traditional knowledge preserved among the chosen people” [Waite]. It was derived from the written Hebrew Scriptures, but was the secret oral doctrine behind the written law. Mystics are notorious for claiming to see into the heart of the matter but not being able to communicate the cardiology to the rest of us. The Kabbalists are no different; they have made do with metaphors instead of photographs.

Because Joyce designed Finnegans Wake as the psycho-spiritual history of mankind, he gave an important part to Kabbalah. New Age Kabbalah is actually quite old. As stated in the 11th Encyclopedia Britannica [Joyce’s edition]:

[Kabbalah] is the technical name for the system of Jewish theosophy which played an important part in the Christian Church in the middle ages. The term primarily denotes ‘reception’ and then ‘doctrines received by tradition.’ * * * It is only since the 11th or 13th century that K has become the exclusive appellation for the renowned system of theosophy which claims to have been transmitted uninterruptedly by the mouths of the patriarchs and prophets ever since the creation of the first man.
With venerable source claims reaching back to first man, Joyce was attracted to K doctrine as foundation stone for his history of mankind and his focus on first man in the Garden of Eden, the first and perhaps last time mankind was together with both ES and TZTZ god.

Kabbalah reads the human experience as the product of a curse deliberately imposed on mankind by god. The curse is heavy, a curse of death and limits designed to restrict the potential of mankind. This is what I mean by the curse of Kabbalah.

Foundation of Finnegans Wake

In my reading, the foundation of FW is the god-issued curse of mankind as understood in the Kabbalah tradition. Joyce found this curse at the heart of the Garden of Eden, Babel and other Genesis myths.

In order to read FW you need to understand the curse of Kabbalah and the implications of Kabbalah doctrine because Joyce starts his novel with the implications of that curse already locked and loaded. As usual, Joyce gives no Kabbalah primer.

In Kabbalah doctrine the curse is described as part of an experiential function of the ultimate god known as “Ein Sof” or “Ain Sof,” pronounced something like Enne Sof. The independent and unified god Ein Sof [“ES”] contracted to produce our world but remained concealed—ES pulled what Joyce calls a “French leave,” which means an unnoticed departure. Our world came not with ES but with a secondary, dependent god interested in separation. This demiurge god issues blessings and curses, good and evil. For reasons set forth below, I call this god TZTZ god. As we shall see, it is Joyce’s position that the path to the secondary TZTZ god is dependence and fear [humility] whereas the path to the primary god ES is independence [courage].

As we shall see, this curse foundation supports the materials that are repeated in various forms throughout the novel—for example materials about the Wake for Finnegan, the Fall of just about everyone including the Fall of Napoleon at Waterloo, opposition of brothers Shem the independent Penman and Shaun the dependent postman [who delivers the views of others], incest dynamics in the Earwicker family, the humpbacked Norwegian Captain and the tailor, the shooting of a Russian general, the first riddle of the universe and the culminating debate about the nature of colors.
Joyce built FW on the principle that the actions of humans in general throughout the ages follow a hardcore version of this original desire of ES god to be manifest in finite and limited terms. In the finite and limited TZTZ creation humans live finite and limited lives—lives born of survival instincts and characterized by limitation and separation. The new gives way to repetition. The purest expression of the TZTZ spirit is the zero sum game competitive activity for survival resources. This competition for reproductive assets, food and power over others has ripped apart the human unity starting with Cain and Abel. Per Joyce, humans could certainly have done better than they have—just as ES god could certainly have done a better job of creating than it did.

**Curse as Latent Content of a Dream**

In Freudian terms, the curse of Kabbalah is the latent or hidden content of the dream-like structure that makes up FW. The curse has been repressed in the collective unconscious of the human race because it creates fear. Since it is latent or hidden content in the psyche of the race, the curse is hidden in FW behind the detail that is the surface.

In Freudian analysis, a censor that is vigilant during the day but somewhat relaxed at night prevents full disclosure of the latent content. In dreams the censor allows the latent content to appear in disguised fashion, so as not to cause too much fear.

In Jungian and Vician terms, the Garden and other stories in Genesis are an important part of the collective conscious of the human race. The curse of Kabbalah is also their latent content. The Jewish Legends help us to find the more censored parts of the latent content, such as the serpent buggering Adam. This content is hidden because it is too frightening, the recognition that god “has it in” for mankind and wants a limited, dependent and short-lived humanity. It is the secret cause that distorts the text.

These transhistorical factors in psycho-spiritual human life are the basis for the curse of commonality and limited possibilities presented by the ruling entity of FW—which is HCE, Here Comes Everybody. Sleep and the dream, lacking voluntary free will and new possibilities of action, are the cable service for the restrictions of the curse.
FW, the Garden of Eden and Curse of Kabbalah

FW is, among many other things, a riff on the Garden of Eden myth, a myth about the relationship of god and first mankind, about the “Fall.”

A powerful piece of writing, the Eden myth still speaks to believers and non-believers alike after thousands of years. It speaks about the relationship of the powers that be and humankind and the effect of the perceived relationship on the human spirit. Like FW, the myth speaks through a particularly potent kind of art. Our literary arbiter Harold Bloom described the author, whom he thought female, as the direct ancestor of Kafka and “uncanny, tricky, sublime, ironic, a visionary of incommensurate . . .”

K helped Joyce find a radically new meaning for Eden’s message to mankind, a meaning that makes the most of the text of the myth itself, particularly the deliberate denial by god of human access to the Tree of Life.

With K help, Joyce reads the myth as a clear expression of the curse of mankind by god in order to restrict human possibilities. God clearly wanted humans to be mortal, rather than either immortal or entitled to direct accession to heaven without death.TZTZ god wanted all humans to die so TZTZ god and his minions could make humans fearful, small and dependent because of the fear of death. Later, just before Noah’s adventure, TZTZ god limits the maximum human lifetime to 120 years. TZTZ god is impatient in the desire for death. TZTZ god can’t wait.

Institutional Christian religion used the Eden myth to point the finger of blame at a seducible Eve. She was the source of “Original Sin,” and in the “Fall” she and Adam shrunk spiritually to something less than they could be. Thanks to St. Augustine, Catholicism taught millions of dependent faithful that Eve’s Original Sin and reduction in the “Fall” were inevitably passed on to every subsequent generation through sexual intercourse, apparently on the corruption gene. This made sex the connection to the past, the bad past.

The basic point of the traditional interpretation, the manifest content, is that mankind is to blame for its own troubles in life and to blame because of disobedience, breaking god’s rule about eating from the Tree of Knowledge. For this disobedience mankind was hit with a big timeout, time out of paradise. This punishment made mankind’s life less than it could have been. Compared to gigantic
pre-fall mankind, fallen mankind out of the garden was like a small bug.

This was the “Fall,” the fall to mortality, lesser possibilities and a lesser life in a time-ruled world full of trouble that Joyce calls the “weedworld.” In the traditional interpretation mankind is to blame for its own problems and can come to god only through a sense of sin and dependency administered in proper dosage by the Church. Independence and striving for more in life only feed the primal sin of pride. In this fallen, original sin-driven condition, you need Christ who died for you. You killed Christ because he had to die for you because of original sin. By this tricky argument original sin became original guilt. In these chapters Harold Earwicker is declared not guilty but only because of the benefit of clergy. On his own, he as the avatar of humanity would be guilty of original sin and jointly responsible for the troubles in the world.

In a radical reinterpretation, Joyce reverses the traditional judgment. Rather than mankind, God is to blame for the trouble in the world and inevitable human death. Inspired by Kabbalah doctrine, Joyce uses the same Eden myth as evidence to point the finger of blame at god. God is to blame for mankind’s problems. This is the first “Fall,” the fall of god [Atherton], not of man.

As Joyce reads it, the Eden myth registers a curse in the god/man relationship, a curse of mankind initiated by god for god’s own purposes and not because of disobedience. The purpose of the curse is to produce a fearful and dependent mankind limited in potential, a fallen mankind. God generated dependency with the blessings of paradise and fear with the sufferings of curses. God wanted the Fall of mankind; god wanted small humans, dependent and fearful humans. God wanted fewer human possibilities. God wanted humans to die, and soon.

And Joyce’s reading makes much more sense of the actual words of the myth than the traditional interpretation. This reading turns on identifying the god in the Garden according to K.

**TZTZ God and ES God and FW**

The product of a manifestation by ES, this TZTZ creation came with its own god, a secondary and inferior TZTZ god. That secondary god and not ES is the co-star with Eve in Genesis. The Garden of Eden screenplay makes more sense if TZTZ god is the god on the garden set.