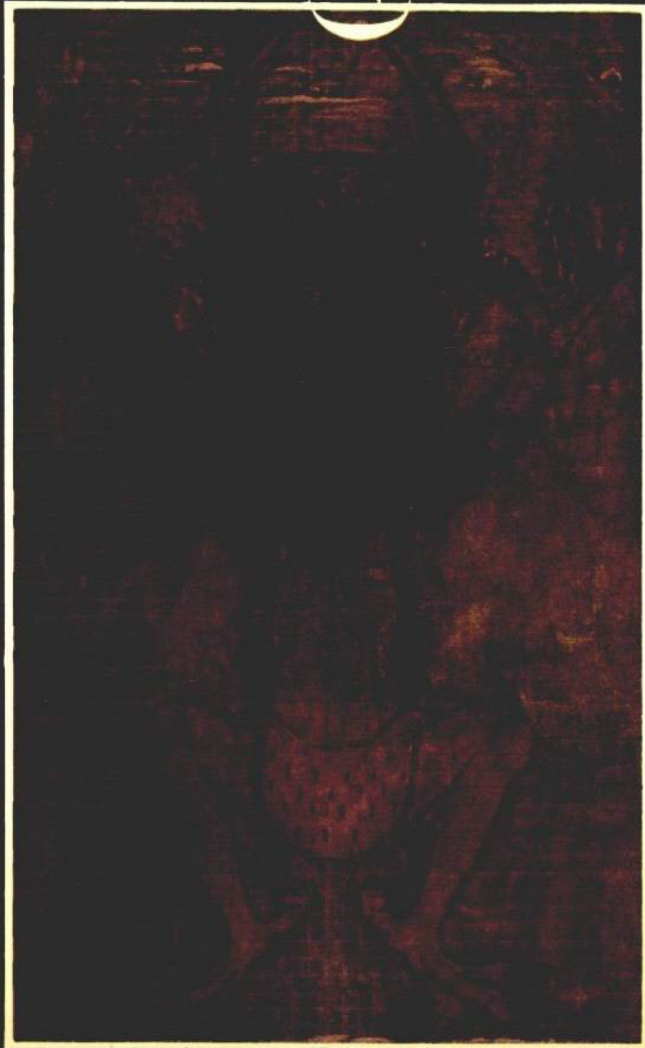


# The Language

FORM AND ARCHETYPE IN FINNEGANS WAKE

# of the Devil



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In a letter to his grandson Stephen, written in 1936, James Joyce said that the Devil speaks 'a language of his own . . . which he makes up himself as he goes along'. Taking this as his theme, Dr Sandulescu offers a wholly new study of the language of *Finnegans Wake*.

The background of *Finnegans Wake* is its function as a simulacrum of the universe, but of a universe created by an Anti-God. In philosophical terms it is a 'possible world', massive, physically dense, and at first apparently chaotic. It nevertheless generates its own conventions which are best understood by studying its constitutive elements – language and culture – by an examination of the mutations of archetypes.

The means are languages and linguistic units. Joyce's own list of forty languages is examined through the idea of the 'hierarchical holon'. The holons (parts which function in some sense as wholes) of *Finnegans Wake* are treated relativistically, in keeping with the spirit of Einstein and Benjamin Lee Whorf. The basic decoding unit for *Finnegans Wake* is identified as the 'cartouche', a self-sustaining micro-segment of text which exhibits an epiphany-like brilliance of meaning. Wittgenstein's idea of the language-game is invoked to analyse its use.

*Finnegans Wake* exhibits four major kinds of regularity: axioms (as proposed by James Atherton); principles (mainly descriptions of human communication); maxims (examined with some reference to the works of Grice); and rules. While the rules govern the function of the parts contained within the smallest wholes, the axioms account for the function of the total book, as a complete and self-referential whole.

The outcome is texture endowed with mass, as in rock-crystals. In this section, Part IV of *Finnegans Wake* is analysed at both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. Having destroyed the novel as a genre in *Ulysses*, Joyce aimed, in *Finnegans Wake* to cancel all monuments of western civilisation, including Shakespeare and the Bible. Furthermore, the texture of *Finnegans Wake* is designed to atomise the means by which those functions are achieved: over Joyce neither God nor His language shall have dominion; the dictum *non serviam* is supremely accomplished. *Finnegans Wake* is the unique object in our world in which the greatest exile applies the greatest cunning to create the greatest silence: the Devil's discourse.