Nothung up my Sleeve

THE WAGNERIAN IMPULSES IN JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES* AND *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Town.

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Date submitted: 22 September 1999

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development, (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

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Acknowledgements

In addition to the generous financial assistance of both the Centre for Scientific Development and the University Research Council, without which this research would not have been possible, I would like to thank my supervisors, Profs. André Brink and John Cartwright, and my co-supervisor, Prof. Stuart Reiner of the South African College of Music. Prof. Brink kindly agreed to supervise the much-needed revisions that were required in order for the dissertation to be presented in a more streamlined and cohesive format. Quite apart from his invariably sound suggestions, I must express my indebtedness to his unsolicited helpfulness in tracing additional sources and his obvious enthusiasm for the project, a factor which greatly stimulated my efforts. Prof. Cartwright, with whom I worked during the earlier stages of development, offered invaluable guidance and advice during the long process of shaping a dauntingly large and diffuse array of material. His patience in dealing with what must have seemed sometimes a disorganised enterprise is warmly appreciated. I also owe a particular debt of gratitude to Prof. Reiner who supervised the musical aspects of this largely inter-disciplinary study and whose kindness and enthusiasm were keenly felt.

Abstract

The Introduction isolates the particular focus of the dissertation - viz. the importance of the Wagnerian themes and allusions in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, considering existing studies of the same subject, as well as elucidating the structure and argument of the dissertation as a whole.

Chapter I presents an overview of Wagner's creative career and discusses the major themes and characters of his operas and the connections between them, as well as the all-important philosophical ideas they are designed to represent. In addition, it singles out those features which are thought to have particular importance for Joyce, with indications of how these issues will be explored further in the following chapters.

Chapter II deals with the process by which Joyce came to know Wagner's work. It briefly considers the earliest cultural and literary responses to Wagner's operas, both on the European continent and in Britain, before moving to Ireland in particular. It also deals with the importance of Wagnerism in shaping the cultural climate of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe. Finally, it examines Joyce's actual exposure to the operas and his changing attitudes to them.

In Chapters III-V, the argument focuses on particular themes and characters in the operas that appear to influence Joyce, whether in terms of direct reference or oblique allusion. The focus of each of these three chapters is, respectively, the artist-hero, the father-son relationship and the symbolic role of woman.

Chapter III considers the Wagnerian artist-hero in his various guises as the Flying Dutchman, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Siegfried, Walther von Stolzing and Parsifal and the influence each of these can be said to have had on the creation of Stephen Dedalus, both in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and in *Ulysses*.

Chapter IV examines the relationship between this artist-hero and various father figures. Its focus is thus the particular relationship between Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*, especially its symbolic dimension, and the ways in which this is informed by similar relationships in Wagner's works: Siegfried, Siegmund and Wotan, Siegfried and Mime, Walther and Hans Sachs, Parsifal and Amfortas. It also notes the significance of certain Wagnerian characters (like the Dutchman and Wotan) being associated with both Stephen and Bloom.

The next chapter expands and elaborates this network of relationships still further, by turning to the various female figures in the works of both artists. Thus Gerty MacDowell and Molly Bloom are considered from the standpoint of Wagner's heroines, Stephen's problematic relationship with his mother is compared with those of Siegfried and Parsifal and both Wagner's and Joyce's interest in the erotic is considered. In addition, the importance both artists place on the symbolic affinity between women and water is analysed and compared.

The Conclusion sums up the findings and reconsiders the chief points of concurrence and divergence between the creative output of these two supremely important artists.

Finally, there is a short appendix, aimed at indicating the ways Joyce continues to develop many of the same Wagnerian themes with still greater complexity in *Finnegans Wake*.

Introduction

When Stephen Dedalus utters his mock-heroic cry of "Nothung" at the moment of supreme crisis in *Ulysses*, he (and Joyce through him) is obviously making a direct and intentional reference to Siegfried's unbreakable sword in the *Ring* cycle. For this reason, the allusion is given considerable attention in the more detailed critical discussions of the subject (listed below). However, it is the contention of the present study that none of these texts, not even Timothy Martin's full-length *Joyce and Wagner* (1991), has considered all the ramifications of this extraordinarily dense quotation. For the fact is that this single word crystallises an exceptionally detailed web of thematic correspondences that connect both *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* with the *Ring* cycle (and, through it, with most of the other Wagner operas as well).

This dissertation is primarily concerned with the Wagnerian themes employed in the two abovementioned novels. It does not discuss any of the allusions to Wagner that have been discovered in *Chamber Music*, *Dubliners* or *Exiles*, nor is it concerned with Joyce's references to the composer and his works in his letters or critical writings, except to demonstrate his knowledge of and interest in these works. It also does not attempt to consider the vast web of allusions in *Finnegans Wake*, since this is so diffuse as to demand a full-length study in itself.[1] In addition, this study does not attempt to treat the subjects of *leitmotif*, uninterrupted melody, interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness, in other words the *formal* and *structural* debt that Joyce is considered to owe largely to Wagner. The reason it was decided to avoid this well-known and certainly very elaborate subject is that it has already been sufficiently covered by existing research, whereas it was thought a greater unity could be imparted to the present study by limiting it to the *thematic* allusions that are its chief focus. However, since this is also a subject that previous researchers have dealt with extensively, an attempt has been made to acknowledge where my findings coincide with theirs and in some instances to question and/or re-evaluate their findings.

The particular contribution this dissertation aims at is twofold: the discussion of what appear to be complex and far-reaching allusions to Wagner which, to the best my knowledge, are *not* noted in previous studies (such as the relationship between the "morning inspiration" of Stephen Dedalus and Walther's "Prize-Song" in *Die Meistersinger*); and the *re*consideration of others which *are*. In the latter case, it is hoped that a number of important points, not formerly examined, will cast new light on the problematic subject of Joyce's Wagnerism. Most of all, my contention is that Joyce's references to Wagner are more sustained and unified than has formerly been recognised. For example, although it is now firmly established (chiefly by Martin) that Stephen Dedalus represents a Joycean Siegfried, that Leopold Bloom is similarly linked to the Flying Dutchman and that Molly's affirmation of him parallels the Wagnerian "redemption through love", it has not been noted that Stephen also suggests elements of the Dutchman, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Wotan, Siegmund, Walther von Stolzing and Parsifal and that, through these identifications, Bloom is brought into closer proximity with Daland, Wolfram, Hans Sachs, Amfortas and Gurnemanz, just as Joyce's female characters are with Senta, Elisabeth, Venus, Elsa, Freia, Erda, Sieglinde, Isolde and Eva. Admittedly, some of these parallels are more evident than others. Nonetheless, it is proposed that, taken together, they imply a stronger Wagnerian presence in Joyce's texts than has hitherto been realised.

The most detailed investigation to date of Joyce's treatment of Wagnerian ideas is found in Martin's abovementioned *Joyce and Wagner*, an assured and comprehensive study that includes detailed analyses of several themes, including those of the artist "as revolutionary [and] exile" and "the redemptive woman", which are also dealt with here.[2] As the first full-length academic study of the relationship between Joyce and Wagner, Martin's book has certain natural advantages over anyone trying, however humbly, to follow in his wake. He makes a strong case, to begin with, for the broader characteristics that unite both artists:

> [They] exploit the resources of myth, emphasize sexual themes, pursue "totality" of form and subject matter, and represent the "modern" or "revolutionary" in art.[3]

He presents all the available evidence we have that Joyce was both familiar with and interested in Wagner and his works. He considers the central correspondent issues between their works in detail and, finally, presents a convincing argument that, in spite of his (understandable) reluctance to admit as much, Joyce must have counted Wagner among his most important and far-reaching influences. Nonetheless, in spite of Martin's apparent hegemony, the subject is, as he has shown, so detailed and diverse as to render it almost inevitable that further discoveries are possible, not to say unavoidable. During the course of my research, which was conducted for the most part in ignorance of Martin's findings, I have had the opportunity and the good fortune to unravel a substantial body of material. Frequently, I have found that the findings of other scholars, often predating mine by several years, have provided the final clue to a line of reasoning I had been pursuing for some time and which would otherwise not have been unearthed. To give one example, without reading Epstein's *Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus* (1971), it would probably never have occurred to me that the figure of King David is an important presence in Joyce's novels, and yet I have spent some time elaborating a theory concerning the presence of David in Wagner's *Meistersinger*, independently of my interest in the other *Meistersinger* parallels in the *Portrait*. This is but one of several similar examples where such a "missing link" has unexpectedly come to light.

Although *Joyce and Wagner* marks a considerable advance on the chapters on Joyce in John Louis DiGaetani's *Richard Wagner and the Modern British Novel* (1978), Stoddard Martin's *Wagner to "The Waste Land": A Study of the Relationship of Wagner to English Literature* (1982) and Raymond Furness's *Wagner and Literature* (1982), each of these texts makes useful contributions and approaches the subject from a different perspective, and each has been helpful in the development of the present study. In addition, Elliott Zuckerman's *The First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan (1964) is a particularly helpful text in regard to the influence of that opera in particular, although its most important contribution to scholarship is arguably the distinction it draws between the recognised phenomenon of Wagnerism and what it terms "Tristanism", a point to be taken up in my first chapter.

In relation to Joyce in general, the following (largely standard) texts have been consulted: Ellman's definitive biography, Gilbert's *James Joyce's* Ulysses*: A Study* and Blamires' *The Bloomsday Book*. In attempting to make at least some intelligent commentary on that ultimate literary enigma, *Finnegans Wake*, the following have been indispensable: Hart's *Structure and Motif in "Finnegans Wake"*, Glasheen's *Census of "Finnegans Wake"*, Tindall's *Reader's Guide to "Finnegans Wake"* and Burgess's *Here Comes Everybody* and *Joysprick*.

As regards background information on Wagner, such a vast amount has been written that one is forced to be selective. The pioneering work of Ernest Newman, his comprehensive biography, translations of the operatic texts and illuminating *Wagner Nights* must all be singled out for mention. Deryck Cooke's tragically unfinished analysis of the *Ring*, entitled *I Saw the World End*, and his extremely helpful notes on the leitmotifs of the *Ring* and their interrelationships[4] are both of great informative value. More recently, *The Wagner Compendium* (ed. Barry Millington) contains an exhaustive amount of material about every imaginable aspect of the composer and his works. Bryan Magee's short but extremely lucid book *Aspects of Wagner* offers several invaluable insights and is eminently readable. Finally, Michael Tanner's *Wagner*, one of the most provocative books on the composer in recent years, vigorously dispels the more persistent of the myths and misconceptions surrounding him, solves previously unanswered questions (especially as regards the meaning of his works) and raises still more challenging issues.

In general, mention must be made of Joseph Campbell's monumental study of comparative mythologies *The Masks of God*, and especially its fourth volume *Creative Mythology*, which deals particularly with modern manifestations of myth in Western culture and makes several illuminating comments about both Joyce and Wagner as prime exemplars of that tradition.

The structure of this study is straightforward. After a general chapter devoted to a reappraisal of Wagner's own work, attempting to clarify those elements in it which are deemed most pertinent to Joyce, a second, shorter chapter traces the biographical

evidence for Joyce's knowledge of and exposure to the works of Wagner. (This second chapter is, of necessity, somewhat derivative, since the evidence is amply provided in Martin, but it is an essential part of the argument nonetheless). Thereafter, a sequence of three chapters examines the main areas of interest, namely the artist-hero, the father-son relationship and the similar treatment of women by both artists (including their frequent association with water). These three chapters are very much the core of the study and are closely interrelated. Collectively, they attempt to map the symbolic territory shared by Joyce and Wagner and, individually, they advance distinct steps in the argument as a whole. The first of these (Chapter III) introduces what could be termed the primary interest of this study, the important figure of the artist-hero. Whereas many previous commentators mention this theme, particularly in terms of the relationship between Siegfried and Stephen Dedalus, only Martin devotes a whole chapter to it and even he does not exhaust the issue. My essential point in the chapter is to show that all Wagner's heroes are variations of one another and that Joyce's characterisation of Stephen draws, either directly or indirectly, on almost all of them. Chapter IV then expands on this theme, showing how the problematic (and essentially antagonistic) relationship between this hero and his various father-figures (both literal and symbolic) is also foreshadowed in Wagner, most obviously (but not exclusively) in the *Ring*. In Chapter V, this sequence of thought is further elaborated by considering the relationships of both male figures with a variety of women, including mothers and lovers. In addition, it considers the many symbolic patterns of water in the works of both artists and their importance for the various characters.

Finally, it needs to be said that, although there are numerous direct allusions to Wagner in Joyce's work, to limit one's attention to such safe ground would be largely unrewarding, unchallenging and unimaginative. Therefore, a substantial part of this dissertation is concerned with exploring slightly greyer areas, those curious but sometimes intangible affinities between Wagner's works and Joyce's. In doing so, I am simply following the lead established by existing studies. Timothy Martin, for example, claims that an allusion may be considered genuine "if its context seems to draw on themes from the opera or if another reference to Wagner is present".[5] Although he is here referring to *Finnegans*

Wake, the same may be said of Joyce's earlier texts. Even though they are far less dense and difficult to decipher, they are subtle enough to conceal significant webs of allusion to more than one source. For example, in my analysis of the apparent *Meistersinger* parallels in the *Portrait*, there is no incontestably direct evidence to link them to Wagner (as is the case with the "Nothung" and other allusions to *Siegfried*). However, what appears to be a series of coincidental resemblances between the "Prize Song" and the "morning inspiration" is unexpectedly consolidated by the description of the girl on the beach as a "soft-plumaged dove" (see Chapter III). While this does not combine several references to Wagner, it does at least satisfy Martin's other criterion of seeming "to draw on themes from the opera".[6] Moreover, unlike the instances described by Martin, these suggestions do not occur in close proximity to one another but are spread out across the body of the text so that it becomes a question of identifying wide-ranging symbolic structures. However, the very least that can be concluded in such cases is that, by what could hardly have been coincidence, Wagner and Joyce have both instituted remarkably similar symbolic patterns in their respective works. Inevitably such delicate shades of overlapping meaning cannot be conclusively proven. Rather, what is intended is that this subtle and intriguing resemblance can be explored in a way that is suggestive and provocative, stimulating an awareness of creative processes, whether conscious or unconscious, at work in both of the artists concerned.

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[1] Although, as Joyceans will notice at once, both the title of the dissertation and several subheadings are taken from the *Wake*'s veritable treasure trove of Wagnerian puns.
[2] *Joyce and Wagner*, preface, p xiii.
[3] Ibid., p xi. (One might add their (partly ironic) nationalism and the way they have come to epitomise the aesthetic movements of Romanticism and Modernism, respectively.)
[4] *An Introduction to* Der Ring des Nibelungen (a specially made recording by DECCA).
[5] *Joyce and* Wagner, p 185.
[6] Loc. cit.

A Note on Translation

Throughout this dissertation quotations from Wagner's works appear in an English translation only, with the original German text provided in the footnotes, rather than the other way around, as is the more usual practice. The reason it was thought best to follow this procedure is that, writing primarily for an English audience and being far from fluent in German myself, it seemed to facilitate a greater fluidity and unity within the text. I have, of course, availed myself of several different translations to arrive at the best possible understanding of the original material, and the reader can easily test the accuracy of my findings against the quotations in footnotes. Wherever possible, I have tried to avoid basing any of my conclusions on the translation alone, without checking the original text as well.

The choice of specific translations has been somewhat limited by availability. Those provided with recordings are generally the most reliable and I have freely used them for reference purposes. However, within the dissertation itself, I have opted to use metrical rather than exact translations, taken largely from piano transcriptions of the operas, many of which are rather old and of unequal quality. This, it might justly be felt, is to risk losing a measure of accuracy, though I have attempted to compensate for this by re-checking the translations against one another. Where discrepancies appear, I have taken the liberty of amending the given translation and providing an explanation in the appropriate footnote, together with alternatives taken from other sources. On the whole, it was thought better to go to these lengths rather than simply use a literal translation, in which the rhythm and flavour of Wagner's (grossly underestimated) poetry is lost. I have been fortunate in most cases to have access to the excellent English versions by Ernest Newman, the quality of which is far superior to the usual thing one comes across. My chief disappointment has been *Tristan*, which I have only been able to find in an anonymous version that leaves much to be desired[1] and for which I must humbly beg the reader's indulgence.

[1] See, for example, the unfortunate extract from the *Liebestod* given on page 30.

Chapter I

HEROES OF THE WAGNER DRAMA

The primary aim of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of Wagner's musico-dramatic output, conceived as a single, unified body of work, while highlighting those features of each opera (and those common to all or most of them) which seem to have exercised the clearest influence on Joyce, thereby providing a background against which the main body of the dissertation can stand.

To begin with, it must be said that the fundamental reason why Wagner is such a pervasive presence in modern literature is probably the unique nature of his position in the cultural climate of the late nineteenth century. To a far greater extent than is usual among composers, his work seems to spill over into the other arts, as well as the realms of philosophy, religion and politics. It seems undeniable that in this and in several other respects Wagner was unique. So it is that, alone among composers, his name has given rise to a cultural movement.[1] He is sometimes referred to as being a figure of the same rank as Freud, Marx and Einstein as one of the primary shapers of modern thought. Referring to the commonly cited remark that Wagner has had more written about him than anyone else except Jesus and Napoleon,[2] Andrew Porter comments that, since that remark was first made, both Jesus and Wagner have continued to inspire ever-increasing numbers of new books, whereas "Napoleon is out of the running".[3] This certainly seems to cut the opposition down to the one figure with whom one imagines Wagner would most like to have been compared!

More specifically, Wagner is arguably the most literary of the great musicians.[4] His works have long been recognised for the serious manner in which they explore central philosophical questions. They are also among the best-known and most influential treatments of myth in recent times.

Finally, there is the extraordinarily powerful impact that his works have always had on audiences. Though often too intense for some tastes, they are unrivalled in their ability to produce extremes of ecstasy, resulting in the well-documented phenomenon of "Wagnerolatry".[5] Numerous accounts exist, by figures as diverse as Baudelaire and Bruno Walter, of the almost religious nature of their first encounters with the music of "the Meister".[6] Nor has this extremism abated significantly, as one might have expected, in the post-war period. Bernard Levin, for example, has recorded his enthusiasm in several books of his popular-serious music journalism. "[E]ven now", he admits, "[W]hen I hear the opening bars of the Prelude to *Tristan*, or the merest growl from Fafner as a snatch of *Siegfried* passes by, or the shimmering wonder of the Good Friday Spell from *Parsifal*, the passion flares up, and in a few seconds I am once again drunk beyond breathalyzers" and, as if this is not enough, he adds "I cannot see how life would be possible without *The Mastersingers*".[7] Levin, moreover, is far from being an isolated case. According to Andrew Porter's illuminating essay on "Richard Wagner – The Continuing Appeal" (quoted above), the composer's popularity is more widespread than ever, and he cites details of performances to prove his point, concluding "I wouldn't be surprised to learn before long that one of our adventurous smaller companies, say the Kentucky Opera in Louisville, was offering a *Ring*".[8] As if to prove him right, the 1998 special festival edition of *Opera* announces a much publicised performance of the cycle in Flagstaff, Arizona in June[9] (actually a repeat of the production mounted there in 1996), as well as three run-throughs in Adelaide by the State Opera of South Australia,[10] not to mention the usual range of Wagner productions on offer in Europe.

It is by no means always the case, however, that the writers and artists who were most strongly influenced by the composer were "Wagnerians" in the sense I have been talking about. Joyce certainly does not seem to have been anything of the kind. Not only is his treatment of Wagnerian themes frequently satirical, his private utterances about the composer are more often abusive than complimentary. The general consensus among scholars of the field, though, seems to be that many of these attitudes can be traced to a jealousy of Wagner's pre-eminence at the time. The

episode in which Joyce left a performance of *Die Walküre* in disgust when told that the "Sirens" chapter of *Ulysses* was no better than this opera certainly seems to provide clear evidence in this regard.[11]

Exactly why Joyce's novels demonstrate such a keen interest in a composer towards whom his attitudes were so ambivalent is not easy to establish. Undoubtedly, satire was one of his aims and one imagines his iconoclastic tendencies being substantially encouraged by the veneration in which Wagner was frequently held at the time. However, his use of Wagnerian patterns in his works is just as serious as it is satirical (being, to use his own term, "jocoserious"). That is to say, while appearing to deflate Wagner in much the same way as he does Homer, he simultaneously adds an element of grandeur to the most banal and, occasionally, even sordid scenarios.

What this chapter will now set out to do is to discuss each of Wagner's operas and music-dramas in turn (from *Der fliegende Holländer* - his first acknowledged masterpiece - to *Parsifal*), attempting to outline:

a) - the primary thematic concerns of each (and their parallels in the works of Joyce to be discussed later); and

b) - the way in which each has important links with all the others.[12]

This, it is hoped, will give some sense of Wagner's creative output as an identifiable cultural phenomenon. Thereafter, we will be better equipped to deal more fully with the subsequent permeation of Joyce's novels by that phenomenon.

Turning our attention to Wagner's early career, it is immediately obvious that he intentionally identified himself with the German Romantic movement, immersing himself from an early age in the works of Goethe and Schiller, as well as translations of Shakespeare. In *Mein Leben*, he describes a histrionic tragedy, "Leubald und Adelaide" which he wrote during his adolescent years and in which he drew heavily on

these influences.[13] At the same time, he was also an avid reader of the macabre tales of E. T. A. Hoffman and was beginning to acquaint himself with the Germanic myths which were to provide the essential stimulus for most of his later works. Considering all these early influences, then, it is not surprising to find in these works a preoccupation with the classic themes of the Romantic movement in general, neatly and amusingly summed up in Constant Lambert's description of the "artist . . . being alternately bludgeoned by Fate and consoled by Platonic Love, the Beauties of Nature and Ultimate Faith in a Beneficent Providence".[14] If we add to this list the artist's chief aims: Re-creation of the Heroic Past, Liberation of the People (the Volk) from Corrupt Materialism, and Intoxication through Dionysian Rites of Ecstasy and Contemplation of the Infinite, we have a more-or-less complete list of the essential Romantic obsessions, all of which were already well established by Wagner's time but which he was greatly to intensify. Indeed, as is often observed, Wagner's works throughout his career increasingly demonstrate a form of Romanticism pushed to its logical limit.

Later, in turning to Joyce, it will be apparent that his use of Wagnerian themes is frequently linked with and sometimes inseparable from his absorption of German Romanticism in general. A good example is the characterisation of Molly Bloom, who, while providing a possible counterpoint to some of Wagner's (frequently overlapping) heroines, can be traced back through these (and also independently of them) to their mutual source in Goethe's "ewig-weibliche". However, it is once again Wagner's pre-eminence as the leading exponent of late nineteenth century Romanticism and his uniquely successful combination of music, drama and myth that make him, for Joyce as for other early twentieth century figures, one of the most obvious sources to turn to for thematic parallels.

The Bugganeering Wanderducken

The first of the four main turning points in Wagner's career was the composition of *Der fliegende Holländer* (1840-1). This was the first example of a "music-drama"[15] created

in the way he intended and marked the beginning of a tradition that was to be continued in every subsequent work that he wrote, though the process grew ever more complex.

Basically, each of the music-dramas began as a dramatisation of the composer's personal experience. His reading of mythology and history seems to have inspired in him a deep sympathy with those characters and situations which he saw as analogous to his own. Thus, he would recreate these ancient subjects by stressing those elements that seemed most pertinent to his own life. As a result, all of his major dramatic works can be interpreted as expressions of his own deeply personal and romanticised reactions to life.

In the case of *Der fliegende Holländer*, he recognised that a figure based on the archetypal wanderer, and like Odysseus a mariner, was powerfully symbolic of his own condition as a struggling artist. It should not be forgotten that, at this time, he really was struggling, desperately turning to any work he could get (from making copies of other composers' scores to writing hack journalism) in order to eke out an existence in the poorer quarters of Paris. Hence the fact that the work which stems from that turbulent creative period is so powerfully expressive of anger, bitterness and disillusionment. The sense of alienation and persecution that was to dog him throughout his life was substantially formed during these early years, and is vividly portrayed in his depiction of the tormented, storm-tossed wayfarer. Similarly, his unshakeable sense of his own worth is also seen in the way the Dutchman is portrayed as an almost elemental figure, larger than life, his character and passions assuming a grandeur that virtually eclipses the secondary characters. Here, then, as in all his subsequent works, the composer effectively becomes his own Romantic hero.[16]

An adjunct to this is that the hero's redemption is typically to be found in the arms of a woman, whose sole aim in life is to provide just such a solace. Many women in Wagner's life were to assume this role at one time or another, but he always knew that

it was by definition an impossible and unattainable ideal. The important point, as far as his works are concerned, is that sex is used symbolically, to represent the mystical, transcendental goal of human existence, a pattern reworked in different ways in each subsequent drama.

It will already be evident to students of Joyce that the features outlined above are all equally prominent in his novels, the theme of exile (particularly in relation to the artist) being the most obvious example. Like Wagner, Joyce also accords a central role to the figure of the wanderer and explores the idea of his possible redemption through sexual love. Equally, his own life, no less than Wagner's, attests to this obsession. He too was obliged to undergo years of privation and ignominy before achieving a measure of success, and also found it necessary to abandon his parochial homeland in favour of wider horizons, both physical and intellectual. Moreover, his partnership with Nora Barnacle was undoubtedly the main sustaining and stabilising influence in his life, and seems to have furnished as much material for his art as Wagner's various love-affairs did for his.

Given this similarity both in the circumstances of their lives and the primary concerns of their respective works, it is natural to expect that Joyce would have been attracted to Wagner as a potential source, and of all the many Wagnerian exile-heroes, as Martin points out, "[n]one . . . spoke so eloquently to [him] as did the figure Wagner had called his 'Wandering Jew of the Ocean,' the Flying Dutchman".[17]

The influence of *Holländer* is clearly seen in *Ulysses*, where the Dutchman's doomed wandering in search of a wife provides an obvious counterpart to that of Ulysses himself (which, as Martin clearly shows, is a similarity already noted by Wagner).[18] Equally significant is the fact that both Joyce and Wagner developed this character in relation to another important figure of popular legend, the Wandering Jew. These and other related ideas will be dealt with fully in Chapter IV. While many of the relevant points have already been treated in detail by Martin, the particular importance of the Dutchman theme for this study is the role it plays in relation to other Wagnerian

components which go to make up the complex persona of Stephen Dedalus. These will be initially considered in Chapter III, and thereafter as they overlap with other themes and characters in the subsequent chapters.

The wish to be her knight

In *Tannhäuser* [19] (composed 1843-5) Wagner goes a step further than *Holländer*. Here, the hero (as in Joyce's *Portrait*) actually is an artist, one who, like the composer himself, is at odds with the musical establishment of his day (again providing a parallel with Stephen-Joyce's rejection of what he considered the backward-looking Celtic revival). Even before his sojourn in the Venusberg, Tannhäuser has quarrelled with his fellow minnesingers, having left the court of the Landgrave "in scornful wrath",[20] though we are not told why.[21] The only comments made in the opera about the songs he sang before being spirited away to the realm of Venus are those of Wolfram in Act I (relating to the effect they had on the chaste Elisabeth) and those of Elisabeth herself in Act II (which reveal still more about this, in some respects, rather alarming effect). First, Wolfram enquires of Tannhäuser:

> What wondrous art didst thou employ
> What magic strains of grief and joy
> To bind with spells of mighty power
> A maid so rich in virtue's dower?[22]

clearly implying that these songs had some extra-musical or supernatural quality which caused them to so captivate their fair listener. She herself later admits this in the following revealing passage:

> The minstrels' cunning measures
> Always to my heart were dear,
> Their singing and their rhyming
> I heard with willing ear,

But what new worlds outspread before me,
When first thy song upon me stole:
At first a thrill of pain came o'er me,
Then floods of joy o'erwhelmed my soul!
New raptures that I scarce could measure
Awoke within my trembling breast,
And lost was ev'ry girlish pleasure
In longings ne'er before confest![23]

In other words, the virginal Elizabeth has clearly experienced some quasi-sexual sensation in the act of hearing Tannhäuser's music. The most noteworthy aspect of this is that Wagner's own music has frequently been described as having just such an effect upon its more receptive listeners. Indeed, it is precisely this quality that is most often cited in efforts to show how Wagner's music differs fundamentally from that of all other composers.[24] It would seem then that Wagner, in portraying himself as his own hero once more, shows that he was aware of the unprecedented effect that his music would have on people: that of making them feel an ecstasy so intense that it is directly analogous to sex.[25]

It is important at this point to draw a distinction between the music which has a specifically sexual *content* (i.e. which deliberately attempts to depict sexual feelings)[26] and that which *produces* the quasi-sexual effect on its hearers mentioned above. Whereas the latter includes almost all of his major work,[27] the former is chiefly restricted to *Tannhäuser*'s "Venusberg Music", the first act of *Die Walküre*, almost all of *Tristan* and the second act of *Parsifal*. In other words, that which could loosely be termed the "sexiness" of the music, its ability to make "floods of joy o'erwhelm [the] soul", is not restricted to the "sex scenes" themselves.

Significantly for this dissertation, Wagner's explicit eroticism finds an interesting counterpart in Joyce, who nonetheless seems to have remained at least relatively impervious to the music's seductiveness (a reaction which - as Chapter V will attempt to show - is matched by that of Bloom in the "Sirens" episode of *Ulysses*). Whether or

not Joyce sought to "overwhelm" his readers in the way Wagner seems to do to his listeners, one can at least note the qualities of richness and intensity that are so evident in the works of both masters and that lend themselves so readily to a powerful and detailed exploration of sexual themes. To the extent that it is possible to do so, Chapter V will consider the relationship (if any) between these two striking treatments of the erotic.

Returning now to the idea that Wagner's works were increasingly shaped by his self-awareness as an artist, it would seem that his interest in the Tannhäuser subject grew from his belief that it would portray his own struggle to find acceptance in a world that regarded his works as too progressive and as both immoral and dangerous (another aspect of his life that is equally true of Joyce). *Tannhäuser* itself, to an even greater extent than *Holländer*, uses the idea of sexual fulfilment as a symbol of redemption (just as Joyce so famously does in *Ulysses*).[28] However, since this interpretation of the opera seems at odds with its literal presentation of a conflict between sensual and spiritual love, it will be considered in more detail in Chapter III.

Tannhäuserian patterns seem to occur with regularity in Joyce's works. The most obvious example is the direct quotation in *Exiles* (dealt with substantially by Martin). However, since this study is concerned exclusively with Joyce's novels, I will confine my attention to the more elusive parallels that occur in them, beginning with *A Portrait*, where Stephen is clearly shown to share Tannhäuser's two conflicting desires, those of his "sinful" sexuality and his highly idealised veneration of "pure" women in general and of the Blessed Virgin Mary in particular (towards whom he feels the mock-chivalric "wish to be her knight").[29] As I will attempt to show in Chapters III and V, Joyce probably felt encouraged by thus finding one of his own obsessions mirrored in the Wagnerian work.

Finally, in *Ulysses*, Stephen continues (albeit with greater awareness - and irony) to indulge both these desires. Furthermore, they emerge as fundamental concerns of the novel as a whole, with the virgin becoming the dominant symbol of "Nausicaa" as the

whore becomes that of "Circe", while Penelope-Molly seems intended (at least in part) as a synthesis of both. Again, while Joyce's interest in these figures primarily grows out of his own experiences and obsessions, he could hardly fail to draw upon the rich parallels provided by both German romanticism in general and Wagner in particular.[30]

The contribution made by *Tannhäuser* to building up the artist-persona of Stephen Dedalus will be considered in detail in Chapter III, while Chapter V looks at the portrayal of "virgin" and "whore" archetypes in relation to both this opera and *Ulysses*.

The end he was born to serve

Lohengrin, which followed almost immediately after *Tannhäuser* (1845-8), expresses the same sense of undeserved rejection that is found in its two predecessors. This time the hero is a knight of the Holy Grail, a messenger of divine grace. He is permitted to fight for truth and justice only so long as his identity remains undisclosed. Once again, Wagner seems to have recognised this tale as an ideal means of allegorising his own situation. As a Romantic artist, he naturally felt himself to be something of a visionary, a revealer of divine truth, whose evident genius should equally remain beyond question, and he was growing increasingly dissatisfied with both his own situation and that of the world in general. His prose writings of the period show his belief that reform in the arts (which he felt was so strongly needed) would only be possible when society itself was regenerated. In spite of his fairly high public profile as Dresden's Kapellmeister, he began to align himself more and more strongly with the growing revolutionary movement. Ernest Newman explains:

> He was sincerely moved by the spectacle of the hardships of the common people, and as sorry for them as he was for himself. The central impulse of his being, of course, was to realise himself as an artist in the new theatre of his Utopian dreams. But this new German theatre could be born only out of a new German culture; and the new culture would be possible, he thought, only when the "Folk" were "free". . . . And since the prerequisite social changes could be

> brought about only by political means, he naturally took, in time, to practical politics, but as yet, for the most part less for politics' sake than for art's sake and for Richard Wagner's sake.[31]

It was against this background that *Lohengrin* was written. The opera's depiction of Henry the Fowler's national call-to-arms is thus given a distinctly revolutionary flavour, as is the fact that this attempt is marred by the internal strife within Brabant itself (which mirrors the provincial discord Wagner and others saw as the major obstacle to the new united Germany they dreamed of). Lohengrin himself, as mentioned earlier, suggests yet another self-portrait of the artist, since it is his shining example as a representative of the realm of divine truth that helps to unite the men of Brabant round Henry's banner. When lack of faith forces him to reveal his identity and return to Monsalvat, he foretells that the campaign will bring victory for the German cause, but even this cannot dispel the sense of loss his enforced departure creates. It seems unavoidable to draw a parallel between this and the composer's own exile that followed the failure of revolution in 1849, less than three years after he drafted the plot. Could it be that he unconsciously foresaw the necessity for his exile and foreshadowed it in the opera he was creating? Whatever the answer, much of the music in this mystical opera is among the most beautiful Wagner ever wrote, creating as it does a sense of incorruptible serenity.

Lohengrin is the one work of Wagner's maturity of which there is no direct evidence that Joyce ever saw it, but as Martin stresses, a work so "widely performed . . . would have been hard for an aficionado of opera to miss" so that "[w]e can be virtually certain that Joyce eventually saw all Wagner's mature operas on stage".[32] Also, as Martin's list of allusions demonstrates, Joyce did at least know the work on paper, since his critical writings refer to it.[33] Clearly then, given the degree of interest he demonstrated in regard to *Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*, we can expect him to have been as aware of the similar issues raised by *Lohengrin*, particularly where the theme of exile is concerned. More particularly, although the novels do not allude to this work as demonstrably as to the others, one can at least speculate that Joyce's knowledge of it

(and, once again, of the obvious thematic links that it shares with the others) informed his writing at some level.

Certainly, *Lohengrin* is in many respects less interesting than its immediate predecessors, as well as being the one Wagner opera that lends itself most readily to literal interpretation as a straightforward Romantic fairy tale. Nonetheless, it does advance one or two interesting ideas. To begin with, the hero is the first in Wagner's canon who assumes the position of redeemer rather than that of victim, though this issue is complicated by the fact that in the end he is also an outcast, in that the potential for redemption that he offers is never fully realised. The idea that all Wagner's larger-than-life heroes were rooted in his egomania has already been discussed: it is a factor that renders them sublime and amusingly pretentious by turns, depending on one's outlook at the time. However, Joyce was far from modest about his own talents, though temperament and cultural environment inclined him much more strongly towards irony and bathos. Nonetheless, however much these qualities limit the heroic dimension of Stephen Dedalus, he is still frequently allowed to rise to heights as ecstatic and triumphant as any of Wagner's more unqualified protagonists. More specifically, the artist who aspires to "forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race"[34] is clearly setting himself up to become the same kind of cultural redeemer that Wagner portrayed for the first time in the figure of Lohengrin. The fact that both heroes are "called" to flee the land where they feel constrained by misunderstanding and fear and to travel by water to the brighter and loftier plane that they envisage as a spiritual home also invites comment. In other words, Joyce must have been aware of the significance *Lohengrin* played in relation to Wagner's life and exile and so perhaps have had it in mind during the dramatisation of his own. Although references to the opera are scant in Joyce's writing (certainly when compared with those to *Holländer*, *Tristan* and the *Ring*), the heroic artist-allegory it suggests does provide a striking parallel with his own voluntary exile and the noted desire to "forge . . . the uncreated conscience of [his] race". However, since Siegfried was to provide a more potent model in this respect, it may have seemed redundant to

refer directly to Lohengrin as well, although, inasmuch as Lohengrin is a partial prototype for Siegfried, the connection is at least worth mentioning.

There is, however, one feature peculiar to *Lohengrin* that is repeated in the *Portrait* and that is the spiritual quality of the hero's calling and of the "vision" he has of the power that has sent him into the world. In each case, this "power" is represented by one of two closely related and highly potent symbols: in Wagner's case, the Grail, and in Joyce's, the Mystic Rose. The implications of this important resemblance will therefore be considered in detail in Chapter III.

Tourments of tosend years

1848 has gone down in history as the Year of Revolutions, the year when workers' and students' movements all over Europe rose up in arms against the authoritarian regimes that seemed to stand in their way to freedom and were (almost without exception) bloodily suppressed. In Dresden, the fighting raged for weeks and Wagner, characteristically, was in the thick of it, helping to distribute placards and taking every opportunity to make inflammatory speeches.[35] When the uprising was finally quashed, a warrant was issued for his arrest on charges of actively inciting and aiding in an insurrection, and he was forced to flee for his life.[36]

Once safely across the border into Switzerland, Wagner threw himself upon the mercy of his many loyal friends and supporters. The generosity of Otto Wesendonck, a wealthy Zurich silk merchant, was particularly instrumental in allowing the composer to live in the style to which he had grown accustomed. It was under these pleasant circumstances, with the turmoil of the failed revolution behind him, that he was finally free to reassess his career or "mission" as an artist. For the next five years, he gave himself over to writing long theoretical treatises about the problems of the world and how they could be solved through the agency of "divine" art, chiefly *Art and Revolution*,

The Artwork of the Future and the copious *Opera and Drama*. In these works, he basically provided a rationale for the epic music-dramas that were to follow.

It would seem that Wagner reviewed his whole life at this point, and put some fundamental questions to himself. He had already shown in his earlier works for the stage that he was aware of having created an entirely new kind of music, one which, in its power to overwhelm the listener, was almost sexual in nature. He had also discovered an equally unprecedented way of depicting sex itself in music and he had finally portrayed himself in the guise of a social reformer whose high ideals proved to be too far ahead of his time. What was a man who had achieved so much already about to do now that he entered his late thirties (a period that modern-day psychologists might well identify as that of his "mid-life crisis")?

Questions of religion and philosophy had always interested Wagner and their influence can be traced in the works he had already written before this time, but it was at this point that they first seem to have become central to his thinking. In other words, just as he had chosen (from *Holländer* onwards) to put music entirely at the service of drama, so now he seems to have reached an equally important decision, that of putting "music-drama" at the service of philosophy. He wanted to create an all-embracing world-view and express it in his works. He wanted to consider everything and leave out nothing (nothing, that is, that he considered important) and he wanted to express it all in such a way that it could not conceivably be improved on. Furthermore, the underlying principle on which it was all to be based was that a mystical energy at the heart of all existence was to be "re-created" in the music-dramas themselves. In portraying himself as the selfless servant and bringer of this energy into the world, he seems to have believed that he would become the healer of the world's problems, a kind of secularised Messiah.

Michael Tanner has some extremely insightful suggestions to make in this regard. Having spoken of Wotan's great soul-searching monologue in *Die Walküre* Act II, he goes on to grapple with the question:

> [H]ow does Wagner free us from the sense that a radically new moral vision - which is self-evidently necessary for us as much as for the inhabitants of the world of the *Ring* - is bound to be trapped in its own dialectic? By the most audacious of means: the experience of his art will bring about our freedom. How could that be? Only if the art itself possessed such transcendent authority that it was able, at one blow, to sweep away the accumulated traditions by which we live . . . and replace our old feelings with a set of new ones which are self-evidently superior. This is the implicit imperative in all of Wagner's mature works. They don't issue the command that issues from Rilke's Archaic Torso of Apollo, "Du musst dein Leben ändern" (You must change your life). They do change it - or that is the idea. . . . There is no question that those who feel most dubious about his art feel that he is making a devilish bid for their souls, just as those who are most spellbound by it are happy to give themselves into its, or his, keeping.[37]

Wagner began work towards the *Ring* as early as 1848 (before his exile). As the great work continued to develop during years of increasing disillusionment that the revolution he had hoped for would ever happen, he recreated a myth that told of how power begets corruption, of how the world has become weighed down beneath the burden of an ancient evil, and of how hope lies in rejecting power and turning instead to nature and to love.

One of the most interesting "coincidences" that emerges from a consideration of Joyce's and Wagner's careers is the fact that both fled their native countries and sought refuge, in each case, in Switzerland, specifically Zürich. It was here too that each artist would begin producing his most significant body of work to date. Of course, there are also significant differences. Joyce was much younger than Wagner at the time of his flight (twenty-two as against thirty-six)[38] and, still more importantly, his exile was a voluntary one. Nonetheless, he was presumably aware of the parallel and even seems to allude to it in *Finnegans Wake* at one point. This is the moment when he refers to the composer's most famous love affair: "as a wagoner would his mudheeldy

wheesindonck . . . after tourments of tosend years".[39] This affair took place largely in Zürich, during the years that followed his exile, and was at least a partial solace after the several "tourments" of Wagner's life up to that time, which he had already expressed as the "tosend years" of suffering endured by his own Flying Dutchman.

Mild Aunt Lisa

The third great turning point in Wagner's career was his decision in 1856 to abandon work on the *Ring* (after having composed the music for *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and the first two acts of *Siegfried*) and instead to begin work on *Tristan und Isolde*, a decision primarily fed by Schopenhauer and by the composer's own ever-deepening awareness of his "mission". In a sense, *Tristan* can be said to be an "offshoot" of the *Ring*, even though it is such a complete and fully formed work in its own right.

Once again, Wagner seems to have been following those deep creative instincts that were to guide him so surely throughout his life. At a subconscious level, he may already have decided to complete both *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* before the *Ring*. With the full picture of his completed life's work before us, a pattern seems to emerge, formed by the *Ring* as the dominant central edifice, flanked by the two twin pillars of *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* and capped by the overarching dome of *Parsifal*. A little fanciful perhaps, but this idea illustrates something essential to this dissertation's understanding of Wagner: that his last works are closely inter-related and that taken together they form a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Tristan, then, was the first part of this colossal edifice to reach completion. It is a perfectly rounded, self-sufficient whole, and has its own, highly distinctive flavour. Without going into too much detail here, it should at least be said that the opera is one of the outstanding artistic achievements of Western culture, seeming like a strange new world in itself, into which one can periodically immerse oneself, to emerge again refreshed in spirit, drunk with delight, washed and cleansed in heart and soul. It is

also an extraordinarily rich and diverse exploration of the erotic and a profound meditation on the relationship between sexuality and death. In addition, it is yet another instance of Wagner's obsession with exploring his own role as an artist, though this is both less obvious and more profound than in previous works. Not only does he now assume the role of the great lover but also that of the revealer of love's secret source, as it is now for the first time that he portrays sex and nature and the divine and, significantly, music as being all closely and inextricably bound. There are several places in the text where this is suggested but the most striking example is Isolde's "Liebestod", where, in her delirium, she hears sweet music pouring from Tristan's body:

> Is it I
> Alone am hearing,
> Strains so tender
> And endearing,
> Passion swelling,
> All things telling,
> Gently bounding,
> From him sounding,
> In me pushes,
> Round me rushes,
> Trumpet tone
> That round me gushes?[40]

As Isolde grows further and further removed from reality, the "music" becomes imperceptibly transformed into "perfumed billows". The implication is that, deluded or not, Isolde is having some kind of astral experience, perceiving her soul as merging with that of Tristan on some transcendental plane of existence. At this point, though, it becomes necessary to distance oneself from the hypnotic experience in order to question for a moment the artificial nature of opera. What is actually happening is that a dramatic soprano is playing the role of a sixth century Irish princess. It cannot be supposed that the "real" Isolde at the level of the story is actually singing.[41] The

audience, however, will have long since ceased to make any such distinction, so that it seems quite natural to identify the music imagined by the fictional Isolde with that which the soprano playing the role and the very large orchestra are combining to produce and which is flooding the auditorium with waves of resplendent sound. The music thus plays the trick of making us suppose that we are somehow inside Isolde's mind, experiencing it with her. It is as if Wagner were saying: The music I have composed is an authentic statement of what becoming immersed in the "World-breath" actually feels like; - the artist himself thus becoming the vehicle through which the uncanny experience is transmuted.

There can be little doubt that, along with *Holländer* and the *Ring*, *Tristan* forms one of the most important of Wagner's influences on Joyce. Its Celtic origin is a signal factor here but at least as important is the opera's exploration of betrayal, guilt and the transcending power of love, themes equally important in Joyce's writing. Furthermore, *Tristan* is arguably Wagner's most technically advanced composition and it is highly likely that Joyce, being aware of its expertise and sophistication, was prompted to emulate these qualities in a different medium. Its extreme sensuality, for one thing, may have challenged him to find literary equivalents for a "Liebestod". Chapter V will compare the way *Tristan* and *Ulysses* idealise erotic experience, as well as looking at the role played in both these works by the sea as an image of the infinite (as happens in *Finnegans Wake* as well).

"My favourite Wagner opera"

Having created *Tristan*, Wagner went on to begin work on *Die Meistersinger*, his only mature comedy. It was in this work that he was first to deal with the question of his own "divinity", by deliberately portraying himself in a manner that invites comparison with Christ.

Along with Verdi's *Falstaff*, *Die Meistersinger* forms the quintessence of nineteenth century opera's contribution to the great tradition of humanist comedy that stretches from Homer, through *Don Quixote* and *Huckleberry Finn*, down to Joyce's own *Ulysses*. In common with this tradition, it exhibits a particular brand of humour in which cynicism is blended with acceptance and which seems to smile wryly at the indifference of the gods, before going on to celebrate the earthy joys of common experience. There is then an innocent inoffensiveness and a great deal of playful fun in the way it presents the young poet, Walther von Stolzing, who dreams of being acclaimed as a Mastersinger, as a Christ-figure. It does this obliquely (but undeniably) by drawing a parallel between Walther's mentor and precursor, Hans Sachs, and the biblical figure of John the Baptist. Walther is also compared to David (both as psalmist and as giant-killer) and to Adam (in his partnering with Eva - Eve), perhaps suggesting that mortal man can become as god in the person of the artist. The wealth of imagery Wagner uses to make this point is extremely complex and elaborate, however, and it is not possible to go into it all in detail here. The Prize Song which Walther sings at the end of the opera plays a particularly important role, in that it explains the relationship between artistic and divine inspiration (symbolised respectively by the Muses' spring and the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Life). The Song itself, in its effect on the assembled populace, can be equated with the Sermon on the Mount.

In its own way, *Die Meistersinger* is as remarkable an achievement as *Tristan*. Instead of eroticism, the work is similarly unified by its sense of life's wholesomeness, a rich blending together of the joy of young love, the wisdom and contentedness of mellow middle age, the healing power of song and the shared warmth of the human community.

One important possible source for Joyce's *Portrait*, that seems to have been generally overlooked is the Prize-Song (more particularly, the earlier version of the song which appears in Act III scene ii, the so-called "Morgentraum-lied"). This, as I hope to show in Chapter III, shares a wealth of important stylistic and symbolic attributes with

Stephen's "morning inspiration" in Chapter 4 of *A Portrait* (already considered in relation to the *Lohengrin* Prelude, with which the lied also has certain affinities).

In addition, *Die Meistersinger* as a whole (which Joyce once claimed was his favourite Wagner opera),[42] provides an obvious counterpart to *A Portrait*, in its strongly autobiographical element and in its association of the hero with Christ. Joyce, however, is most unlike Wagner in his ironic distancing of himself from his hero.

Guttergloomering

In August 1876, in what was one of the most significant musical events of the century, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was given its first complete performance, at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus which Wagner had had specially built for it.

Once again, as in the earlier works, his conception of himself is a vital part of the pattern. The hero of the cycle, in the conventional operatic sense, is obviously Siegfried, but the central figure is Wotan, who begins by dominating the action but becomes gradually more withdrawn from it as he learns the lesson of renunciation. Indeed it is perhaps Wotan of all his characters that is most readily associated with the composer. Like Wotan, Wagner felt he had to learn to abandon his dream of improving the world, leaving that task to the "new man" or "man of the future", represented by Siegfried. There is little hope expressed in the work, though, that even he will succeed, and it is only the idealised "woman of the future" in the person of Brünnhilde who averts final disaster - though, even then, not before she and all the gods have gone to their fiery end. Ultimately, it is this end, more than anything else, that is upheld as a solution. Indeed, one of the central tenets of Wagner's thinking, already hinted at in *Holländer*, but perhaps not fully realised until after the crisis of 1848, is that death and destruction are greatly desirable. It is this, surely, which has led to so many people finding his works so deeply disturbing, even if, from the Wagnerian perspective, this seems paradoxically to be his greatest insight. There

appears to be an incomparable masochistic joy, a mingling of awe and malicious glee in contemplating the near-universal devastation with which the *Ring* comes to its breathtaking close, compared to which the happier endings of other works can seem trite and dull.

This ending is worth looking at in some detail. Wagner himself spent a great deal of soul-searching before producing the finished version and it remains, as he no doubt intended, decidedly ambiguous. The end of the gods is portrayed as inevitable, regardless of the Ring's ultimate fate, and yet Wotan remains passionately concerned that it should be returned to its rightful owners, the Rhine-daughters, rather than fall into the hands of Hagen and Alberich. The implication here is that Wotan's concern is not for himself but for the world. Only once he knows that the curse of the Ring has been washed away and the world freed from its evil, can he face his own extinction with equanimity and even bliss. Strangely, though, it has become a matter of course to describe this finale as Apocalyptic and to speak of it as representing the end of the world or the end of time. The title of Deryck Cooke's study, *I Saw the World End*, is in fact taken from an earlier draft of Brünnhilde's Immolation, but it is unlikely that she means it literally. What actually ends is the rule of the gods. They themselves are consumed by fire, virtually all the central characters are destroyed as well and the hall of the Gibichung clan is demolished. However, the anonymous mass of people onstage remain alive and well, albeit leaderless - the message presumably being that the audience find themselves at a similar cross-roads, with the familiar institutions of church and state having lost their credibility, and a decidedly uncertain future ahead. This does not fully account for the *mood* of the opera though, which, from the very opening bars, is charged with a sense of utter doom. The world of *Götterdämmerung* appears old and tired, its skies are thickly clouded and there is a distinct atmosphere of gut-churning fear blended with a strangely thrilling excitement at the prospect of everything we know coming to a violent and horrible end. The sinister machinations of Hagen seem to persuade us of the reality of unthinkable evil. The entry of the vassals in Act II has the quality of a fascist uprising (as the bloodthirsty mob pours onto the stage in ever-increasing numbers), while their barbaric carousal at the end of the act is

the action of people with no true purpose in life. The work thus seems to invite us, metaphorically speaking, to follow Brünnhilde's example of "dying to the world", a combination of catharsis and Buddhistic renunciation.

The combination of violent and destructive elements in the *Ring*, the prevalence given to adultery, incest, rape, murder, betrayal and unimaginable evil in the form of Alberich's and Hagen's ruthless lust for world-domination, and the culmination of all these features in the apocalyptic ruin of the finale, give it a brutal power to shock and disturb audiences in a way that no other work can. The stark, mythic atmosphere, compelling drama and monumental spectacle combine to produce an overwhelming theatrical experience, as Wagner surely intended. The massive, turgid music intensifies this still more, giving rich expression to a brooding, twilit world of primeval forests, soaked in lurid, volcanic light.

Sex in the *Ring*, if less "advanced" than that of *Tristan*, is, in keeping with this mythic quality, extraordinarily vital and basic, as though returning to the kind of rugged primal physicality that was later to obsess D. H. Lawrence. The explosion of natural desire between the reunited siblings, Sieglinde and Siegmund, the raw virility of Siegfried forging his sword with smashing hammer-blows and Brünnhilde's supreme gesture of riding her horse into the hero's funeral pyre are all heavily charged with eroticism. So too, though less obviously, are the seductive, lilting Rhinedaughters, the stately, dignified figure of the one-eyed Allfather, Wotan, and even, perversely, the sadistic lust of Alberich. Much of the power of the *Ring* lies in its being communicated to us at such a basic level.

The relationship the *Ring* cycle has with Joyce's novels is, of course, the most complete (and well-documented) of all the Wagner operas and for obvious reasons: it provides material for the largest proportion of allusions and is composed on a similarly epic scale.

Chapter III will begin the process of considering the complex of allusions to the *Ring* in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. Primarily, I will attempt to make an original contribution to the already substantially documented question of Stephen Dedalus's association with Siegfried. Among the points insufficiently touched on in existing research, I will be dealing with the detailed symbolic meanings generated by the sword, the significance of the "intermediary" generation represented by Siegmund, the function of the musical examples evoked by Joyce and the detailed web of correspondences connecting Stephen through Siegfried with his other symbolic personae of augur, blacksmith, Christ-figure and Wagner's own Parsifal. Chapter IV will then turn to the all-important father-son relationship and the role played by Bloom as a surrogate Wotan. Chapter V will consider the figure of the mother-goddess and the closely related symbol of the river. With regard to the last two issues, the scope of the study expands (in the form of an appendix) to include *Finnegans Wake*, where I focus primarily on the cyclical plot-structure and the recurrent pattern of rise-and-fall, features which can be shown to have very strong and detailed precursors in the *Ring*.

Priest of the eternal imagination

In his last opera, *Parsifal*, Wagner actually takes the "artist-as-Messiah" theme of *Die Meistersinger* a step further. While *Die Meistersinger* presents us with an allegorical self-portrait of the artist and then subtly compares him with Christ, *Parsifal* essentially reverses this process, starting out with a hero who is clearly meant to be a Christ figure and then (as in the earlier operas) giving him certain symbolic attributes that are typical of the artist.

Curiously, Wagner heartily denied that Parsifal was intended as a Christ figure, and several highly reputable scholars and researchers (Ernest Newman among them) have taken him at his word. This, however, seems to fly in the face of the evidence. First of all, Wagner is notoriously untrustworthy as a commentator on his works. Then there is the extraordinary final act of the opera itself to be taken into consideration, in

which the way-weary Parsifal is gradually divested of his armour and clothed instead in the mantle of a Grail Knight (in many performances, being arranged in such a way, together with the hero's shoulder-length hair and short beard, as to closely resemble the popular image of Jesus), and then has his feet washed, anointed and dried with the hastily unbound hair of the repentant temptress Kundry (exactly as Mary Magdalene does to Christ in the gospels). Furthermore, while this is going on, the old hermit Gurnemanz is blessing and anointing Parsifal as the new Grail King and the long-awaited healer of the wasteland. Finally, when Parsifal actually enters the temple, miraculously heals the wound of Amfortas and reveals the Grail itself to the adoring multitude, a white dove is seen to hover over his head while an invisible choir of boys' voices sings over and over the enigmatic words, "Erlösung dem Erlöser" (redemption to the Redeemer)![43]

In an occasionally surreal Gothic fantasy, *Parsifal* blends profound religiosity with intense and sometimes bizarre sexuality, exploring extremes of guilt, repentance, blasphemy and ecstatic delirium. Among the issues it touches on are reincarnation, Oedipal mother-fixation, self-mutilation and stigmatism, as well as - by association - vampirism. There is chanting and incense and tolling bells and voices from the tomb and angelic choirs and weird, unsettling music of a kind even Wagner had never approached before. In addition, *Parsifal* is apparently intended to provide a direct musical equivalent for the Eucharistic experience, and it is this, above all, which would seem to be Wagner's ultimate (and most mysterious) achievement.

Chapter III will discuss the Parsifalian aspects of Stephen Dedalus's character (which can be understood largely as a natural consequence of his Siegfried-persona - since these two Wagnerian heroes in particular are so closely related). Chapter IV will then go on to discuss his relationship with Bloom in the light of that between Parsifal and Amfortas. Similarly, Chapter V will explore the possible relationship between Molly Bloom and the Grail.

The musics of the futures

It is essential to realise that, although this study attempts to analyse the individual influence of each of the seven major Wagnerian stage-works (counting the *Ring* as a single work), it is impossible to consider them as watertight compartments, since there are a large number of correspondences between them, effectively making them parts of a single, unified whole.[44]

In addition, there are several direct links between the thematic content of the different works. The relatively short and direct *Holländer* is the basic type for all the more elaborate dramas that follow it. Its central themes of "redemption through love", the quest and the death-wish recur in various guises in almost all the others. The romantic wanderer hero is also present in Tannhäuser, Siegmund, Wotan-Wanderer and the questing Parsifal (and even Siegfried and Walther). His characterisation as the Wandering Jew also has a direct counterpart in the Wandering Jewess, Kundry. The pervasive water imagery is also present in the other operas: the Venusberg's subterranean lake, the river Scheldt that brings Lohengrin's swan-boat to Brabant, the world-encircling Rhine of the *Ring*, the baptismal waters of *Parsifal* and *Meistersinger*, and, although less stormy than in *Holländer*, the sea itself is as pervasive a presence in *Tristan.*

Die Meistersinger, by Wagner's own admission, was on one level a comic version of *Tannhäuser.* The common motifs of the song-contest and artist-hero are clear enough. *Tannhäuser*'s eroticism is also a clear foreshadowing of that found in the later operas and given its fullest treatment in *Tristan.* The conflict between sexuality and religion is specifically to return in *Parsifal.* There is also a curious parallel in that Tannhäuser's fellow minnesingers, Wolfram von Eschenbach and Walther von der Vogelweide, were, respectively, the author of the original *Parzifal* and *Titurel* epics on which both *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* are partially based, and the poet whom Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger* cites as his spiritual mentor.

The fact that Lohengrin is Parsifal's son and fellow-servant of the Grail ensures a natural similarity in the mood and style of these two operas in particular. The white dove makes an appearance in the finale of each and the musical motif of the swan is also identical in both works.[45] The spirituality of the earlier opera is to become greatly more profound and solemn in the later one, though. *Lohengrin* also includes references to the pagan gods worshipped by Ortrud who are to appear in person in the *Ring*. The swan-knight himself resembles Siegfried in his invincibility and in the fact that he carries a sword, a horn and a ring and that he enters the world of men by river-boat.

Musical motifs from *Tristan* appear with striking effect at one point in *Die Meistersinger* (to illustrate Hans Sachs's intention that he should not play the role of King Marke in relation to the young lovers). The essential situation of *Tristan* is clearly identical to that of *Die Walküre* Act I, albeit intensified and drawn into the foreground - and with a far more sympathetic husband. There is also a parallel between *Tristan* and *Götterdämmerung*: the hero in each case is accused of betraying the woman he loves by giving her away to the man to whom he has sworn allegiance - and a magic potion becomes the indirect agent of his death. The redemptive love-death is also repeated at the end of the *Ring*, albeit expanded onto a universal scale. Wagner himself was conscious of the connection between the wounded Tristan and the character of Amfortas in *Parsifal*: the wounds of both are the indirect result of love.

Freia's golden apples in *Das Rheingold* are clearly a direct mythic counterpart to the golden fruit of the "Lebensbaum" in Walther's dream-song in *Die Meistersinger.* Birdsong is an important motif in both *Siegfried* and *Die Meistersinger*, both of which introduce the relationship (found also in *Parsifal*) between a youthful, sanguine hero and the world-weary older man whom he is in some sense destined to supplant. In each case, the hero has an almost Messianic status - which also links them both to *Parsifal.*

The *Ring* and *Parsifal* both involve situations of potential global catastrophe. The pagan mysticism of the former also has a Christianised equivalent in the latter. Both Siegfried and Parsifal have pronounced mother-fixations and both, largely through their near-complete innocence, become saviours of one kind or another.

The fact is, then, that many situations in Wagner cannot necessarily be confined to one particular opera. Thus, one can expect to encounter situations where an author's reference to one opera will trigger off all kinds of associations with other operas. This is particularly the case in Joyce's work where a similar reworking of obsessive concerns is to be found and where the multi-layered allusions to Wagner frequently demonstrate a clear understanding of the relations between the respective operas.

Several aspects of Wagner's life are widely seen as being closely bound up with the works he produced, and have themselves provided material for the many artists who followed him. The manner in which each of his heroes is closely grounded in his own experience has been touched on. The often remarkable circumstances surrounding the creation of his works also contributed to the myth surrounding the man himself, as did the nature of his personal lifestyle, particularly his love of luxury and his known preference for wearing silk and satin dressing-gowns and filling his rooms with the scent of flowers and incense. It is easy to draw a clear link between the sensuous opulence of such a lifestyle and the quality of the music it helped inspire, especially the endless, languid, self-indulgent phrases of *Tristan* and *Parsifal*. Furthermore, there is a tradition that closely links this aspect of his myth with Venice, the city where he composed the second act of *Tristan* (the "Liebesnacht") and where he died in 1883. The dreamlike quality of Venice with all its waterways and decaying palaces and secret gardens and its general air of faded elegance became somehow tied up with the cult of Wagner and with the whole *fin de siècle* atmosphere his music was seen to embody. As Raymond Furness puts it:

> [T]o Richard Wagner it was given to exemplify perfectly in his music, his life and above all his death the morbid sensuality of that city[46] . . . . The enervating,

> fetid atmosphere exhaled by the canals, the rippling reflections of crumbling stone, damp walls and ornate bridges produced that "volupté de la tristesse" for which tired souls yearned.[47]

It may seem strange to us that a "heavy" composer like Wagner should ever have enjoyed mass popularity, but during the eighteen-nineties his ghost seems to have haunted Europe, his music to have pervaded the air like some soporific drug. There is also the extraordinary train of madness and suicide he seems to have left in his wake: in 1865, Ludwig Schnorr, the first Tristan, died only weeks after creating the role, in a state of severe delirium and with Wagner's name on his lips; in 1886, "Mad" Ludwig II, whose obsession with the composer lead him to such romantic extravagances as "You are my god", drowned under mysterious circumstances shortly after being incarcerated by his doctors; in 1889, the ageing Hapsburg empire was severely shaken by the seemingly unmotivated suicide of the heir apparent and his mistress in what appeared to be a Tristanesque love-pact; the soprano Marie Wilt committed suicide in 1891, shortly after claiming that the role of Brünnhilde "finished" her; Nietzsche, who said of Wagner both that he was "the greatest benefactor of my life", and that he "made music sick", adding "Is Wagner a man at all? Is he not rather a disease? Everything he touches he contaminates"[48], collapsed into madness just a year before his death in 1900.[49] Inevitably, events of this kind contributed to the growing mythology surrounding the composer and his frequently intoxicating music. In addition, this climate of decadence influenced much of the literature of the period and even seemed to produce a late flowering in some of Virginia Woolf's novels, where the theme of the death-wish takes on considerable significance.

Nietzsche, of course, is a figure of special interest in any case, since the well-known love-hate relationship he continued with the composer even after Wagner's death gave rise to many of the deepest insights into the nature of his music (even where they are inseparable from his most determined misunderstandings). It is of particular interest here that Joyce was as familiar with Nietzsche as he was with Wagner himself and owned copies of many of his works. In Chapter III in particular, attention will be paid to

the way the presentation of Stephen Dedalus is coloured by Joyce's awareness that Siegfried was very much the prototype for Nietzsche's *übermensch.* Perhaps the essential point to be made is that Nietzsche is the first to show the way in which the attributes of a mythic character like Siegfried can be translated into philosophical terms, thereby becoming a model for the "revolutionary" behaviour demonstrated by Stephen in the realistic world depicted in Joyce's novels.

By the time Joyce was producing his mature work, the first wave of enthusiasm for Wagner was already a thing of the past and he expresses a growing unease and even distaste for aspects of his work. Nonetheless, it can be argued that this allowed for a more objective critical distance when it came to incorporating Wagnerian themes and ideas into his works. The following chapter will pay close attention to the contact he had with Wagner's operas throughout his career, focusing on those areas most relevant to the works singled out for attention in the dissertation as a whole.

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[1] Assuming, of course, that that is what Wagnerism is, but, whatever it is; its existence at least is not in dispute, whereas nobody ever talks about, say, "Mozartism".

[2] This claim seems to have first been made by Magee (*Aspects of Wagner* (1968), p 50).

[3] Porter, "Wagner: The Continuing Appeal" in *Wagner in Retrospect* (1987), p 7. It may perhaps seem curious that other major cultural figures such as Shakespeare are not mentioned as being contenders. To what extent Porter's sources are reliable is impossible to say (he cites, somewhat casually, "the *New Yorker* checkers") – but it does at least seem conclusive that Wagner continues to be one of the most written about people on the planet.

[4] Another respect in which he is unusual, composers in general appearing to have restricted their intellectual activities to music. However, a more serious interest in the importance of the written word does at least seem to be a feature of the Romantic movement as a whole, with both Berlioz and Schumann, for example, being noted for their music journalism at least as much as their music, whereas an increased interest in literary subject matter is one of the most frequently noted features of Romantic music. Wagner, though, must surely be the prime example of this trend, with his vast output of prose on innumerable subjects, his insistence on writing his own (frequently underestimated) libretti (or "poems", as he preferred to call them) and the immense scope of his reading in all fields that interested him.

[5] A phenomenon neatly described by Brian Magee, who expresses the insight that "the devotion aroused in some people by Wagner's music is *different in kind* from that aroused by any other composer's. It is like being in love: a kind of madness, a kind of worship, an irrational commitment yet abandonment which, among other things, dissolves the critical faculty", (*Aspects of Wagner,* pp 50-51, my emphasis).

[6] The latter, for example, provides this rapturous account of his first encounter with *Tristan*, the Wagnerian's opera *par excellence*: "There I sat in the topmost gallery of the Berlin Operahouse, and from the first sound of the cellos my heart contracted spasmodically. The magic, like the terrible potion that the deathly ill Tristan curses in the third act, 'burst raging from heart and brain'. Never before had my soul been so deluged with floods of sound and passion, never had my heart been consumed by

such yearning and sublime blissfulness, never had I been transported from reality by such heavenly glory. I was no longer in this world. After the performance, I roamed the streets aimlessly. When I got home I didn't say anything and begged not to be questioned. My ecstasy kept singing within me through half the night, and when I awoke on the following morning I knew that my life was changed. A new epoch had begun: Wagner was my God, and I wanted to become his prophet." (Walter, *Theme and Variations* (1946), p 40.)

[7] Levin, *Conducted Tour* (1981), p 7.

[8] Porter, op. cit., p 8.

[9] *Opera* (1998 Annual Festival Issue), p 45.

[10] Ibid., p 13.

[11] Ellman, *James Joyce* (1959), p 473.

[12] Such as the situation of Stephen Dedalus for example, whose explicit relationship to Siegfried carries subtler overtones of other Wagnerian heroes, including Siegmund, Parsifal and Walther von Stolzing.

[13] *Mein Leben* (1911), pp 29-31.

[14] *Music Ho!* (1948), p 229.

[15] This term has become synonymous with Wagner's operas, although he did not sanction its use himself.

[16] All these features are, of course, common to the German Romantic tradition of *Sturm und Drang* which Wagner inherited. His own unique contribution, though, lies in his successful implementation of these themes in grand opera. Eventually, he was to take the hallmarks of the movement to unprecedented heights, with the result that he is generally regarded as the artist whose work most clearly epitomises the culmination of Romanticism.

[17] *Joyce and Wagner* (1991), p 55.

[18] Ibid., p 56.

[19] Or to give it its full title - *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf dem Wartburg (Tannhäuser and the Contest of Song on the Wartburg).*

[20] *Tannhäuser* (1900) I, iv, l 7 ("in Hochmuth stolz"); the translation here is a little free: a more exact alternative would be "in proud disdain".

[21] In Wagner's sources, however, the cause is that Tannhäuser's songs are already considered heretical. (See Newman, *Wagner Nights* (1949), pp 58-74.)

[22] *Tannhäuser* I, iv, ll 49-52 ("War's Zauber, war es reine Macht/Durch die solch Wunder du vollbracht,/An deinen Sang voll Wonn' und Leid/Gebannt die tugendreichste Maid?")

[23] Ibid. II, ii, ll 25-38 ("Der Sänger klugen Weisen/Lauscht' ich sonst gern und viel;/Ihr Singen und ihr Preisen/Schien mir ein holdes Spiel./Doch welch' ein seltsam neues Leben/Rief euer Lied mir in die Brust!/Bald wollt' es mich wie Schmerz durchbeben,/Bald drang's in mich wie jähe Lust:/Gefühle, die ich nie empfunden!/Verlangen, das ich nie gekannt!/Was einst mir lieblich, war verschwunden/Vor Wonnen, die noch nie genannt!")

[24] See Magee, *Aspects of Wagner,* pp 50-51.

[25] As Michael Tanner says, "The immediate effect is of an undreamt-of expansion of consciousness, giving us an intimation of a level of living which perhaps only Wagner can communicate to us, but does communicate so forcefully that we are led to think we can make it our own. The longer-term effect is of a closing down of alternatives, so that we seem to be left with the brutal imperative: Either live like this or you aren't living at all. . . . So the upshot is that we become addicted to the only art which does that for us: we become Wagnerians, dependent on the magic brew of an astonishingly persuasive mixture of something like sex and religion, a transcendence of the ordinary conditions of life which is, as many have remarked, the prolonged artistic equivalent of an orgasm." (*Wagner* (1996), pp 46-7.)

[26] Something else he is famous for. Tanner puts it very succinctly when he says "there is [often] a strong erotic charge in Wagner's music that would seem to indicate that a sexual act is imminent, or is even being performed, but in musical code." (Ibid., p 42.)

[27] It can even be traced back as far as the "Prayer" melody in *Rienzi.*

[28] This idea is by no means self-evident but will be discussed much more fully in Chapter V (see especially p 187.)

[29] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1992), p 112.

[30] It is worth noting, in this context, Timothy Martin's point that, in his characterisation of Molly Bloom as "*das Fleisch das stets bejaht*" (*Letters* (1966), vol. I, p 170), obviously a deliberate inversion of Goethe's

famous description of Mephistopheles as "der Geist der stets verneint" (*Faust* Pt I (1899), I 1338 ("Studierzimmer"), p 67), "[Joyce] is invoking, with a Joycean twist, the affirming spirit of the *Ewig-Weibliche* with which Goethe's drama concludes" (*Joyce and Wagner*, p 84). Clearly, this is a case of Joyce deliberately making use of another of his (and Wagner's) nineteenth century forbears by reacting against (and yet confirming) him.

[31] *The Life of Richard Wagner* (1937) Vol. II, p 12.

[32] *Joyce and Wagner*, p 16.

[33] Ibid., p 193.

[34] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 276.

[35] Newman cites for example an article Wagner published in the *Volksblätter* of 8 April 1849 in which he says, "The old world is in ruins from which a new world will arise; for the sublime goddess REVOLUTION comes rushing and roaring on the wings of the storm, her august head rayed round with lightnings, a sword in her right hand, a torch in her left . . . destroying and blessing she sweeps across the earth . . . vast clouds of dust darken the air, and where her mighty foot treads, all that has been built for ages past in idle whim crashes in ruins, and the hem of her robe sweeps the last remains of it away" (*The Life of Richard Wagner* Vol. II, p 57; see also pp 57-102 for a full account of his involvement in the uprising.)

[36] He could indeed have faced imprisonment or even execution, had he been caught, and his hair-raising escape - which he retells with characteristic flair in *Mein Leben* - is yet another instance of his perennial good luck.

[37] *Wagner*, pp 127-8.

[38] Almost exactly the relative ages of Stephen and Bloom – but I'm sure that really is a coincidence!

[39] *Finnegans Wake* (1992), p 240; this passage is considered in more detail in Chapter II (see pp 52-54).

[40] *Tristan und Isolde* (1938) III, iii, II 120-131 ("Höre ich nur/Diese Weise,/Die so wunder-/Vollund leise,/Wonne klagend,/Alles sagend,/Mild versöhnend/Aus ihm tönend,/Auf sich schwingt,/In mich dringt,/Hold erhallend/Um mich klingt?"); the translation here is rather free, there being no mention of "trumpet tone" as such in the original, but the essential meaning is conveyed well enough.

[41] Curiously, though, Wagner's characters often describe themselves as singing when there is no dramatic necessity for them to be doing so.

[42] Ellman, p 473.

[43] All of which provides an interesting parallel with the "jocoserious" manner in which Joyce portrays his own artist-hero as a (somewhat ironic) Christ-figure.

[44] As Michael Tanner puts it, "Because [Wagner] was always occupied with certain very general issues, he was insistent on his works as constituting a genuine *oeuvre*. If it is not the case, as it is with Nietzsche, that each of his works left him with issues unresolved which demanded the composition of a further one, it is still true that their interrelationships are vital to understanding them, and that characters in one reappear, almost, with a different name, in another" (*Wagner*, pp 41-2).

[45] In essence, that is. The vast increase in Wagner's expressive powers between these two works enables him to transfigure the original motif.

[46] *Wagner and Literature* (1982), p 49.

[47] Ibid., p 48. Furness also notes how this aspect of the Wagner myth bore its own literary fruit in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*.

[48] *The Case of Wagner* (1911), p 11.

[49] See Magee, *Aspects of Wagner*, pp 64-67, for more elucidation of this phenomenon.

Chapter II

WAGNER'S RECEPTION IN ENGLAND AND IN IRELAND

The process whereby Joyce came to know Wagner's work has been more or less fully covered by Martin, so it will suffice here merely to sketch the salient points. Unless new evidence comes to light, there are only a few references in Joyce's correspondence to go on, to show that he attended a fair number of performances of the operas, certainly during his early years on the continent. However, it can at least be claimed that it is *probable* that he saw all the operas from *Holländer* to *Parsifal* at least once, and many of them substantially more often than that.[1] The very frequency and sophistication with which the works are alluded to in his novels is itself proof that he must have had a good working knowledge of them. Furthermore, such chance remarks as we do have documentary evidence of, such as that *Die Meistersinger* was (at least at one point) his favourite Wagner opera, suggest a high degree of familiarity with the Wagnerian *oeuvre* as a whole (in this case since he can hardly have been sure of his preference without access to the whole range of potential contenders).

Interestingly, the *Meistersinger* comment is a little misleading, since it might tempt one into thinking that this work would have the greatest influence on Joyce.[2] However, while his musical preferences seem generally to have inclined towards the lighter and more tuneful world of Italian opera (towards which Wagner's great comedy bears at least a relative resemblance), his artistic interest seems to veer more sharply towards the more tragic and elemental of the music dramas, especially the *Ring*, *Tristan* and *Holländer*, and to a slightly lesser degree *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal*. The reason for this seems clear enough: these are the works that deal most successfully with mythic material. This leaves only the romantic fairy tale *Lohengrin*, of which there is little or no hint in Joyce's work (except for some faint suggestions in the *Portrait* – discussed in Chapter III).

Joyce himself, however, did not encounter Wagner's works at first hand until he had done so at second hand, in the novels of George Moore and from the suggestions of Yeats and

Symons. He was also familiar with Shaw's *The Perfect Wagnerite*, the blatantly Wagnerian novels of Gabriele D'Annunzio and many of the principal works of Nietzsche. It is therefore worthwhile considering, at least in part, the development of the cultural climate in which Wagner, unusually for a composer, came to be seen among English and Irish intellectuals of the day as one of the leading figures in a much needed revitalisation of European art and society.

The Spread of English Wagnerism

Wagner only visited England on three occasions (1839, 1855 and 1877), and does not seem to have enjoyed himself very much on any of them. On the first occasion he was entirely unknown and unnoticed, doing little more than pass through on his way to Paris. On the second, he had come by arrangement to conduct a series of concerts, hoping thereby to raise funds for his own theatre. By this time, he had acquired a reputation as a controversial composer of music as yet unheard but rumoured to be noisy and difficult. To make matters worse, he spoke only the most rudimentary English with a thick German accent, was widely mistrusted because of his known revolutionary activities and had a knack for offending people through his frequently tactless behaviour. By the time of the third visit, however, he was world famous as the composer of the *Ring* and the dominant figure in German Romantic music. His works had begun to gain increasing admiration among English artists and intellectuals, who generally stood apart from the majority of their fellow countrymen in their readiness to embrace a broader European culture.[3]

Among the most prominent English literary figures to express an early sympathy for the composer was George Eliot, whose wide knowledge of German literature and philosophy gave her an unusual advantage in appreciating operas so steeped in the German Romantic tradition. She saw *Holländer*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* in Weimar in 1854 and is believed to have expressed great admiration for them.[4]

Among those first to make active use of Wagnerian allusions in their work are several of the foremost names in English literature during the late Victorian and early modern period, including Swinburne, Conrad, Shaw, Wilde and Yeats. Of the studies referred to in the introduction, several imply the existence of a Wagnerian tradition in English literature, beginning with these and other authors and gradually moving towards a culmination in the thoroughly integrated Wagnerism of Joyce and T. S. Eliot.[5]

The literary influence of Wagner did not exist in isolation, however, but side by side with other forms of expression as part of a general wave of interest in the composer and his works. For example, Aubrey Beardsley produced a number of Wagnerian engravings (notable for the accent they place on the works' potential for "decadence" – as in his narcissistic portrayal of Siegfried), while Arthur Rackham's more faithful rendition of the *Ring* became a favourite of Edwardian music-lovers. Among English musicians, Rutland Boughton was the most visibly Wagnerian, producing a cycle of five Arthurian operas – which, in a gesture reminiscent of Bayreuth, he staged as part of a series of Glastonbury Festivals.[6]

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Wagner's operas began to be staged in London with increasing regularity. Before then, however, it was only possible for British authors to gain first-hand experience of Wagner's operas by visiting the continent. Swinburne, for example, at the time of composing *Laus Veneris*, took the opportunity to see *Tannhäuser* performed in Paris (probably, as Stoddard Martin argues, to compare it with his own treatment of the subject and to see whether any creative inspiration could be gained from the experience). By the early '90s, however, all Wagner's operas except *Parsifal* were being performed at Covent Garden on a regular basis.[7] Despite themselves, these weighty Teutonic dramas somehow managed to become the stuff of fashionable entertainment. Among the literati in particular, Wagnerism became something of an aesthetic cult, just as it had in Paris a decade earlier. This was most markedly the case among the so-called "Decadents", who seemed to find in Wagner's wholesale attack on conventional bourgeois morality a reflection of their own rebellious and iconoclastic ideals. The *Ring*, for example, offered a celebration of incestuous and adulterous love, a perfectly

free, proto-Nietzschean superman-hero who defies and overthrows the existing order, and a culminating portrayal of Valhalla's destruction with obvious insurgent and anarchic overtones. Alternatively, both *Tannhäuser* and *Tristan* contained intensely self-indulgent eroticism, the former in a "sinful" guise which suggested a certain masochism, the latter with a completeness and abandon that implied a total rejection of material values, even of life itself. Finally, for those prepared to undertake the "pilgrimage" to Bayreuth, there remained the ultimate Wagnerian experience of *Parsifal*, which, with its highly charged treatment of the Grail legend, seemed to offer a form of spiritual renewal to those who had lost confidence in the staid rituals of conventional religion.

Among those self-styled Decadents who made frank use of Wagnerian themes in their own work were Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and Arthur Symons (who was one of the first to introduce Wagner to Joyce).[8] However, it was not necessary to be outwardly Bohemian to become a "Wagnerite", since there were many who managed to combine their enthusiasm for the composer with outward respectability. There was even an official Wagnerian journal, *The Meister*, which made a concerted effort to promote his operas among a wider public, by printing critical essays about the works and their wide range of implications, artistic, social or theosophical.

Probably the most influential figure in encouraging popular appreciation of Wagner was Shaw, whose *Perfect Wagnerite* sold numerous copies (though its Fabian interpretation of the *Ring* - presented as indisputable fact - is far from being an adequate assessment of this multi-faceted masterpiece). Nonetheless, for many English Wagnerites it was the first introduction to the cycle and so helped to provide an access that might not otherwise have been possible.

Thus, given the prevalence of Wagner performances and the high proportion of prominent cultural figures who fell under the spell of his music, it would have been difficult for anyone then growing up and harbouring intellectual aspirations to avoid his pervasive influence. As Martin concludes,

> [b]y the end of the century, Wagner had been studied and borrowed by progressive artistic movements across Europe – by Parnassians, Symbolists, and Impressionists in France, by Pre-Raphaelites, theosophists and "decadents" in England. . . . For the serious artist at the end of the nineteenth century, Wagner was inescapable.[9]

Wagner in Irish Culture and Politics

The situation was somewhat different in colonial Ireland, where there was little or no direct exposure to Wagner's works, and it was only by relocating to the imperial capital (as Shaw and Wilde did) that Irish artists could enjoy the same familiarity with them as their English counterparts. But even in Ireland, there was access to Wagner in printed form, in librettos and piano scores for example. At the same time, however, there was perhaps more interest in his prose works than in his music. His status as a great European artist who had triumphed over personal difficulties to create an art that was seen as the supreme embodiment of German revolutionary and nationalistic aspirations, obviously provided an inspiring model to Irish artists hoping to emerge from under the English yoke.

> Wagner, in fact, exerted a particular fascination on the Irish literary imagination. On the musical culture of Ireland the composer's effect was slight, for, because of the complexity, scale, and moral audacity of the operas, very few staged productions were attempted in Ireland at this time. But here, as elsewhere, Wagner's reputation preceded his operas, and his name crops up frequently, with Ibsen's, in connection with the movement for an Irish literary theatre.[10]

As Martin goes on to demonstrate, Joyce inherited much of this peculiarly Irish Wagnerism from Yeats and George Moore, both of whom use the image of a sword to evoke a sense of heroic nationalist revival. In Moore's case, this is done in an overtly Wagnerian manner. He likens Parnell to a doomed Irish Siegmund and himself to a potential Siegfried, capable of restoring the nation's pride through art, and even quotes the "Sword" motif to add weight to the parallel and a sense of the dramatic.[11] Joyce's reaction to this, Martin implies, was to wrest this heroic mantle away from Moore and bestow it on himself, through the

Wagnerian characterisation of Stephen Dedalus.[12] However, it is worth noting that this is done with a considerable dose of irony. Just as Joyce came to repudiate the Irish cultural revival, so he transforms Moore's straightforwardly heroic invocation of the Siegfried persona into a more mocking one. On the other hand, as Martin surmises, Joyce had probably had more in common with the movement than he later cared to admit.[13] As a result, Stephen is only in part an ironic Siegfried. At another level, he represents Joyce's serious challenge to the Irish literary establishment and to Moore in particular, as well as his own claim to liberate the national consciousness, not through a pugnacious jingoism but rather through a more enlightened cosmopolitan and pacifist ethic.

Jars and Roguenaar

> James Joyce was uniquely qualified to appreciate Wagner's position in nineteenth century culture, for he was a more serious and better-trained musician than nearly all the Wagnerites in the literary world.[14]

Thus Martin begins his solid demonstration of Joyce's actual knowledge of the composer's work and ideas, based on the several references in his critical writings, in letters and in reported conversations. He sketches his early musical interests, his contact with the pro-Wagnerian Yeats and Symons and his close study of texts by and about Wagner, adding that "Joyce's first encounters with Wagner were probably at second hand, in the writings of intermediary figures already under Wagner's influence".[15] Referring to this literary connection, he goes on to conclude:

> Entangled as Joyce was, then, in the progressive literary culture of the late nineteenth century, it is not surprising that his earliest Wagnerism was more literary than musical. Unlike those imperfect Wagnerites who preferred the composer's music, the young Joyce swore allegiance to Wagner the poet, dramatist, and mythmaker.[16]

Thereafter, continues Martin, this allegiance appears to have been steadily eroded by actual contact with the operas themselves, probably in Paris to begin with and thereafter in

the other European centres where he found himself and where Wagner was usually widely performed. To judge from the most commonly cited references in Ellman's *James Joyce* and the collected letters, Joyce's direct experience of the works in performance seem to have inclined him less towards awe than facetiousness.[17] However, this need to belittle was not limited to Wagner. It was applied uniformly to all Joyce's potential sources more recent than Dante and, as Martin also argues, seems designed to conceal too great an appearance of indebtedness: "Joyce's recorded impressions of Wagner's music are contradictory, depending almost entirely upon the context in which they were elicited",[18] he writes, and adds that "Joyce's occasional impatience with Wagner, however, probably derives more from artistic rivalry than from distaste for the music".[19] Later, he comes to the conclusion that "[i]t is impossible to take Joyce's disparagement of Wagner at face value when we set their work side by side".[20] Finally, his assessment of the Wagnerian influence on Joyce cannot be bettered and must be its own excuse for being quoted at length:

> The sources of Wagner's power in nineteenth and turn-of-the-century literary circles were many, and Joyce, especially in the initial encounters through intermediaries, doubtless felt many of them. The operas, first of all, offered writers a rich store of characters and situations on which they could draw for their own work. The idea of a "total artwork," which Wagner's operas seemed to embody, inspired attempts by many progressive artists to mix artistic forms – in particular, attempts to bring the techniques and expressive power of music to language. Wagner's use of myth encouraged the widespread borrowing of mythic material for literature. But most significant, though less tangible, was the importance attached to Wagner himself. To many, Wagner was a high priest of art, removed from the gross, material world, indifferent to critical praise or blame, and uncompromising in his dedication to art alone. . . . The facts of Wagner's career – the years of poverty, the long exile after his part in the Dresden uprising, and the harsh treatment in Paris – did nothing to dispel the image of a supremely principled and cruelly persecuted artist. The ultimate vindication was Bayreuth, which seemed to make tangible the Romantic idea of genius and to show that a high priest of art might renounce the world and still become a cultural Messiah.[21]

The case for Wagner's being a substantial role-model for Joyce thus seems fairly clear. As was suggested in the previous chapter,[22] Joyce was almost certainly aware of the several, and perhaps only partially coincidental, similarities between Wagner's career and his own, especially as regards their exile. Evidence to this effect is to be found in several places in *Finnegans Wake*, arguably the most autobiographical of all Joyce's books. Quite apart from the several references to characters and situations in his operas, Wagner frequently appears there in person as, among other possible permutations, "wagoner", "waggy", "wageearner", "voguener" and "roguenaar",[23] (while the author himself also appears in several guises such as, for example, "jams jars"). Along with the many other artists who appear in the novel and whom Joyce seems to regard as prototypes for himself, Wagner tends to merge into the general dream-persona of the archetypal artist. A good example of this happening is the well-known "wagoner" episode (quoted in Chapter I).[24] Martin, and several other commentators refer to this, since it is one of the *Wake*'s most detailed composite references to the composer, but none has yet elaborated its full significance. It is one of several passages in the *Wake* in which the figure of Shem, representing the artist, is vilified by his brother Shaun:

> And, reading off his fleshskin and writing with his quillbone, fillfull ninequires with it for his auditers, Caxton and Pollock, a most moraculous jeeremyhead sindbook for all the peoples, under the presidency of the suchess of sceaunonsceau, a hadtobe heldin, thoroughly enjoyed by many so meny on block at Boyrut season and for their account ottorly admired by her husband in sole intimacy, about whose told his innersense and the grusomehed's yoeureeke of his spectrescope and why he was off colour and how he was ambothed upon by the very spit of himself, first on the cheekside by Michelangelo and, besouns thats, over on the owld jowly side by Bill C. Babby, and the suberb's formule why they provencials drollo eggspilled him out of his homety dometry narrowedknee domum (osco de basco de pesco de bisco!) because all his creature comfort was an omulette finas erbas in an ark finis orbe and, no master how mustered, mind never mend, he could neither swuck in nonneither swimp in the flood of cecialism and the best and shortest way of blacking out a caughtalock of all the sorrors of Sexton until he would accoster her to coume il fou in teto-dous as a wagoner would his mudheeldy wheesindonk at their trist in Parasise after tourments of tosend years, bread

> cast out on waters, making goods at mutuurity, Mondamoiseau of Casanuova and Mademoisselle from Armentières.[25]

Martin interprets this passage as follows:

> "Wagoner" is an English translation of "Wagner," and "mudheeldy wheesindonk" is Joycean for "Mathilde Wesendonck" with whom Wagner had an affair in the late 1850s and who is generally thought to have inspired *Tristan* ("trist in") *und Isolde*.[26]

He also adds that "heldin" and "Boyrut" obviously refer to a German heroine on stage at Bayreuth and that Mathilde's long-suffering husband (and Wagner's benefactor), Otto, is present in "ottorly admired by her husband", and comments that the passage as a whole demonstrates Joyce's intimate knowledge of Wagner's life and work, as well as the fact that the two were inextricable.

Closer inspection, however, reveals still more details that, given those already noted, probably constitute additional references to the composer and his works. For example, the allusion to Otto Wesendonck is immediately followed by the phrase "about whose told his innersense", which could suggest "about who stole his innocence" or even "who told him about his innocence". This would indeed make sense in relation to the Wagner-Mathilde-Otto triangle, since Mathilde insisted after the affair was uncovered that it had been of a purely Platonic nature and that Otto should therefore overlook it and continue to support Wagner, which he in fact did. That Wagner's "innocence" was really an "inner sense" also fits the facts. There is a general consensus that Wagner was remarkably successful in following his instincts and that in the case of Mathilde, for example, he had sought out and chosen the most suitable "muse" to guide him through the composition of *Tristan*.

This is then followed up by a sequence of further excuses. First comes "why he was off colour" (possibly referring to Wagner's continual ill-health – which he made a chief reason for his demands on others). Then "why they provencials drollo eggspilled him out of his homety dometry narrowedknee domum" seems to refer to the narrow-minded provincialism that forced him into exile. At the same time, the appearance here of Humpty Dumpty

(supported by the modulation of "exiled" into "eggspilled") points to a connection with HCE, the dominant father figure of the novel. Wagner's exile, like the downfall of other great men, is thus made an instance of the continually recurring Fall. The egg motif is then continued in "because all his creature comfort was an omulette", which sounds vaguely like one of Wagner's periodical complaints about being hard up. "[H]e could neither . . . swimp in the flood of cecialism" seems to be "he could not swim in the flood of socialism" (which may be interpreted as another reason why he had to go into exile), while "the sorrors of Sexton" approximates "the sorrows/horrors of Saxony" (Wagner's native province). Finally and most persuasively, "Parisise" is both Paris and Paradise. Paris in this case is both the city (which Wagner visited several times and where he conducted other affairs – but not the one with Mathilde) and Helen's abductor (in which role Wagner was caricatured during the première of *Tristan*),[27] while the mention of Paradise recalls Walther's prize song.

One could go on speculating at length about the implications of this sequence, which seems to be permeated by a detailed and sympathetic understanding of Wagner's life.[28] Furthermore, the general context suggests that, beneath the surface appearance of poking fun, Joyce felt a genuine empathy for Wagner's struggles that so closely mirrored his own and a resultant sense of artistic kinship with him. Whatever the truth of the matter, there is no doubt that Joyce had strong reasons for incorporating the rich Wagnerian patterns in his two previous novels, which the remainder of this study will now attempt to explore in depth.

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[1] Furthermore, on at least one occasion, he actually *sang* Wagner: "In Trieste in 1909 Joyce performed in the quintet from *Die Meistersinger*, probably the tenor part of David" (Martin, "Joyce, Wagner, and the Artist-Hero" (in *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1984)), p 66). No known record exists to show which part Joyce in fact took, but Martin's surmise that it was that of David is indeed more than likely. Of the three male roles in the quintet, only two are for tenors, and of those two the secondary, lyric tenor of David is the obvious choice for a gifted amateur like Joyce, rather than the more heroic role of Walther which, while much lighter than the classic Wagnerian tenor parts, Siegfried and Tristan, usually requires a professional *Heldentenor*. The part for David, however, may have had added significance for Joyce since, at this point in the work, the apprentice, having pleased his master, is made a journeyman and seems set to become a worthy successor to Walther. Anticipating this, he sings "[A] voice within me cries/Soon the Master's Prize!" (*Die Meistersinger* (1913) III, iv, ll 213-14 ("'s geht der Kopf mir wie im Kreis'/Daß ich Meister bald heiß!).

[2] It is also an opinion that took some time to develop, since a decade earlier he had dismissed the same work as being "pretentious stuff" (*Letters of James Joyce* (1966), vol. I, p 67). This remark had been addressed, somewhat off the cuff, to G. Molyneux Palmer, a composer who was setting certain of the *Chamber Music* lyrics and whom the twenty-seven year old Joyce may have been trying to impress with a

show of musical sophistication (though belittling Wagner at that time must have required a considerable measure of *chutzpah*).

[3] For a full account of this process, see Anne Dzamba Sessa, *Richard Wagner and the English* (1976).

[4] Coterrill, *Wagner* (1996), p152.

[5] See for example Stoddard Martin, *Wagner to* The Waste Land (1982), introduction.

[6] See Sessa, "Ar Wagner's Shrine: British and American Wagnerians" (in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (1984), pp 258-61).

[7] The popular *Lohengrin* was the first to arrive, being performed every year but one from its première in 1875 until World War I. *Tannhäuser* and *Holländer* followed shortly thereafter, both *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* were introduced in 1884 and the first *Ring* cycle was produced in 1892. *Parsifal* was reserved from production outside Bayreuth, according to Wagner's own wishes, until thirty years after his death (1913). See *Two Hundred Years of Opera at Covent Garden* (1958), appendix.

[8] Martin, *Joyce and Wagner* (1991), p 12.

[9] Ibid., pp 4 – 5. The question of exactly *why* the Wagner craze developed in Britain is a complex one, itself deserving of extensive study. It involves the related issues of whether Wagner represented a "German", a "Germanic" or a "Northern" consciousness, or something wider yet, and whether this could be embraced by artists of another culture or whether it should merely be used by them as a model for their own, independent expression of identity. That Wagner's works did become so popular in Britain at least suggests that they answered a need for some such "national" or "racial" consciousness. This was particularly the case in Ireland. Yeats, for example, used Cuchulain to embody nationalist pride in much the same way that Wagner was (perhaps mistakenly) considered to use Siegfried. Joyce, more sceptical of such gestures, combined the "Nordic" Siegfried with the "Hellenic" Daedalus.

[10] Ibid., p 13.

[11] Moore, *Hail and Farewell*, vol. 3 (1919), p 306; discussed in detail by Martin, p 39.

[12] Martin refers at this point of his argument to the library scene in *Ulysses*, in which it is proposed that Moore is the man to write the Irish national epic, while Stephen sits quietly in the corner feeling neglected (*Ulysses* (1992), p 246, discussed by Martin, p 40). Martin does not really press the point, but it is clear that the self-reflexive moment refers to *Ulysses*' own claim to be such an epic. Furthermore, the fact that Stephen is quietly fingering his ashplant and explicitly comparing it to a sword provides a subtle rejoinder to the more dramatic self-assertion of Moore. The underlying suggestion is that Moore was just another of those who tried unsuccessfully to pull the sword from the tree and that Joyce, like Siegmund, is throwing off his disguise in order claim his true birthright. However, a fuller understanding of the complexity of Stephen's characterisation as Siegfried, Siegmund and Wotan in one is needed to clarify the issue, and this will be taken up in the following chapter.

[13] *Joyce and Wagner*, p 52.

[14] Ibid., p 6.

[15] Ibid., p 7.

[16] Ibid., p 14.

[17] This is certainly the case with the famous anecdote Joyce tells in a letter to his brother Stanislaus about a performance of *Götterdämmerung* in which Brünnhilde's horse, "being unable to sing, evacuated" (*Letters of James Joyce*, vol. 2, p 214).

[18] *Joyce and Wagner*, p 17.

[19] Ibid., pp 17-18.

[20] Ibid., p 168.

[21] Ibid., pp 21-22.

[22] See p 28.

[23] Cf. Martin's detailed list of such allusions in his appendix, pp 187-9.

[24] See pp 28-29.

[25] *Finnegans Wake* (1992), pp 229-30.

[26] *Joyce and Wagner*, p 70.

[27] The reason for this was that, as the Munich press was well aware, Wagner was again involved with a married woman, this time Cosima von Bülow.

[28] However, as with anything in the *Wake* the density of the text is such that there are many other levels of meaning that may have nothing directly to do with Wagner, and a full analysis would require that these be taken into account as well.

Chapter III

PORTRAITS OF THE ARTISTS AS YOUNG MEN

The Romantic tradition of the artist-hero was comfortably established long before the creation of Stephen Dedalus. Goethe immediately springs to mind, as do almost all of the English Romantic poets.[1] Among musicians, the heroic mantle was most readily assigned to Beethoven, and his *Eroica* clearly begins the tradition of ascribing a heroic persona to the symphony. Later, such associations would become more explicit, as in the "Faust" and "Dante" symphonies and the symphonic poems of Liszt and in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* (with its revealing subtitle, "An Episode in the Life of an Artist") and *Harold in Italy* (which was inspired by that quintessential artist-hero, Byron). At around the same time, Carlyle expressed most clearly the contemporary attitudes on the subject in his essay on *The Hero as Poet*:

> [W]hoever may forget [the] divine mystery [of the universe], the *Vates*, whether Prophet or Poet, has penetrated into it; is a man sent hither to make it more impressively known to us. That always is his message; he is to reveal that to us – that sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with.[2]

This view of the poet as someone "sent hither" for the betterment of the human race was most typical of the period. In the same essay, Carlyle claims that the most pre-eminent poets can safely be described in still more laudatory terms:

> Shakspeare (sic) and Dante are Saints of Poetry; really, if we will think of it, *canonised*, so that it is impiety to meddle with them. . . . They dwell apart, in a kind of royal solitude; none equal, none second to them: in the general feeling of the world, a certain transcendentalism, a glory as of complete perfection, invests these two.[3]

However much we might agree with the assessment of the supreme talents in question, we would not normally use the language of religion to describe them today. Nonetheless, in the nineteenth century, such lavish encomiums seemed quite natural and unforced.[4]

However, as closer examination reveals, the exact relationship between artist and hero is not always easy to define. Typically, the hero of a given work (or the protagonist of a poem or musical work) literally is an artist and, it is implied, a self-portrait of his own creator. Alternatively, though, the hero may not necessarily be an artist at all but merely a figure with whom the artist can be seen to share certain features. Typical roles include those of the wanderer, the mystic, the misunderstood prophet, the unrequited lover, the social outcast, the insurgent revolutionary and the martyr suffering for his cause. In all such cases, it is assumed that there is a close affinity between these roles and that of "artist", since they are all figures one can easily imagine translating their melancholy experiences into verse. A study could easily be made of the (ghostly) presence of Hamlet in much of romantic literature, and in particular in the morbidly introspective figures that people it.

As discussed in the opening chapter, Wagner himself was unquestionably a product of this Romantic movement and shared its obsessions. Although, as is generally known, the dominant theme of almost all his mature works is that of redemption, the presence of the "artist-hero" in these works is no less ubiquitous, being in fact strongly connected to the redemption theme (since these heroes are always either the agents of redemption or those in need of it - or even, in some instances, both simultaneously).

As with Romantic heroes in general, Wagner's are not always literally artists. The obvious exceptions are Tannhäuser and Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger* (as well as Hans Sachs – the real hero of *Die Meistersinger*). However, as elsewhere, even the other heroes are all analogous to the Romantic conception of the artist in some significant way. So, for example, the Dutchman and Siegmund embody his outcast, exiled state, Lohengrin, Siegfried and Parsifal his Messianic mission. Less obviously, both Tristan and Wotan can be seen to share his Hamlet-like brooding (for which another important source may have been Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*). Ultimately, many of these heroes – but especially Siegfried, Walther and, most obviously of all, Parsifal – are Christ-figures.

It is immediately obvious that the same concerns inform the work of Joyce, most of all in relation to the partially autobiographical figure of Stephen Dedalus. In creating his own portrait of the artist, Joyce was clearly working within (as well as extending and transforming) the Romantic tradition outlined above. Naturally, then, in addition to the personae of Daedalus, Icarus, Lucifer, Christ, Prometheus and Hamlet, Stephen also acquires those of several Wagnerian heroes. Of these, by far the most prominent is Siegfried, so that it is not surprising to find that most of the studies undertaken in this field have concentrated exclusively on Stephen's Siegfried-persona. However, this in itself is so detailed and elaborate as to admit of still closer scrutiny, while it is also worth paying attention to those other Wagnerian figures who, both through Siegfried and independently of him, are also connected to Stephen Dedalus.

The Artist as Wanderer: The Flying Dutchman and Stephen Dedalus

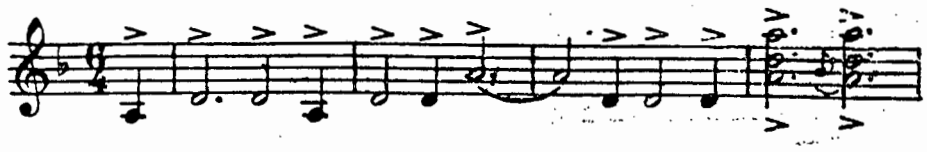
As Martin and others have argued, and as will be considered in more detail in Chapter IV, *Ulysses* contains a sequence of direct and indirect allusions which serve to connect Leopold Bloom with his Wagnerian predecessor, the Flying Dutchman. However, what is less often noted is that the text also indicates a more subtle connection between the Dutchman and Stephen, one that can, moreover, be traced back as far as the *Portrait*.

The figure of the Dutchman, it was argued in Chapter I, was Wagner's first attempt to portray himself, albeit (as he was to continue to do) in allegorical terms. In Chapter II it was suggested that Joyce probably saw the opera several times during his own years of exile. Thus it stands to reason that he would have identified with the protagonist and understood why Wagner created him as he did. Certainly, it is hard to imagine how the quintessential loneliness of this figure, portrayed with such compelling force, could have failed to strike a chord in the fiercely independent, self-exiled writer. Like Hamlet and Werther before him, here was another of those tormented souls who seemed to wear their isolation with a certain tragic pride, and which would thus find their way into the partly ironic self-dramatisation of Joyce as Stephen.

At the very end of the *Portrait*, Stephen is preparing to go into self-imposed exile in order to develop his sense of identity as an artist. He dreams passionately of

> the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations. They are held out to say: We are alone - come. And the voices say with them: We are your kinsmen. And the air is thick with their company as they call to me, their kinsman, making ready to go, shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth.[5]

Now, on the face of it, the "black arms" of these ships only appear black because they are silhouetted against the moon and not because they bear any kindred resemblance to the ghastly "black masts and red sails"[6] of the Dutchman's ship. Also, the image, which clearly evokes Stephen's prototypes, Daedalus and his headstrong son Icarus, is used to indicate the *beginning* of a voyage and the exhilarated mood of a young man who seems to find himself on the threshold of a great adventure. It is thus appropriate to Stephen's characterisation as Siegfried, but it could hardly be more at odds with Wagner's presentation of the Dutchman, a man of unnaturally protracted age who has been voyaging for an indefinite period and wants nothing more desperately than to come home and die peacefully. Nonetheless, there is at least an atmospheric similarity and perhaps just the hint of something more. Stephen, it is spelled out, is running away from Ireland in an attempt to "fly by those nets"[7] which he perceives attempting to stifle his development. He thus rejects the claims of nationality in favour of a more authentic mode of existence in exile. He even embraces and affirms such an existence. Wagner's Dutchman, on the other hand, no longer knows anything but exile and yearns for an end to his tortured life, but, as Nietzsche recognised, when he gains what he longs for, he ceases to be himself.[8] In other words, his very nature, like that of an infinitely older and intensified Stephen, demands that he be eternally homeless. And, in spite of the pain this causes him, there is a certain tone of defiant relish involved in it as well, as can clearly be heard for example in his characteristic musical theme:



It does not seem to be stretching a point, then, to connect Stephen at the end of *A Portrait* with a sort of embryonic Flying Dutchman.

The ship image reappears at the close of the three-part "Telemachia" of *Ulysses*. Stephen is now about a year or two older, having been recalled from Paris some months previously to be present at his mother's deathbed, and now in mourning for her. At a symbolic level, he is in quest of a father figure, who, unbeknown to him, will later be made manifest in the unlikely person of Leopold Bloom. However, as he muses on his fate, he suddenly sees a seagoing ship drawing into the harbour: "Moving through the air high spars of a threemaster, her sails braided up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream, silently moving, a silent ship."[9] A mariner has come home then, but we do not know as yet who it is. Finding out must be postponed until we come to consider the Odyssean wanderer himself in Chapter IV.

However, before we abandon the Dutchman altogether, there is another detail linking him to Stephen, noted by both Martin and DiGaetani. This is the poem Stephen tries to compose on the beach, shortly before seeing the ship: "He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss."[10] Clearly, this evokes a very Dutchman-like figure approaching his Senta for a fatal rendezvous. In his analysis, Martin hints obliquely that the "morbid fascination" Wagner's Senta is shown to feel for the Dutchman conceals an erotic death-wish.[11] Actually, the theme of "death and the maiden" is a strong undercurrent in the opera. From early on, it is made clear that to save the Dutchman Senta must be prepared to sacrifice her life for him. His occult nature is further emphasised by the more down-to-earth figures in the drama. The pious housekeeper, Mary, for example, becomes very tetchy when Senta insists on singing the

ballad, saying "Leave thou the Flying Dutchman in peace"[12] and adding that his portrait (with which Senta is infatuated) should be burnt. Senta's fiancé, Erik, convinced that the stranger is in league with the devil, repeatedly tries to warn Senta off him and, when he finally encounters him, screams "Oh horror, what a face!"[13] Thus, Stephen's apparent characterisation of him as a "pale vampire" is by no means inaccurate. The phrase "through storm his eyes", moreover, blends the imagery of tempest with the hero's demonic purpose in much the way Wagner's music does. As Stephen continues to muse on the lines he is writing, he considers, briefly, "Why not endless till the farthest star?"[14] and this too seems to echo the Dutchman's curse of eternal wandering, even elevating it to a more cosmic scale, and this in turn prefigures the unending journey of Ulysses-Bloom:

> Ever would he wander, selfcompelled, to the extreme limit of his cometary orbit, beyond the fixed stars and variable suns and telescopic planets, astronomical waifs and strays, to the extreme boundary of space, passing from land to land, among peoples, amid events. Somewhere imperceptibly he would hear and somehow reluctantly, suncompelled, obey the summons of recall. Whence, disappearing from the constellation of the Northern Crown he would somehow reappear reborn above delta in the constellation of Cassiopeia and after incalculable eons of peregrination return an estranged avenger, a wreaker of justice on malefactors, a dark crusader, a sleeper awakened, with financial resources (by supposition) surpassing those of Rothschild or of the silver King.[15]

In this instance, more detailed similarities are at work than can easily be pinpointed. As will be fully discussed in the following chapter, Bloom is very closely linked to the Dutchman. Here, he even appears to share his fabulous wealth. More importantly, the celestial imagery highlights the essentially metaphysical nature of their quest. In the opera, the Dutchman apostrophises the planets, asking them to discontinue their course so that his doomed wandering can come to an end.[16] Bloom, as the above quotation shows, is actually compared to the planets himself, presaging the final reminder that, like all of us, he and Molly are wanderers even in repose, "being each and both carried westward, forward and rereward respectively, by the proper perpetual motion of the earth through everchanging tracks of neverchanging space".[17]

The Artist as Debauchee: Tannhäuser and Stephen Dedalus

A more exact and detailed correlation can be deduced between Stephen and Tannhäuser, though it may be largely coincidental. The principal facts are that both heroes are artists as well as romantic outcasts, and both are racked by an inner conflict between the lusts of the flesh and the idealised desire for a spiritual or courtly love. In Tannhäuser's case, this dichotomy is symbolised by the opposing figures of Venus and Elisabeth, behind whom hovers the clear presence of the Virgin Mary. In Stephen's, there is a similar parallelism between the Dublin whores he meets, on the one hand, and his beloved "E. C.", on the other, while the figure of the Virgin is, again as in *Tannhäuser*, almost omnipresent. Each goes through a progression from an initial commitment to the idealised beloved, through dissatisfaction and rebellion, a prolonged period of licentiousness (characterised by infernal imagery) and repentance and terror in the face of damnation, to final salvation by the intervention of the beloved, with whom he is then reconciled. In each case, too, it is strongly implied that the symbolic opposition of "whore" and "virgin" archetypes conceals the primacy of the "ur-woman", who alone can offer the final redemption.

Joyce's main source of inspiration for most of this material was, of course, his own experience of growing up in late nineteenth century Ireland and the uncompromising Roman Catholic education he received at the hands of his Jesuit masters. His creative imagination, which frequently tended to work in terms of symbolic associations, could thus have easily shaped the narrative structure of Stephen's intertwined sexual and spiritual crises out of the raw material of his own experiences, without needing to turn for help either to *Tannhäuser* or anywhere else. However, we know that he *did* know Wagner's work in general, and he refers to *Tannhäuser* specifically in *Exiles*[18] and elsewhere.[19] He must therefore, at the very least, have been aware of the thematic similarities between his autobiographical work and Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, not unlike Wilde's Dorian Gray, who saw "in the prelude to that great work of art a presentation of the tragedy of his own soul".[20] Of course, the Stephen of *A Portrait* does not have the recourse to the opera that both Wilde and his own creator enjoyed and so is not in a position to draw connections with the work in the way Dorian is shown to do. Nonetheless, an awareness of the opera

lends a literary context to Stephen's experience and thereby does much to enhance it. Furthermore, there are verbal clues in the text that indicate the possibility of allusions to the opera.

Towards the end of second of the *Portrait*'s five chapters, Stephen is beginning to be troubled by the onset of puberty. His childhood fantasies of a chaste union with "another Mercedes",[21] like the heroine of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, have given way to "a cold and cruel and loveless lust".[22] Simultaneously, he is aware of a growing alienation from his family, his schoolfellows, his masters and from the Irish in general. He does not yet understand what is happening to him and feels troubled by it. His solution mirrors that of the self-exiled Tannhäuser in turning to the Venusberg for solace:

> He turned to appease the longings of his heart before which everything else was idle and alien. He cared little that he was in mortal sin, that his life had grown to be a tissue of subterfuge and falsehood. Beside the savage desire within him to realise the enormities which he brooded on nothing was sacred. He bore cynically with the shameful details of his secret riots in which he exulted to defile with patience whatever image had attracted his eyes. By day and by night he moved among distorted images of the outside world. A figure that had seemed to him by day demure and innocent came towards him by night through the winding darkness of sleep, her face transfigured by a lecherous cunning, her eyes bright with brutish joy. Only the morning pained him with its dim memory of dark orgiastic riot, its keen and humiliating sense of transgression.[23]

The parallel is not an exact one. Wagner's minstrel is significantly older than the adolescent Stephen and somewhat less tormented. While in the Venusberg, he celebrates the experience wholeheartedly rather than having to "[bear] with it cynically". However, after spending an unspecified time in thrall to this extreme sensual indulgence, he longs to return to the world of chaste pleasures that he has forsaken:

> And yet in all these roseate bowers
> I miss the scent of woodland flowers,

Long for the skies of liquid blue,
Long for the meadows fresh with dew,
Once more to hear the linnet singing,
Roam where at eve the bells are ringing.
To earth once more I long to flee!
O peerless one! Goddess! Set me free![24]

In each case, then, a clear underlying polarity is set up between the hero's riotous life of secret debauchery and the world of purity and innocence that seems irreconcilable with it. In addition, Stephen's sense of moving among "distorted images" heralds the increasing transformation of his environment, whereby his inner experiences seem shadowed forth in his surroundings and the brothel district into which he wanders becomes coloured so as to resemble a nightmarish vision of hell:

> [T]he wasting fires of lust sprang up again. . . . His blood was in revolt. He wandered up and down the dark slimy streets peering into the gloom of lanes and doorways, listening eagerly for any sound. He moaned to himself like some baffled prowling beast. . . . He felt some dark presence moving irresistibly upon him from the darkness, a presence subtle and murmurous as a flood filling him wholly with itself. . . . His hands clenched convulsively and his teeth set together as he suffered the agony of its penetration. He stretched out his arms in the street to hold fast to hold fast the frail swooning form that eluded him and incited him: and the cry that he had strangled for so long in his throat issued from his lips. It broke from him like a wail of despair from a hell of sufferers and died in a wail of furious entreaty, a cry for an iniquitous abandonment, a cry which was but the echo of an obscene scrawl which he had read on the oozing wall of a urinal.[25]

Whereas this squalor and misery is in one way very far removed from the "roseate bowers" of the Venusberg, the difference merely serves to conceal underlying similarities. Both scenarios have a distinctly surreal quality and both are used to represent in visual terms a particular state of mind, one that Michael Tanner, referring to the revised Venusberg Music, describes as "the realm of pathological sexuality".[26] Both are also, in a sense, "superimposed" on the daylight world with which they are contrasted. In Stephen's case

this is made clear by the almost dreamlike way in which his actual surroundings are coloured and disturbed by his imagination. In Tannhäuser's, it is suggested visibly, firstly (in Act I) by the Venusberg's suddenly dissolving into nothingness (when the hero calls on the Virgin Mary to deliver him) and giving way to the green fields and open skies that he has been longing for, and secondly (in Act III) when the Venusberg begins to materialise again, this time in answer to his renewed pleas to the goddess. In the latter case, there is an additional suggestion in the succubus-like "frail swooning form" of Stephen's lurid fantasies and the stage directions from this scene, which read:

> *Light vapours gradually cover the stage, it being now dark night. The vapours begin to glow with soft, rosy light. Festal music is heard from behind the scenes. The wild movements of dancing forms become visible.*[27]

Furthermore, these phenomena vary their appearance according to the differing perceptions of the characters. Whereas Tannhäuser describes "balmy breezes", "delicate odours" and "jubilant voices" and cries out joyously "With rapture ev'ry sense is glowing!/What rosy lights around me play!",[28] the sober and virtuous Wolfram sees them quite differently: "A hideous glamour mocks mine eyes!/The fiends of hell around me rise!"[29]

In each case, then, we have a situation where elusive and indistinct forms, at once seductive and demonic, become superimposed on the real world and threaten to engulf it. Furthermore, whenever the protagonists recover from these erotic hallucinations, it is only to be faced with what, in the Roman Catholic ethos they both inhabit, can only be regarded as their grievous sin. Significantly, both then turn to the figure of the all-forgiving Virgin, seen by both as a more generous parent than the stern and vengeful male God. Moreover, it is fairly certain that both Joyce and Wagner have a sophisticated awareness of the psychological issues this conceals (even if, in Wagner's case, such awareness predates Freud by several decades). Simply put, the hero turns directly from one female icon to another, while his creator implies a relationship and even, possibly, an identity between the two, while the only real opposition comes from the sternly unforgiving father.

In *Tannhäuser*, this element of opposition is embodied in the patriarchal figures of the Landgrave and the Pope. The former condemns the minstrel to exile and invokes the authority of God to justify his judgement:

> A crime, fearful and monstrous, is before us.
> With fiendish treachery hath stol'n into
> Our midst this wretched, sin-polluted man.
> We thrust thee from our court! With us seek not
> To shelter! Thou hast stain'd our very hearth
> With guilt! The heavens look with awful frown
> Upon this roof that all too long doth hide thee![30]

The latter sets the seal upon his doom with the damning curse:

> Thou that the joys of hell hast known,
> Bound in its lust's unholy thrall,
> Thou that in Venus' Mount hast dwelt,
> Thy soul is lost beyond recall!
> As on this staff that here I hold
> Never again a leaf shall grow,
> So from the fiery pangs of hell
> Redemption never canst thou know!"[31]

In each case, these powerful rejections by authoritarian males are overturned by acts of forgiveness and compassion on the part of Elisabeth. In the first, after shielding Tannhäuser from the swords of the outraged knights, she upbraids them for their unbending attitude, denying them the right to judge him. In the second, after offering her life to the Virgin in exchange for his salvation, she dies and the papal staff is declared to have miraculously burst into leaf. Moreover, behind the opposing figures of Elisabeth and the various male judges stand the images of the compassionate, gentle Virgin and the angry God of the Old Testament.

Turning now to Stephen once more, we find exactly the same kind of opposition. The authority of the church is upheld by the patriarchal figure of father Arnall, whose famous hellfire sermon dominates the novel's central chapter. Although this is once again based directly on Joyce's own experiences (and reputedly taken almost verbatim from an actual Jesuit hell sermon), it provides a strikingly direct (and arguably not coincidental) parallel with the pope's curse. Moreover, Stephen is finally freed from its paralysing influence by his "vision" of the girl on the beach. And, as in *Tannhäuser*, the figures of male God and female Virgin loom behind both priest and girl:

> His sin, which had covered him from the sight of God, had led him nearer to the refuge of sinners. Her eyes seemed to regard him with mild pity; her holiness, a strange light glowing faintly upon her pale flesh, did not humiliate the sinner who approached her. If ever he was impelled to cast sin from him and to repent the impulse that moved him was the wish to be her knight. If ever his soul, re-entering her dwelling shyly after the frenzy of his body's lust had spent itself, was turned towards her whose emblem is the morning star, *bright and musical, telling of heaven and infusing peace*, it was when her names were murmured softly by lips whereon there still lingered foul and shameful words, the savour itself of a lewd kiss.[32]

The words in italics, though primarily a reference to orthodox Catholic belief, are immediately suggestive of Wolfram's "Song to the Evening Star" in *Tannhäuser*. This is the scene in which Elisabeth, having made her pact with the Blessed Virgin, exits slowly and solemnly to prepare herself for sacrificial death (symbolically, that is). As she goes, Wolfram invokes the aid of the "holder Abendstern" to guide her on her chosen path. The whole import of the song is in fact directly concerned with "telling of heaven and infusing peace". What makes it unlikely that the similarity is coincidental is the parallel circumstances in each case: a passionate artist-hero calls upon the emblem of the evening or morning star (they are of course one and the same - as well as Venus) as symbolic of the Virgin, in an attempt to have her intercede for his (or another's) salvation. In each case, furthermore, there is a deliberately ironic blurring of the distinction between sensual and spiritual love.

The Artist as Visionary: Lohengrin and Stephen Dedalus

As discussed in the opening chapter, there is considerably less evidence for Joyce's being influenced by *Lohengrin* than by the works that immediately preceded it. One possible reason for this is the general decline of literary interest in *Lohengrin* after the 1890s. To the modernists, this particular work, with its generally sentimental atmosphere (lacking in both the aggressive power of *Holländer* and the controversial sensuality of *Tannhäuser*), must have seemed to embody the most dated and obsolete aspects of Wagner's *oeuvre*. The prelude, for example, with its mystical atmosphere, provides one of the best examples of that quality which the Symbolists and "decadents" had esteemed most highly in Wagner but which had largely gone out of fashion among the next generation: a shimmering, otherworldly haze suggestive of spiritualism and the supernatural:

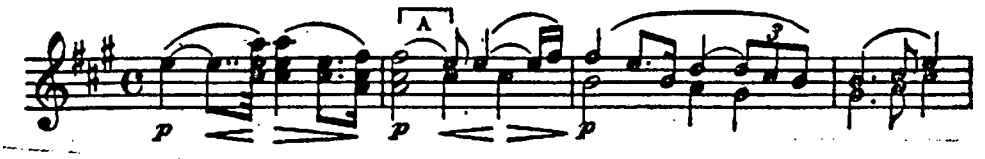
> Out of the clear blue ether of the sky there seems to condense a wonderful yet at first hardly perceptible vision; and out of this there gradually emerges, ever more and more clearly, an angel host bearing in its midst the sacred Grail. As it approaches earth it pours out exquisite odours, like streams of gold, ravishing the senses of the beholder. The glory of the vision grows and grows until it seems as if the rapture must be shattered and dispersed by the very vehemence of its own expansion. The vision draws nearer, and the climax is reached when at last the Grail is revealed in all its glorious reality, radiating fiery beams and shaking the soul with emotion. The beholder sinks on his knees in adoring self-annihilation. The Grail pours out its light on him like a benediction and consecrates him to its service; then the flames gradually die away, and the angel host soars up again to the ethereal heights in tender joy, having made pure once more the hearts of men by the sacred blessing of the Grail.[33]

This is Wagner's own "programme" for the prelude (as translated by Ernest Newman) and provides both a convincing interpretation of the music's "content" and a striking indication of those mystical qualities so admired during the 1890s, when Symbolism held sway.[34] In addition, one of the most intriguing features of the passage is the distinct sense of an underlying sexuality ("as if the rapture must be shattered and dispersed by the vehemence

of its own expansion"). As such, it provides a helpful illustration of the deep parallels that are drawn between sexual, religious and aesthetic experience throughout Wagner's work.

Actually, this "inverse eroticism", a kind of obscurely eroticised celibacy (paradoxical as that may seem) which is to be greatly intensified in *Parsifal*, is of great interest in *Lohengrin*, where it suggests a curious parallel with Stephen's "morning inspiration" in the *Portrait*.[35] Wagner's conception of the Grail, much like Tennyson's,[36] implies a kind of sexuality repressed by and sublimated in monasticism. In addition, the importance Wagner frequently seems to attach to sexuality as the fundamental principle of human life and one from which all other experiences must ultimately derive their source suggests that he was fully aware of and even intended such an interpretation. It even seems as if, anticipating the findings of J. G. Frazer and Jessie Weston, Wagner may have consciously envisaged the Grail as a womb-symbol. What adds strength to this conjecture is the ubiquitous presence of the "eternal feminine" throughout his operas. Whereas in the overtly pagan and secular worlds of the *Ring* and *Tristan* this figure is easily discernible in Brünnhilde and Isolde, in such superficially Christian works as *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*, where it seems conspicuous by its absence, it may in fact have been "spiritualised" into the Grail, an idea which seems all the more likely when we consider that the redemptive role played by the Grail in these works is almost exactly analogous to that of the more visible heroines of the other works.[37]

In *Lohengrin*, as discussed in the opening chapter, the hero is sent into the world from a higher realm (Monsalvat) and the Grail itself is mentioned as having sent him. As a result, the prelude (which, like Wagner's others, encapsulates the mood of the complete work) can be said to "prepare the way" for his coming. The "beholder" mentioned in the programme and who experiences the vision and benediction of the Grail is obviously the hero himself. In Act III, he makes this clear in his climactic narration, which is sung to the same music that constitutes the prelude, and in which he reveals the secret of his divine origin and purpose. Above all the music itself, the radiant "Grail" theme, expresses this ineffable quality:



In Stephen's case, a strikingly similar air of purity pervades the "morning inspiration" which, in the fourth chapter, serves to confirm him in his new vocation:

> Towards dawn he awoke. O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music. His mind was waking slowly to a tremulous morning knowledge, a morning inspiration. A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was inbreathed, how passionlessly, as if the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him! His soul was waking slowly, fearing to awake wholly. It was that windless hour of dawn when madness wakes and strange plants open to the light and the moth flies forth silently.[38]

Of course, there can be no question of proving that Joyce modelled this on either the *Lohengrin* prelude or its programme, but one cannot help noting the kindred atmosphere it bears to both, particularly as evinced by the "faint sweet music", the "pale cool waves of light" and the sense of being "filled" by a spirit, almost as the Grail is supposed to overwhelm the senses of its adoring knight. A few sentences further on, moreover, Stephen thinks ecstatically "O! In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh. Gabriel the seraph had come to the virgin's chamber."[39] In a manner typical of the *Lohengrin*-loving Symbolists, in other words, he appropriates the image of the Incarnation to describe the quasi-mystical nature of his "inspiration" and, at the symbolic level, this draws the whole experience into still closer kinship with the Swan-knight's vision, since the "virgin womb" is typified by the Grail. According to one source,

> [t]he Grail is generally taken to symbolise the Waters of Life; the Holy of Holies; the Cosmic Centre; the heart; the source of life and immortality; the cup of the magician; the source of abundance; fertility . . . and [it] carries a eucharistic significance, and is the symbolical source of physical and spiritual life. . . . [It] can be depicted as the downward pointing triangle, the receptive, watery feminine element, and as such is associated with the symbolism of the lance, the active, fiery, masculine element depicted as the upward pointing triangle. The two together are connected with, and united in, the blood or sacred draught in the cup; the life-blood.[40]

Thus, in each case, the hero experiences an image of spiritual fecundity that is associated with his own "awakening" as a potential saviour. Furthermore, although Stephen does not encounter the Grail as such, he does have a vision of another, and closely related symbol, the Mystic Rose. Several details in the "morning inspiration" episode recall an important earlier passage that follows immediately after Stephen's first discovering his artistic vocation. Exhausted but euphoric after a long walk on the beach, he settles down on the sand to rest. As he drifts into unconsciousness, he imagines a rich and strange medley of images:

> His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other.[41]

Like the Grail, the flower symbol represents "the feminine, passive, principle, the form of the receptacle", while in addition "in opening and expanding from the centre outwards it depicts development in manifestation".[42] The rose in particular is

> ambivalent as both heavenly perfection and earthly passion . . . fertility and virginity . . . perfection; the pleroma; completion; the mystery of life; the unknown; beauty; grace;

> happiness, but also voluptuousness; the passions and [is] associated with wine, sensuality and seduction.[43]

The red rose in particular denotes "desire, passion, joy, beauty, consummation; [and the] flower . . . of the blood . . . of Christ".[44] Essentially, what the Grail and rose symbols have in common is their archetypally feminine cup shape and their rich red colour, denoting passion and sacrifice. Ultimately, what both heroes experience is an image of the creative potential and spiritual abundance of the universe, and a sense of their own investiture as agents of that abundance.

Linked with the virgin womb symbolism is that associated with the Holy Ghost. In *Lohengrin* (as later in *Parsifal*) this takes the form of the white dove of the Grail which descends every Good Friday bearing in its beak the wafer of bread that is placed in the chalice. In keeping with the tradition established by the New Testament, the Spirit functions as a source of enlightenment and grants the gift of tongues. This makes it a natural means of indicating artistic as well as religious inspiration.[45] In the *Portrait*, Stephen comes to an understanding of this almost intuitively:

> [H]e believed that at some future stage of his spiritual progress . . . his sinful soul [would be] raised up from its weakness and enlightened by the Third Person of the Most Blessed Trinity. He believed this all the more, and with trepidation, because of the divine gloom and silence wherein dwelt the unseen Paraclete, Whose symbols were a dove and a mighty wind, to sin against Whom was a sin beyond forgiveness, the eternal, mysterious secret Being to Whom, as God, the priests offered up mass once a year, robed in the scarlet of the tongues of fire.[46]

The key to this passage is that Stephen is unconsciously expressing a greater truth than he is aware of. He will indeed come to a greater understanding and power but, ironically, only after he has lost his faith. However, like Joyce himself, he will continue to use the language and symbolism of Catholicism to express his post-Christian world-view. Thus, when he finally enjoys his liberating sense of his true artistic vocation and heritage, the

experience recalls not only the flight of the classical Daedalus but also the Pentecostal visitation of the Holy Ghost:

> His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he were soaring sunward. His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his windswept limbs.[47]

What is more, this climactic moment is not only the fulfilment of Stephen's earlier belief "that at some future stage of his spiritual progress . . . his sinful soul [would be] raised up from its weakness and enlightened", but also of a similar prediction that he had made earlier still, concerning "the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld":

> They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence: and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes and then in a moment, he would be transfigured. Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment.[48]

In *Lohengrin* too, the lovers' meeting is prefigured by dreams and visions, and is characterised in a similarly idealised and ethereal way. At another level, it is the connection between Virgin and Spirit that is being reinforced. Thus, again like Lohengrin, Stephen is continually shown to be surrounded by symbolic images that indicate the lofty spiritual nature of his calling. In each case, too, as discussed in Chapter I, the hero fails to be recognised or accepted. Elsa insists on asking Lohengrin "the forbidden question" (i.e. to reveal his true identity) and thus forcing him to return to Monsalvat, guided by the white dove. Stephen, rejected by his unnamed beloved in favour of a priest (and thereby, as he sees it, either scorning or simply failing to recognise his true identity as "priest of the eternal imagination"), determines to flee the narrow-minded provincialism of Ireland for the worldly sophistication of the Continent. Although there is no exact correlation here, there are at least hints of a parallel. Most importantly though, what all the subtle echoes of

earlier Wagner heroes add up to is a prophetic indication of the most important association of all, that of Stephen and Siegfried.

The Artist as Superman: Siegfried and Stephen Dedalus

Almost every commentary on *Ulysses* at least notes Stephen Dedalus's Wagnerian cry of "Nothung!" in the brothel scene. DiGaetani, Stoddard Martin, Timothy Martin and Furness all offer analyses of it in which they point out numerous salient points - and yet, once again, "there is always much more to be said".[49] Elliott Zuckerman, for example has the following to say:

> To catch all the allusions in *Ulysses* one must know Wagner's epics as well as Homer's, and be as closely acquainted with Nibelheim and Valhalla as with the geography of Dante's *Comedy* . . . . The name of the Volsung's sword is well known, but to notice the pun in 'ashplant' one must remember that the tree in which Wotan had planted the sword was an ash. Just as other details in *Ulysses* were supposed to delight connoisseurs of Celtic lore, the parody of Siegmund's heroic moment was intended for well informed Wagnerians.[50]

This is largely all Zuckerman has to say on the subject, the comment being a mere appendix to his study of the broader influence of *Tristan*, but two points are worth noting. One is the easily overlooked information that "ashplant" is a pun. The other is more questionable: the assumption that the incident in question is a parody of "Siegmund's heroic moment", by which is intended, presumably, the climax of *Die Walküre* Act I, in which Siegmund pulls the sword from the tree-stem. This, however, as we shall see, is only a small part of the complex Wagnerian connection and less generally important than the links that it makes between Stephen and Siegmund's still more heroic son, the invincible Siegfried.

Furness, on the other hand, sums up the situation in brief: "[Stephen] flaunts his cane as the 'ash-sword' and, with the famous cry of 'Nothung!' shatters the chandelier in Bella

Cohen's brothel."[51] He goes on to mention the references to the blood-brotherhood oath from *Götterdämmerung*, and the fact that Stephen's cane (or "ashplant") is a parodistic version of Wotan's ash-spear, and then comments on the comic deflation of Wagnerian myth, concluding "The antics of modern man seem derisory indeed when compared with mythical archetypes, and Joyce derives obvious humour from the parallel".[52] The episode is not purely comic, however, but, to use a Joycean term, "jocoserious".[53] Furthermore, it cannot be properly considered in isolation but must be interpreted in relation to the text as a whole, since it connects with broader thematic currents within that whole. It contains and concretises a vast complex of symbolic references to (and even "through") the *Ring* cycle, evoking characters and situations from it, rearranging them and combining them with others (notably from Homer, the Bible and Shakespeare) to produce a new and remarkable artistic statement.

The deliberate identification of Stephen Dedalus with Siegfried that is most obvious in *Ulysses* actually begins in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This work, as is well known, shows us Stephen's development as "the artist" from early childhood, through a stormy adolescence, to the brink of adulthood. It ends triumphantly, with Stephen-Joyce's resounding challenge to himself to "encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race".[54] Apart from being a partly ironic self-portrait, though, the novel is, at a deeper level, an illustration of the intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth of the artist (considered as a universal type). This is also the reason for Stephen's unusual surname, which at once suggests the great inventor of classical mythology. In a way, Stephen is meant to suggest aspects of both Daedalus and, in his headstrong youthfulness, Icarus. In spite of his loss of faith, he retains a profound sense of his inner spirituality and also sees himself as both a martyr and a Christ figure. Another famous son with whom he feels a strong personal affinity is Hamlet, and Siegfried is yet another.

The first direct reference to the opera takes place one afternoon during Stephen's years at university. When he and his friend Cranly turn to go off together, leaving a group of other students behind them, we are distinctly told that "the bird call from *Siegfried* whistled softly

followed them from the steps of the porch".[55] Furness suggests that the purpose of this is "to warn Stephen of the dangers of listening to the blandishments of Cranly, the consequences of which would be spiritual death for him".[56] This is quite true, but Furness does not explain the reasons why the birdcall can be taken as such a warning. It remains to be seen, therefore, what role the birdcall plays in the opera and what ramifications this has for the character of Stephen Dedalus.

The call is first heard during the second act, when Siegfried wonders what the Woodbird is trying to tell him, but only discovers after slaying the dragon, when he finds that the taste of its blood enables him to understand its song. It instructs him first to take the Ring and the Tarnhelm from the hoard, then to be wary of Mime (who is plotting his murder) and finally how and where to find Brünnhilde. Clearly, then, it is (primarily) the second of these messages that is implied in the *Portrait*, with Cranly functioning as a counterpart to Mime (although the third may be implied as well). There may be additional layers of association, however. In mythic terms, the call clearly functions as a message or an inspiration, while the bird itself seems to resemble a kind of spirit guide. This fits the personality and situation of Stephen very neatly. He too is consciously seeking a signal, a sign to lead him on to fresh adventures. At the precise moment that the birdcall is whistled in the novel, he is leading Cranly aside to tell him of his loss of faith, which is an important step in severing his ties with home and tradition before he can go forward into exile. It is as if the birdcall is being used to underpin Stephen's own growing urge towards exile and freedom. This is matched in the opera by Siegfried repeatedly telling Mime of his impatience to leave the forest where he has spent his whole young life. Early in Act I, for example, he declares that, when the Sword is made, he will

> From the wood forth
> In the world fare,
> Nevermore to return!
> Gladness floods me
> For my freedom,
> Nothing now binds me here.
> My father thou art not,

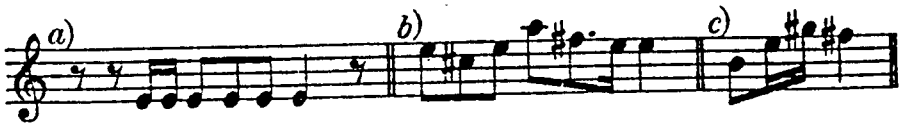
And afar I know my home.
Thy hearth is not my house,
Nor thy cave my rightful roof.
As the fish glad
In the flood swims,
As the finch free
On the wind soars,
I fly from here,
Fleetly I flow,
Like the wind o'er the woods
Wending my way,
Thee, Mime, no more to behold![57]

Like Mime's cave, Ireland has become a prison for the young artist-hero; the fledgling yearning to try out his new wings at last. Like Mime, too, neither Cranly nor Stephen's own father, Simon Dedalus, has anything in common with him.

It is also significant that the allusion refers to a relatively early stage in Siegfried's heroic career. Timothy Martin makes the point that because Dixon whistles rather than sings the motif, the reference is to the instrumental version played before tasting the dragon's blood allows the hero to understand it (after which it is transferred to soprano voice, thereby becoming intelligible):

> Stephen is in Siegfried's position when he cannot yet understand the bird, the position of an apprentice hero who has slain no dragons and pierced no rings of fire but of whom a good deal is expected; and because Stephen is not prepared for the heroic "calling" that the birdcall represents, Dixon whistles rather than sings (with words) the motive. Wagner's Woodbird is one of many birds in *A Portrait*, the Holy Spirit foremost, that evoke the ideal realm in which the artist's "vocation" is determined.[58]

Actually, it would be extremely odd for Dixon to sing rather than whistle this particular motif, simply because it is an entirely naturalistic, florid imitation of birdsong, memorable and perfectly adapted for whistling:



On the other hand it would be extremely difficult to sing, especially at the right pitch, even conceding that Dixon is familiar with the words, which would make him a very diligent Wagnerite indeed. Nonetheless, Martin's essential point is entirely valid, as is his placing the birdcall in its proper context as one of many bird references in the novel. What he does not mention, though, is that *Siegfried* is similarly filled with such references, so that the *Portrait*'s single direct allusion suggests a more detailed correlation. For example, we have already considered Siegfried's remark "As the finch free/On the wind soars/I fly from here",[59] in connection with his desire to escape the confines of Mime's cave and company. This, however, merely extends a strain of imagery established earlier in the same scene, whereby the hero is implicitly likened (in this case by Mime himself) to a young bird learning to fly:

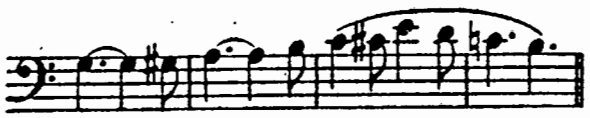
> What the parent bird is to the birdling,
> Nourish'd and nurs'd in the nest,
> Ere the fledgling can flutter,
> Such to his boy- his bantling's
> The sage and unselfish old Mime.[60]

Siegfried, however, angrily rebuffs Mime's false claim to kinship, seeing in the life of the forest birds an analogy to his own true parentage, the secret of which he is trying to uncover:

> The birds in the springtime
> For happiness sang.
> Each sought the heart of the other.

Thou saidst thyself,
When I question'd thee,
These wing'd ones husband and wife were.
With sweetest caresses
They stayed side by side.
They built them a nest
And brooded therein.
Then flutter'd the tiny
Young fledglings out,
And both did cherish the brood.[61]

In the opera, this episode is accompanied in the orchestra by the tender motif of "Love in Nature":



Later, the same motif is heard during the "Forest Murmurs" – the scene when Siegfried encounters the Woodbird, so there is clearly a strong connection between the two. Broadly speaking, the bird references are all part of an elaborate web of images, both verbal and musical, that are used to characterise Siegfried as a child of nature.

Turning again to the *Portrait*, it is immediately apparent that the imagery of birds and flight is still more richly elaborate than in *Siegfried.* The primary image here of course is that of Stephen's namesake and chief paradigm, Daedalus – the artist as birdman. In true Joycean fashion, however, one set of mythic correspondences is overlaid and intermeshed with several others, including, in this case, Wagner's Siegfried. For both heroes the flight of birds is an inspirational model of the restless urge to travel and experience. In Siegfried's case, this reaches a climax in the closing bars of Act II. The Woodbird, having

promised to lead the hero to his chosen bride, flutters into the background with the exuberant youth in hot pursuit, while its characteristic motif (the "birdcall" again) is taken up with radiant effect by the trumpets. In *A Portrait*, on the other hand, a similar effect is often achieved in words. For example, shortly before the scene in which the birdcall is featured directly, Stephen is contemplating the flight of migratory swallows:

> They came back with shrill cries over the jutting shoulder of the house, flying darkly against the fading air. . . . they must be swallows who had come back from the south. Then he was to go away for they were birds ever going and coming, building ever an unlasting home under the eaves of men's houses and ever leaving the homes they had built to wander.[62]

It is the birds themselves that first inspire Stephen's own wanderlust, and again the parallel with Siegfried's impulse to "fly from here" is self-evident. The swallows' music too, like that of Siegfried's Woodbird, sounds a note of departure as well as excitement in Stephen's heart, recalling another music that had occurred to his imagination during an earlier section and which was similarly linked in his mind with his growing sense of a personal destiny:

> The end he had been born to serve yet did not see had led him to escape by an unseen path and now it beckoned to him once more and a new adventure was about to be opened to him. It seemed to him that he heard notes of fitful music leaping upwards a tone and downwards a diminished fourth, upwards a tone and downwards a major third, like triple-branching flames leaping fitfully, flame after flame, out of a midnight wood. It was an elfin prelude, endless and formless; and, as it grew wilder and faster, the flames leaping out of time, he seemed to hear from under the boughs and grasses wild creatures racing, their feet pattering like rain upon the leaves.[63]

Here again, echoes of Siegfried are plentiful. He too has been "born to serve" and yet does not see the destiny planned for him by Wotan, while the sense of this destiny "beckoning" to him to follow "a new adventure" is strongly conveyed throughout the drama, for example in the passage quoted above, in which he sings of his quest for freedom. He too is accompanied by "a fitful music": the leitmotif of "Siegfried's Impatience":

As can be seen, this is characterised by alternate upward and downward leaps very similar to those in Stephen's music. Furthermore, this motif is akin to those of "Loge" and "the Magic Fire" that are used in association both with Siegfried's forge and the wall of flame he must penetrate to awaken Brünnhilde and which he too approaches from the depths of a "midnight wood". The description of the music as "endless and formless", as an elemental force surcharged with the life of forest creatures, is also directly comparable to Wagner, while the general atmosphere of youthful exuberance is evoked with equal force in both cases.

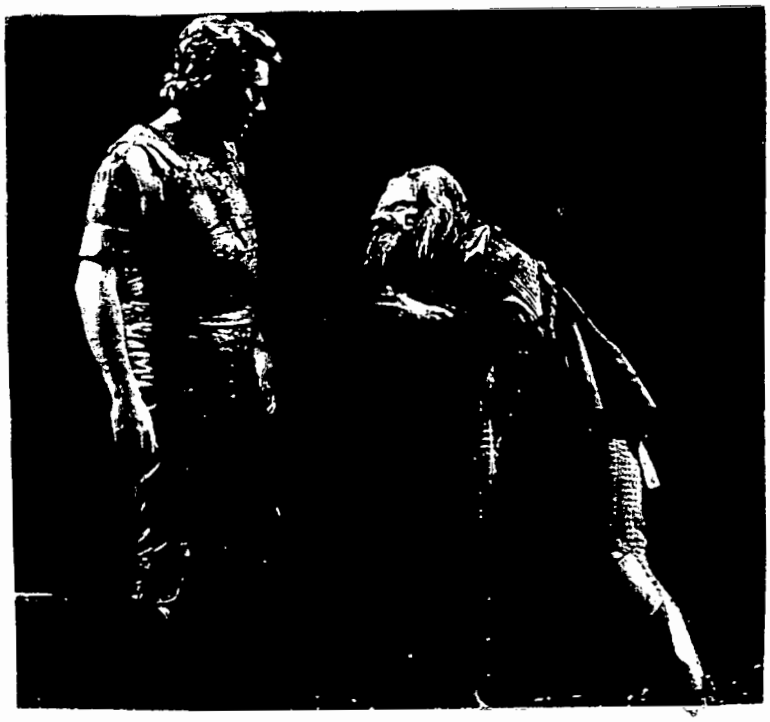
There are also a number of symbolic references to dwarfs in the *Portrait*, which, given the context, evoke Wagner as well. In most situations, they are used in relation to figures who, in one way or another, typify the suffocating provincialism of Ireland that Stephen is trying to escape, just as Siegfried longs to flee the close confines of Mime's cave and find both his freedom and his true heritage in the world beyond. In each case, the hero is determined to break an alleged bond of kinship that he regards as false.

The most detailed of these references occurs in the final chapter of the novel, shortly before the birdcall incident. Stephen, Cranly and Dixon are in the process of leaving the college library:

> As they crossed the hall a man of dwarfish stature came towards them. Under the dome of his tiny hat his unshaven face began to smile with pleasure and he was heard to murmur. His eyes were as melancholy as those of a monkey.
> - Good evening, gentlemen, said the stubble-grown monkeyish face.
> - Warm weather for March, said Cranly. They have the windows open upstairs.

> Dixon smiled and turned his ring. The blackish, monkey-puckered face pursed its human mouth with gentle pleasure and its voice purred:
> - Delightful weather for March. Simply delightful.
> - There are two nice young ladies upstairs, captain, tired of waiting, Dixon said.
> Cranly smiled and said kindly:
> - The captain has only one love: sir Walter Scott. Isn't that so, captain?
> - What are you reading now, captain? Dixon asked. *The Bride of Lammermoor?*
> - I love old Scott, the flexible lips said, I think he writes something lovely. There is no writer can touch sir Walter Scott.
> He moved a thin shrunken brown hand gently in the air in time to his praise and his thin quick eyelids beat often over his sad eyes.
> Sadder to Stephen's ear was his speech: a genteel accent, low and moist, marred by errors, and, listening to it, he wondered was the story true and was the thin blood that flowed in his shrunken frame noble and come of an incestuous love?[64]

The rumour Stephen refers to here suggests a parallel with the incestuous love of Siegmund and Sieglinde which leads to the begetting of Siegfried. If so, Joyce must be deliberately parodying the heroic original, in which Wagner glorifies the blended "Wälsungenblut" which will give rise to the purest and noblest of heroes. One suspects that the racism inherent in this would have irked Joyce into providing this ironic parallel, in which a much less heroic incest produces a character who seems more like a Mime to Stephen's Siegfried. That this is likely is also suggested by the repeated description of the "captain" as being monkey-like, a fact that has its counterpart in the simian features that were frequently given to Mime in contemporary illustrations. Indeed to this day opera producers show no signs of trying to blur this embarrassing reminder of Wagner's notorious prejudice. As the following brief sample of pictures (taken from performances as relatively recent as the early to mid '70s) illustrates, Siegfried's heroic image clearly monopolises the virtues Wagner considered properly "German" (forthrightness, vigour and manliness) while Mime embodies to an almost ludicrous extent the cupidity and deviousness one associates with such well-known anti-Semitic caricatures as Shylock and Fagin. (However, if one is able to dissociate both characters from the uncomfortable associations of racism, they remain in essence wonderfully realised portrayals of the archetypes of radiant sun-god and scheming villain.)



From top-left, clockwise: Paul Crook as Mime (1974), Jon Weaving as Siegfried and Paul Crook as Mime (1976), Jess Thomas as Siegfried (1974), Jean Cox as Siegfried and Heinz Zednik as Mime (1973).

Moreover, the tone of veiled condescension with which the "captain" is described suggests Stephen's Siegfried-like disdain for the dwarfish figure. In this case, one suspects that the ambitious young artist-hero feels disagreeably challenged by the somewhat excessive praise of Scott.[65] Further evidence that Wagner lies behind this passage is the mention of Dixon's ring. On the face of it, there is nothing to connect this perfectly innocuous signet ring with the all-powerful totem of the Nibelungs. However, it will be remembered that the frequently facetious Dixon is the same student who later whistles the Woodbird motif. This shows that he is at least familiar with *Siegfried*, if not the other *Ring* operas as well, and it would be perfectly in character for him to indulge in a private joke at the captain's expense by mentally comparing his stature with that of a Nibelung. In addition, Dixon's ring is also one of the outward signs of his wealth and culture, just as Wagner's Ring is associated with material wealth and power. The penniless Stephen by contrast has no power save that of his mind and spirit.

Now, after recalling the story of how the "shrivelled mannikin" was conceived in incest, Stephen mentally constructs the scene, investing it with the haunting quality of an old romance:

> The park trees were heavy with rain; and rain fell still and ever in the lake, lying grey like a shield. A game of swans flew there and the water and the shore beneath were fouled with their green-white slime. They embraced softly, - impelled by the grey rainy light, the wet silent trees, the shield-like witnessing lake, the swans. They embraced without joy or passion, his arm about his sister's neck. A grey woollen cloak was wrapped athwart her from her shoulder to her waist and her fair head was bent in willing shame. He had loose red-brown hair and tender shapely strong freckled hands. Face? There was no face seen. The brother's face was bent upon her fair rain-fragrant hair. The hand freckled and strong and shapely and caressing was Davin's hand.[66]

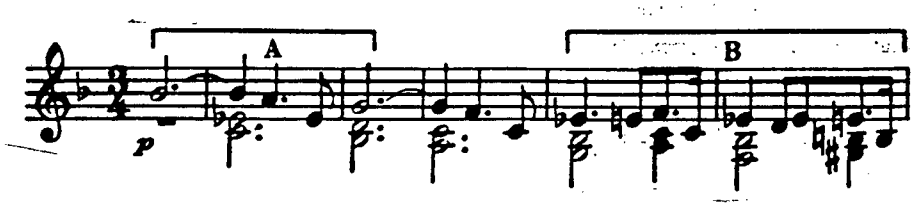
Davin, by the way, is one of Stephen's university friends, a "peasant student"[67] who appears to be everything that Stephen is not, athletic, modest, companionable, devoted to Ireland, loyal to the Church. In reality, it would be inconceivable for such an upright

character to commit incest, but Stephen's wayward imagination is no respecter of persons. Again, if the above episode is intended as a counterpart to the conception of Siegfried in *Die Walküre* Act I, it is a decidedly ironic one, since the melancholy atmosphere and pervasive sense of guilt differs markedly from the triumphant coupling of the Volsung twins. If anything, it is actually more suggestive of *Tristan*. Earlier in the same chapter, though, Stephen recalls a haunting story Davin had told him of an adventure that had befallen him while walking home one night from a hurling match:

> At last, after a bend of the road, I spied a little cottage with a light in the window. I went up and knocked at the door. A voice asked who was there and I answered I was over at the match . . . and that I'd be grateful for a glass of water. After a while a young woman opened the door and brought me out a big mug of milk. She was half undressed as if she was going to bed when I knocked and she had her hair hanging; and I thought by her figure and by something in the look of her eyes that she must be carrying a child. She kept me in talk a long while at the door and I thought it strange because her breast and her shoulders were bare. She asked me was I tired and would I like to stop the night there. She said that she was all alone in the house and that her husband had gone that morning to Queenstown . . . . And all the time she was talking, Stevie, she had her eyes fixed on my face and she stood so close to me I could hear her breathing. When I handed her back the mug at last she took my hand to draw me in over the threshold and said: *Come in and stay the night here. You've no call to be frightened. There's no one it but ourselves. . . .*[68]

Here, it seems, we have our missing link. Anyone familiar with the love-scene in *Die Walküre* will at once note the several parallels it shares with this passage. Although the details are not absolutely exact (as they might be in less capable hands), they are sufficient to preclude the likelihood of coincidence. First, Davin's hurling match (described earlier as violent and even – though perhaps not entirely seriously – as almost fatal)[69] provides a reasonably close parallel to the bloody battle from which Siegmund has barely escaped.[70] Although not, like Siegmund, fleeing for his life, Davin is still a solitary figure journeying by night from a scene of violent encounter. Like Siegmund, he then seeks shelter in an isolated homestead, finds it unoccupied except by an obviously attractive

young woman, from whom he begs a drink of water but receives more: in Davin's case, a "big mug of milk"; in Siegmund's, both the water he needs to quench his thirst and, in addition, a drink of mead. Both women have absent husbands and beg the stranger to stay and both generate the same powerful erotic and emotional attraction, seeming in each case to mask a real need for companionship. Even the detail of the woman's keeping her glance fixed on the man while he drinks and hands back the vessel occurs in both cases. With Wagner, moreover, the moment is underscored by a striking and richly emotional moment on solo cello (in fact the first occurrence in the cycle of the "Love" motif) the effect of which Joyce appears to approximate as nearly as possible in his haunting prose:



The big difference, on the other hand, is that, whereas Siegmund fearlessly seizes the opportunity offered to him, Davin meekly withdraws, leaving the woman to look sorrowfully after him as he departs. Stephen's unspoken but implied comment on this is that it demonstrates a typically Irish servility and lack of moral imagination and courage (attributes for which Wagner's heroes, by contrast, could well be taken as exemplars). However, what finally seems to point the connection is Davin's guess that the woman is pregnant (which is as close as he gets to Siegmund's example of actually impregnating her himself).[71]

What we have then is a situation whereby Stephen is likened, at first obliquely, to Siegfried. Then he encounters, briefly, a character who seems outwardly a Mime but whose incestuous origins are shown to mirror Siegfried's (and which are imaginatively linked by Stephen with his friend's story, which itself echoes the meeting of Siegmund and Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*). Joyce, then, creates a subtle skein of veiled illusions to the *Ring* cycle, particularly to the issue of Siegfried's parentage and identity, which, as we

have already seen, is especially pertinent to Stephen. There appears, moreover, to be a consistent inversion of the Wagnerian originals, in keeping with Joyce's ironic stance. In one case, a Mime-like figure seems to usurp or else mock Stephen's role as Siegfried, thereby threatening his heritage as the chosen son. In another, Davin is cast as an unsuccessful Siegmund, probably as a negative model against which Stephen can define himself.

Another negative or forbidding presence implied in the novel is that of Fafner, the dragon that Siegfried must fight and overcome. In this case, the allusions are centred on Cranly, whom we have already seen cast in a Mime-like role, that of a false friend who will try to turn Stephen's allegiance back to Ireland and the Church. Once again, the correlation is indirect and multi-faceted. As Fafner, Cranly is not a deceiver so much as an obstacle the hero must overcome and a representative of bourgeois complacency and conventionality, the sluggish brooding worm that sits on his hoard to no purpose. The allusions begin before Cranly appears in person, at a point when Stephen is thinking about him and the depressing effect his company produces:

> Through this image [Cranly's face] he had a glimpse of a strange dark cavern of speculation but at once turned away from it, feeling that it was not yet the hour to enter it. But the nightshade of his friend's listlessness seemed to be diffusing in the air around him a tenuous and deadly exhalation . . . .[72]

Since Stephen so clearly comes to represent Siegfried, this image of him facing a "strange dark cavern" cannot be dismissed as coincidence. It corresponds perfectly to Fafner's cave, Neidhöhle (the Pit of Envy), just as the "tenuous and deadly exhalation" suggests the dragon's poison breath. Stephen's unwillingness to enter the cave, moreover, indicates his awareness that he is not yet ready for the confrontation (he has yet to acquire the ashplant which represents his sword). Later Cranly is repeatedly associated with food and is frequently seen exposing and picking his teeth. Typically this is described in an unpleasantly bestial way and one that again recalls Fafner's gross appetite and slavering toothy jaws. Then again, a phrase Cranly uses is described as "soursmelling as the

smoke of charcoal and disheartening, [and as having] excited Stephen's brain, over which its fumes seemed to brood".[73] Consistently, the impression is given of a Fafner-like sluggishness and vague malevolence that the hero must counter with his wits and determination.

Moving on now to Siegfried's unbreakable Sword, Notung,[74] that features so prominently in *Ulysses*, it is easy to see how neatly this is suggested in the resounding final image in *A Portrait*, that of Stephen's forging "in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race".[75] Of course this is not a direct reference to *Siegfried* specifically, but it clearly forms part of the image-pattern associated with Siegfried that begins with the birdcall and is continued and elaborated in *Ulysses*. Obviously, the blacksmith-archetype has direct associations with creative forces in general, as well as indirect or symbolic associations with artistic creativity in particular. Owing to his strength, power and energy, his working with such hard materials as iron and steel, his closeness to roaring furnaces and his general tendency to produce armour and weaponry, the figure of the blacksmith is naturally suggestive of the most violent, potent and masculine aspects of creativity. Although Daedalus himself was not primarily a blacksmith, he was, of course, a craftsman, and this gives him a certain affinity with Vulcan-Hephaestus, as well as with Prometheus (whom Romantic artists from Shelley to Beethoven were quick to recognise as an ideal symbol of artists everywhere).[76] Traditionally, of course, Siegfried/Sigurd is not a blacksmith at all but simply a warrior-hero and dragonslayer. In both the *Volsungasaga* and *Nibelungenlied*, for example, his mighty sword is forged by other characters (usually dwarfs). It was Wagner himself who had the idea of making him forge it on his own, thereby emphasising his independence and self-will and bringing him closer to the composer's romanticised conception of the artist-as-hero.

Another important figure involved (albeit indirectly) in the forging process is the fire-god, Loge (Loki). In *Das Rheingold*, he enquires of Alberich

> In sunless cave,
> Where cold thou didst cower,

Where were thy light
And comforting fire then,
Had Loge not on thee laugh'd?
What use were thy forging,
Had I thy forge-fire not lit?[77]

Like his classical counterpart Prometheus, then, it is Loge who brings fire to earth from heaven. After *Das Rheingold*, he does not appear in person but (through the agency of his characteristic leitmotif) in his elemental guise as fire in all its forms, including that of Siegfried's forge. The impression created is that, as a force of nature, Loge, like the Woodbird, joyfully allies himself with the hero in youthful companionship. The fire imagery thus indicates a continuing association between Siegfried and Loge (in his manifestation as the eternal flame of inspiration and enlightenment). In this way, Wagner's Siegfried can be seen to have evolved considerably from the original Nordic hero on which he was based, with his Promethean fire-spirit as guide and familiar and his accumulation of Wayland's blacksmithing skills both bringing him considerably closer in kind to the artist-archetype Stephen Dedalus has in mind when describing his own sense of mission.

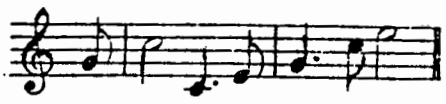
"The smithy of my soul" is patently figurative, of course. It is not Stephen's actions or surroundings that are compared to a blacksmith's forge, but rather his "soul", the seat of his emotions. It is in his soul that he creates his art. Similarly, Siegfried's forging of Notung, though portrayed as a "real" action, is largely an outward manifestation of his creating himself, forging his own fiery hero's soul. In spite of their obvious differences, the two episodes clearly share an affinity with one another as celebrations of raw, revolutionary art. In addition, "the uncreated conscience of my race" implies an assertiveness and self-confidence reminiscent of Wagner himself. It is a claim that clearly implies a lofty moral purpose, an epic sense of "the artist's" own importance and a specific commitment towards the national identity of his people, all of which apply equally to Wagner (and especially in his portrayal of Siegfried).

As for Stephen's "ashplant", it too appears in the penultimate section of *A Portrait*. As is to be the case in *Ulysses*, it is his constant companion. It is first mentioned in connection

with his leaning upon it on the steps outside the library, watching the flight of swallows, (just as Siegfried leans on his sword while listening to the Woodbird). It is in *Ulysses*, however, that Stephen begins to describe the stick openly as his "sword", though we can see how carefully this has been prepared by the other Siegfried allusions. For example, in the "Proteus" episode, he thinks "My ash sword hangs at my side" and, after tapping the ground with it, "Sounds solid: made by the mallet of *Los Demiurgos*",[78] mockingly suggesting that a wooden sword should be forged with a wooden hammer, but also evoking an appropriately mythic image. Then again, in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode, "Stephen looked down on a wide headless caubeen, hung on his ashplanthandle over his knee. My casque and sword."[79]

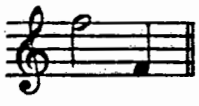
It can thus be seen that by the time the famous shout of "Nothung!" is arrived at, a whole string of associations have led up to it. In order to understand the full implications that this symbolism begins to take on in *Ulysses*, though, it will first be necessary to describe the function and importance of "Notung" in Wagner's own work. It should be noted that the name is Wagner's own invention and not drawn from any of the numerous sources to which he had recourse, and so Joyce's use of it cannot possibly be a quotation from anywhere but Wagner.[80]

In the *Ring*, "Notung" is best remembered as the name of the unbreakable sword that is forged and wielded by the great hero, Siegfried. It is one of the most important symbols in the cycle, and has its own distinctive leitmotif, a superbly heroic fanfare which appears frequently throughout the entire work:



Primarily, then, Stephen's combined cry and action must be seen as a means of strengthening the identification of his "ashplant" with the Sword and himself with Siegfried. Actually, though, although the Sword is primarily associated with Siegfried in the opera, it has a much older history and this is worth looking into, since it throws considerable light on aspects of the Sword's multiple symbolic function.

In the first act of *Die Walküre*, Siegmund the Wälsung, Wotan's son by a mortal woman, comes unwittingly to the home of his enemy, Hunding. It is here that the Sword which his father had once promised him is to be found, buried up to its hilt in the trunk of a mighty ash tree. It thus comes to stand for the idea of an heirloom, a powerful symbol of bonding passed on from father to son.[81] Although Siegmund does not see the Sword at first, Sieglinde, Hunding's wife, tries to tell him of its whereabouts by means of furtive gestures. The climax of the act is reached when Siegmund succeeds in drawing forth the weapon and claims Sieglinde as bride. Importantly, it is at this point that Siegmund gives it the name "Notung" by which it is to be known from then on. This is sung to a new motif (based on the falling octave which is so distinctive a part of the original "Sword" motif):



Whenever the sword's name is mentioned thereafter, it is sung to the same descending figure. The name is usually translated as "Needful", referring to the passionate need (Not) Siegmund had felt for it earlier and to the conviction he has that it has come to him in his need. It can also be seen to exercise a certain phallic function,[82] and is thus the means, the instrument, whereby the hero's need or desire is to be achieved: a need that is partially erotic but, more importantly, political: freedom. That these two elements are combined is seen in the way that Siegmund and Sieglinde's forbidden love is an expression of defiance against the corrupt rule of law of which her loveless marriage to the boorish Hunding is a

symptom. It is thus immediately apparent from Wagner's superb dramatic and musical rhetoric that "Notung" is to be understood in an archetypal and symbolic sense - as the Sword of Freedom - and this is precisely the significance it has for Stephen Dedalus.

The destruction of the chandelier in the brothel is, as one might imagine, far more than a simple act of vandalism. What needs to be established is Stephen's real motivation for acting as he does, and to do that it is necessary to refer back to the opening of the novel. Bearing in mind the important fact that all the surface action of *Ulysses* takes place in a single day, the events of the early morning will return to haunt him later that night.

The opening section of *Ulysses* was subtitled "Telemachus" (to reflect the Homeric role played by Stephen in relation to Leopold Bloom's Ulysses). Following the general pattern of *The Odyssey*, this introduces the reader to the figure of the son and heir about to set off on a journey in search of his father. In this episode, Stephen is unkindly accused by his companion, Buck Mulligan, of having killed his mother (metaphorically speaking, that is).

Unbeknown to Mulligan, this remark touches a raw nerve on Stephen's part and sharply reminds him of thoughts which are all too present in his mind anyway. Briefly, Stephen is in mourning for his mother's death and is filled with intense feelings of guilt and remorse (which he knows to be without proper foundation) on account of having refused her dying request for him to pray for her. As recounted in the *Portrait*, Stephen has been brought up in a Jesuit school, undergone a deep religious crisis and finally abandoned his faith, determined to remain a free-thinker. His refusal to humour his mother's dying wish had thus been a refusal to stoop to hypocrisy by pretending to a faith he did not possess. In spite of enormous emotional pressure, he has succeeded in maintaining his personal integrity. Now, some months after his mother's death, his internal struggle continues. Intellectually, he knows that the decision he made was the right one but, instinctively, still feels remorse at having denied his mother the simple pleasure she sought from him. He recalls dreaming of her as a decaying corpse come back to torment him, and this repulsive image continues to haunt him at various moments throughout the day. It becomes symbolic of the religious authority which he has foresworn, and subconsciously he knows

that he must engage with it and reject it before he can be free of it. This, then, is what happens that evening, when Stephen, by this time drunk, visits a brothel with his friend Lynch, and is followed there by Leopold Bloom. In this scene, the three men, in the company of three whores, are dancing together. At the climax of the festivities, Stephen whirls around in a frenzy of high spirits. As the room continues to spin, his already overexcited mind becomes prey to the vision of his mother, rising from the floor as if from a grave:

> *(Stephen's mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor in leper grey with a wreath of faded orange blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mould. Her hair is scant and lank. She fixes her bluecircled hollow eyesockets on Stephen and opens her toothless mouth uttering a silent word. A choir of virgins and confessors sing voicelessly.)*[83]

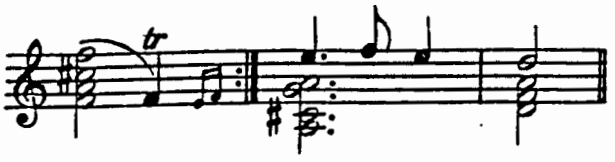
The scene becomes filled with increasingly horrible imagery, as the mother urges Stephen to repent. He is clearly overcome with revulsion and terror, but nevertheless remains determined not to give in. At the climactic moment, he uses the Wagnerian cry to save himself:

> STEPHEN: *Nothung*!
> *(He hits his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time's livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry.)*[84]

Clearly, Stephen is using the Sword motif precisely as it is used throughout the *Ring* operas (beginning with Siegmund's triumphant, quasi-phallic flourishing of it discussed above): that is, as a symbolic instrument of freedom and defiance against the forces of oppression (in his case, the Roman Catholic Church). Why, though, is it necessary for him to cause public damage in the process? To answer that question, we shall have to consider the further development of the Sword theme in Wagner.

In the second act of *Die Walküre*, after Siegmund has won the sword, Wotan is forced, much against his will, to break his bond with the hero, and the outward symbol of this is his breaking of the Sword with his almighty Spear. The Spear represents the universal principle of law and it is the sceptre which Wotan wields as the symbol of his authority. His wife, Fricka, has forced him to acknowledge that his championing of Siegmund is illegitimate, since only a truly free mortal, unaided by the gods, can accomplish the deed Wotan wishes. Siegmund, however, is not truly free as he has been spurred on by Wotan all along and was led to where he would find the Sword promised to him. Wotan has no choice but to destroy the weapon he had hoped would save him, leaving his unarmed son to be struck down by Hunding.

But the story of the Sword does not end here. Brünnhilde, the favourite of Wotan's Valkyrie daughters, moved by pity for Siegmund's fate, removes the broken shards from the field, rescues Sieglinde (whose womb now bears Siegmund's son) and gives the shards into her keeping, prophesying that this mighty son, Siegfried, shall reforge the Sword and save the world, a prophecy that is fulfilled in the next drama. Siegfried, in the act of reforging the blade, asks Mime whether it had a name. On learning it, he begins his "Bellows Song", using a modified version of the "Nothung" motif mentioned earlier:



In terms of the drama as a whole, this marks the point at which the free hero, so longed for by Wotan, finally creates himself, having achieved the Sword entirely by his own efforts (unlike Siegmund, who had merely been Wotan's unwitting pawn). In Wagner's complex socio-political rationale, Siegfried represents "the man of the future", a prototype of Nietzsche's superman, who defies authority and convention and determines his own destiny.[85]

In the second act, Siegfried uses the Sword to slay the dragon, Fafner, thereby winning possession of the Ring. A still more significant encounter is that which takes place with Wotan himself in Act III. When the god seeks to bar Siegfried's passage to Brünnhilde's rock, the hero, in a direct inversion of the events of *Die Walküre*, uses the Sword to break Wotan's Spear. Although Siegfried naively makes light of this encounter, its implications are enormous. The Spear being the symbol of Wotan's power and authority, its breaking naturally signifies the end of that power and authority. The whole fabric of law by which the universe has been governed is swept aside at a blow, a stroke as it were of revolution, and Siegfried, the world-ruling Ring on his finger, symbolically leads humanity into a new age of freedom and anarchy.[86]

In all of this we can see that the heroic associations of the Sword that were established in *Die Walküre* Act I continue to be developed in more detail. The quest for freedom is initially thwarted by the resurgence of law in the shape of Wotan's Spear, only to be reasserted with redoubled vigour with the coming of the triumphant Siegfried. There is a sense that the movement towards freedom is a natural one, one which can be repressed for a time but not indefinitely. The existence of three successive generations is also important as it re-emphasises the theme of fatherhood.

We can now see that, by quoting the name of Siegfried's unbreakable sword, Stephen recalls not only Siegmund's original cry of defiance but also his son's still more vigorous reiteration of that cry and, most importantly, his challenge to Wotan, the assertion of his individuality against the false claims of power and authority. As we have seen, the authority figures that Stephen needs to confront and overcome are represented by his mother's ghost. Furthermore, by combining his cry with a violent action, Stephen adds an element of physical potency to his challenge. We can also see the significance of breaking the chandelier, which in some way must correspond to Wotan's Spear. That is, although at first sight there does not seem to be a direct connection between the two, nor any obvious clue as to what the chandelier represents, if indeed it represents anything, if we look again at the description of its destruction, we are given an interesting hint: "*Time's*

livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry."[87]

On a literal level, this simply means that the light has gone out but "time's livid final flame", "ruin of all space" and "toppling masonry" can all be seen to equal Götterdämmerung, the downfall of the gods that forms the finale of Wagner's cycle. In fact, given the reference to "Nothung", these phrases also invite direct comparison with this finale, in which Valhalla itself is depicted being consumed by fire, an event which was symbolically prefigured by Siegfried's breaking the Spear and which is clearly seen to stand for universal apocalypse. In the almost cinematic image of the shattering chandelier, is the suggestion of an event charged with meaning, a visual manifestation of Stephen's triumph over his personal gods. "Nothung" has given him the power to destroy the old, corrupt, authoritarian order and instead to assert his own freedom. The end of space and time, as in the *Ring*, seems to symbolise the attainment of a higher level of consciousness.

Immediately after breaking the chandelier, Stephen runs out into the street. In his intoxicated state, it is less likely that he does so to avoid the consequences of his "accident" than that he continues to associate himself mentally with Siegfried. In the opera, Siegfried spends a great deal of time rushing lustily from one adventure to another. After breaking the Spear, he runs up the Valkyries' mountain, straight through the wall of fire, and wakens the sleeping Brünnhilde. Interestingly, Stephen's first deed after wielding "Nothung" is also to encounter a woman, Cissey Caffrey, who is waiting in the street while her two soldier escorts, Privates Carr and Compton, relieve themselves against a wall. As with Siegfried, the encounter gets him into trouble. The belligerent soldiers catch up with him and begin to quarrel but, although he tries to reason with them, he ends up being knocked down by Private Carr. At the same time, there are continued references to an apocalypse:

> *(Brimstone fires spring up. Dense clouds roll past. Heavy Gatling guns boom. Pandemonium. Troops deploy. Gallop of hoofs. Artillery. Hoarse commands. Bells clang. Backers shout. Drunkards brawl. Whores screech. Foghorns hoot. Cries of valour. Shrieks of dying. Pikes clash on cuirasses. Thieves rob the slain. Birds of*

prey, winging from the sea, rising from marsh lands, swooping from eyries, hover screaming, gannets, cormorants, vultures, goshawks, climbing woodcocks, peregrines, merlin, blackgrouse, sea eagles, gulls, albatrosses, barnacle geese. The midnight sun is darkened. The earth trembles. The dead of Dublin . . . arise and appear to many. A chasm opens with a noiseless yawn. . . . laughing witches . . . ride through the air on broomsticks. . . . shafts of light fall on the smokepalled altarstone. . . .)[88]

Stephen's cry of "Nothung" has now unleashed even greater destructive forces. The end of the rule of authority lets loose a tide of anarchy and chaos. Like Siegfried's, Stephen's act of self-assertion triggers the very events that eventually bring his destruction. The references to a great burning in particular suggest once again the destruction of Valhalla and also connect with other related images that have occurred prior to this, such as that seen by Leopold Bloom while still on his way to the brothel:

(Snakes of river fog creep slowly. From drains, clefts, cesspools, middens arise on all sides stagnant fumes. A glow leaps in the south beyond the seaward reaches of the river. . . . On the farther side under the railway bridge Bloom appears flushed, panting. . . . He takes breath with care and goes forward slowly. . . . The glow leaps again.)

BLOOM: What is that? A flasher? Searchlight.

(He stands at Cormack's corner watching.)

BLOOM: Aurora borealis or a steel foundry? Ah, the brigade, of course. South side anyhow. Big blaze. Might be his house. Beggar's bush. We're safe. *(He hums cheerfully)* London's burning, London's burning! On fire, on fire![89]

Literally, there is a fire somewhere on the south side of Dublin. Bloom's cheerfulness stems from the fact that his own home lies on the north. The important thing for our purposes, though, is that the fire is seen as a distant glow in the sky. As such it bears a strong visual resemblance to the fire that lays waste to Valhalla, as seen by the characters onstage during the final tableau of Wagner's *Ring*:

(Through the cloud bank that lies on the horizon there breaks an increasingly bright glow. . . . From the ruins of the fallen hall, the men and women, in the greatest agitation, watch the growing firelight in the heavens. When at last the glow is at its

brightest there becomes visible the interior of Valhalla, in which the gods and heroes sit assembled. Bright flames seem to seize upon the hall of the gods. As the gods become entirely hidden by the flames the curtain falls.)[90]

The similarity might easily be written off as a passing one were it not that the same image is suggested by "Time's livid final flame". The order of events has become slightly jumbled, but there is a clear connection being drawn between the use of the Sword as a symbol of personal freedom and the universal destruction which results from it.

There is yet more evidence of such a connection. Shortly before Bloom's sighting of the fire, Stephen has himself passed through nighttown with Lynch, and, in the course of their drunken banter, has prefigured the later crisis in a parody of the Roman Catholic mass:

(Stephen, flourishing the ashplant in his left hand, chants with joy the introit *for paschal time. . . .)*

STEPHEN: *(Triumphaliter.)* Salvi facti i sunt.

(He flourishes his ashplant shivering the lamp image, shattering light over the world.)[91]

Here again the ashplant is used to destroy a "lamp image", not a real chandelier this time but a mental image. Once more the ashplant is the symbolic weapon he uses against the religious establishment. In this way, the climactic "Nothung" incident is presaged by another action, less dramatic, but with similar symbolic attachments. The effect of all these interweaving allusions is cumulative. They reflect one another and, through the use of "Nothung", achieve a central point of reference which itself is unequivocally Wagnerian.[92]

"Nothung" alone, however, as is generally acknowledged, is not the only direct reference to the *Ring* that appears in *Ulysses*. It is preceded by a few pages by another, located in the same brothel sequence. Once again, it is Stephen who is directly involved. Bloom, who is concerned about Stephen's inebriated condition, is trying to suggest that he have something to eat. Zoe, one of the whores, asks Bloom, "Is he hungry?" and Stephen, overhearing her, replies as follows:

STEPHEN *(Extends his hand to her smiling and chants to the air of the bloodoath in the* Dusk of the Gods.*)*

Hangende Hunger,
Fragende Frau,
Macht uns alle kaput.[93]

Now this is far from being a straightforward quotation like that of "Nothung". The words are Joyce's own, and could be translated, more or less, as "Hankering hunger/Questioning wife/Will be the end of us all", but not only are they written in German, but in a distinctly mock-Wagnerian idiom (of which more anon), and are directed to be sung to "the air of the bloodoath", which forms just part of an elaborate oath-swearing sequence that takes place between Siegfried and Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*. The words sung in the opera (by Siegfried), are as follows:

Flowering life's
All-freshening blood
Here I drop in the draught.[94]

He is then answered by Gunther to the same tune (albeit an octave lower):

Brothers' love
In bravest blend
Bloom from our blood in the cup.[95]

It is easy to see how this allusion forms yet another part of the pattern of images and allusions that connect Stephen Dedalus with the figure of Siegfried, since it too refers to a part of the *Ring* that is directly connected with "Nothung", in that Siegfried uses the blade to cut himself during the oath-swearing. Amid the elaborate contrapuntal texture of this sequence, the "Sword" motif consequently plays a major role.[96] Furthermore, just as in the *Ring* the oath-swearing sequence is the first in a chain of events that sets the seal on the

hero's impending death, so its counterpart in *Ulysses* begins the direct association with Siegfried which is to lead, through the "Nothung" incident, to Stephen's own, symbolic "death".

There is another obvious feature of Joyce's version of the "bloodoath" which is central to his treatment of the subject, and this is its blatantly parodistic quality. As Furness says, "a brothel is hardly the place for the swearing of such an oath".[97] There do seem, though, to be certain underlying connections between the two episodes. In Wagner, the blood-oath is one of the earliest consequences of Siegfried's unwittingly drinking the magic potion, which is the cause of his forgetting Brünnhilde. Joyce's version of the oath, however, is just one of a whole string of drunken posturings which are the result of Stephen's deliberately using liquor to help him forget the haunting image of his mother. In both cases, the oath-swearing occurs shortly after the ingestion of memory-obliterating liquors, and "death" follows shortly after the hero sees a vision of the woman he had previously forgotten.

What, though, are we to make of Joyce's choice of words? Furness dismisses them as "meaningless",[98] but this is not necessarily the case. At first their seriousness matches that of the melody to which they are set (both the pattern of two shorter lines followed by a longer one, and the alliteration of each of the first two lines, being clearly modelled on the verse style of the *Ring*), only to be undercut by the decidedly bathetic effect of the final "kaput". So far, this fits the ironic, mock-heroic flavour of Joyce's novel, but what is the significance of the words themselves, since they have no clear connection with the Wagnerian conception of "blood-brotherhood" that would seem to be implied by the choice of melody? On a literal level, they simply constitute Stephen's theatrical way of answering Zoe's question. The implied meaning would seem to be "Well, yes, I am hungry, actually, but I'm really too drunk to care, and what does it matter in any case, since we're all going to die of hunger anyway?" Considering that the scene is set in a brothel, it seems reasonable to assume that "hunger" includes the additional meaning of "sexual appetite", and the interpretation then becomes "the desire for sexual gratification will lead to all our deaths", an idea which is often implicit in Wagner. The unusual juxtaposition of Joyce's words and Wagner's music, then, can be seen, beyond their ironic intention, to strengthen

the thematic links between the concepts of brotherhood, faith, guilt and sexuality, which are so significant in both novel and opera.

There is yet another, more subtle, allusion to the *Ring* contained in the words sung by Stephen. Although the "air of the bloodoath" only occurs in *Götterdämmerung* and although the words directed to be sung to it are Joyce's own, the line "Fragende Frau" will also be familiar to lovers of Wagner from its prominent appearance in *Die Walküre* Act I. It occurs when Siegmund sings to Sieglinde after relating the sorrowful story of his life:

> Nun weißt dir, fragende Frau,
> Warum ich "Friedmund" nicht heiße.
>
> (Now know'st thou, questioning wife,
> Why men may "Joyful" not call me.)[99]

Now it may be the case that Joyce's choice of the phrase "fragende Frau" is purely coincidental in this respect. However, this seems unlikely when one considers, firstly, the way his whole verse is modelled on the Wagnerian idiom, secondly, his familiarity with the operas, and, thirdly, the detailed pattern of Wagnerian cross-references which we have already shown to pervade the text of *Ulysses*. Furthermore, a mere cursory glance at both verses reveals that each is a self-contained syntactic unit, as well as that "Fragende Frau" occurs as the centrally placed auxiliary phrase in each case. Based on our knowledge of the foregoing points, it seems safe to assume that Joyce is deliberately echoing the resounding use of the same phrase in *Die Walküre*. There should be no fear that this is just another alliterative line among the thousands that comprise the libretto. In fact, it is one of the most dramatic moments in the entire cycle. Unlike the fleeting "air of the bloodoath", the setting of Siegmund's lines is to the second limb of one of the longest and most important motifs of the drama, the sorrowful, noble theme of "the Wälsung race":

Used in a quasi-Wagnerian context, then, the words "fragende Frau" cannot fail to recall this episode. The effect of this is to consolidate Stephen's connection with Siegfried with an equally strong connection with his father, Siegmund, who, it will be remembered, was the first to win the Sword and to name it "Nothung" (events which take place shortly after the "fragende Frau" episode). This is therefore another instance of the ever-present theme of "fatherhood", since both heroes are recalled simultaneously by the juxtaposition of the father's words and the son's music.[100]

Actually, the verse sung by Stephen has far stronger contextual parallels with this episode in *Die Walküre* than it does with the oath-swearing sequence in *Götterdämmerung*. For one thing, he, like Siegmund, is addressing a woman. Again, the fact that she is a prostitute presupposes a sexual element, although this is clearly an ironic counterpart to the tragic passion of the lovers in Wagner. Zoe's sympathy for Stephen's condition also mirrors that of Sieglinde for the wounded and exhausted Siegmund. Her (implied) offer of food balances Sieglinde's offer of a refreshing drink. Stephen's reaction, though comic in comparison to that of the serious, brooding Siegmund, also has distinct similarities to it. Siegmund gladly accepts the drink but believes that he cannot accept the offer of love and sympathy that lies behind it, since he is aware that his own ill-starred fate would also bring sorrow to her. Stephen's flippant dismissal of Zoe's offer masks his own despair at ever finding fulfilment in love or life. His frustrated search for both mother and father figures and for the realisation of the rigorous intellectual and psychological demands he makes on himself, both cause him to find "role models" in the figures of romantic heroes, albeit with an irony born of his belief that the attainment of such remote goals is not possible in real life.

The Artist as Messiah: Walther von Stolzing and Stephen Dedalus

As was suggested earlier, Stephen's direct association with Siegfried is only the most prominent of a whole sequence of Wagnerian personae that cluster around him. In most cases, these are both implied by the central connection with Siegfried and supported independently by indirect allusions of their own. First of all, as we have seen, the "Nothung" motif connects Stephen to both Siegmund and Wotan as well as Siegfried. In addition, Stephen's sense of alienation and exile suggests aspects of the Flying Dutchman, a persona that, as we shall see in the following chapter, is linked much more directly with Leopold Bloom. Tannhäuser is present in Stephen's sexual crises and his ambivalent relationship to the Virgin Mary. Lohengrin, albeit less explicitly, is hinted at in some of Stephen's aesthetic "visions". As the rest of this chapter will attempt to show, Walther von Stolzing's "Morgentraum-lied" in *Die Meistersinger* is implied much more strongly by these "visions" and in particular by Stephen's own "morning-inspiration" and the somewhat occult symbolism surrounding his artistic calling. Finally, Stephen's aggressive subversion of religion and self-designation as "priest of the eternal imagination" will be seen to prompt a direct comparison with Parsifal.

In one sense, Stephen is much closer in kind to Walther von Stolzing than to Siegfried. This is because Walther is literally rather than allegorically an artist, and very much a self-portrait of Wagner himself in much the same way as Stephen is of Joyce. Both heroes are young men, standing at the beginning of their respective careers, both are poets and both are inspired by a woman who is at once a real human being and an idealised muse. At a deeper level, both typify a spirit of rebellion against the established order and so appear to be irreverent and heretical, and yet both are portrayed, with great subtlety in each case, as Christ-figures. With regard to these last two points (those of the muse and the underlying religious meaning - which are interrelated), a complex web of imagery connects both Wagner's and Joyce's portraits of the artist.

Stephen's spiritual development is seen to undergo several twists and turns during the course of the novel. As was discussed in relation to *Tannhäuser*, his adolescent sense of

loneliness drives him to seek comfort in the arms of a prostitute - an act of which he comes to repent after the famous hell sermon preached by his Jesuit masters. For the remainder of his school years, he is a model of piety and devotion, so much so that on graduating he is offered the opportunity to join the order. At this, however, he realises that what he thought he had wanted all along no longer holds any attraction for him and it is at this point, after leaving the college, that the hazy confusion begins to settle over his mind which is eventually to lead to his complete loss of faith. At the same time, he is filled with a new awareness of the beauty of language and a growing sense that he is waiting for some significant change to take place within himself, though he is not yet certain what that might be. Clearly, one is meant to recognise that Joyce is here presenting the artist's awakening to his vocation in the guise of an almost spiritual experience. The moment of epiphany comes when he is walking along the beach, filled with a sense of joy in his isolation as well as a contradictory feeling of oneness with all things, and suddenly sets eyes on a beautiful young girl standing in the shallows with her skirts tucked up around her thighs. His reaction is partly erotic, partly aesthetic and wholly overwhelming:

> She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither; and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.
>
> - Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy.[101]

After this, he goes striding down the beach in a frenzy of elation, reflecting that the girl has appeared to him as a sign, as a call to him to claim his artistic heritage. Coming back to his present reality, he finds that he is completely alone and lies down in the sand, where he drifts slowly into an ecstatic sleep. This is the point already considered in relation to *Lohengrin* in which the hero enjoys his "vision" of the Mystic Rose:

> His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other.[102]

It seems fairly certain that Stephen's sense of his vocation begins at this point and that the catalyst for it is his meeting with the girl. It is significant that his sense of inspiration has already being developing for some time prior to this meeting, so that the girl herself represents the climactic point rather than the totality of his experience. The attributes she has that affect him most include not only her physical beauty but also what he perceives as her naturalness, her intrinsic purity, grace and modesty - all traditional features of the "Ewig-Weibliche". She also represents a perfect midpoint between his corrupt impulse towards the early gratification of his tortured lust and the equally unsatisfying inclination towards an ascetic life (a process clearly mirrored in *Tannhäuser*). His Nietzschean realisation that his former guilt and fear of hellfire were based on an illusion allows him to explore the fullness of his delight in unashamed sexual feelings. Paradoxically, it also suggests a spiritual reawakening akin to resurrection. Essentially, though, he has identified the girl as his poetic muse, his source of inspiration. His perception of her beauty, physical and moral, has come to him like a revelation, driving him on to recreate his experience in words, "crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him".[103]

In several respects, this experience conforms to an unofficial tradition that (male) artists are always filled with impassioned inspiration by their girlfriends, but it is one seldom treated as a serious theme in great works of art. Milton's "heavenly muse", for example, is clearly not of this world. Generally, it seems to be a question of conflating two kinds of beauty, and examples - from Dante to Berlioz - abound. It is rarely the case, however, for the process of inspiration itself to be explored in much detail, and it is all the more striking then that just such a detailed exploration is common to both Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* and Wagner's *Meistersinger*.

Of course, the original Muses of Mount Parnassus were heavenly custodians of the arts and bore scant relation to earthly women. It is not always clear how they are supposed to have inspired mortal artists but it was clearly a process quite unrelated to sexual love. It seems to be a symptom of the deification of the beloved other (deriving from the practice of Courtly Love that grew up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) that poets began to identify the objects of their passion as "muses", as direct sources of inspiration. In Renaissance poetry, it is commonplace to make this identification and, in some instances, the curious conceit of the beloved "impregnating" the mind of her lover, causing him to "bring forth" poetry, is developed. By the time we encounter the Romantic consciousness, then, it seems quite natural to exaggerate the whole process connecting love and artistic creation, blending it with other typical concerns, such as the self-aggrandisement of the Artist Hero, the nostalgic re-creation of a Middle Ages that never was,[104] and the theosophical or natural apprehension of God, independent of religious dogma. In such an intellectual climate as this then, it would seem to be almost inevitable that a comic masterpiece such as Wagner's *Meistersinger* would emerge.

The opera begins by directly addressing the matter in hand. The young Walther is in love with Eva (and she with him) and finds that to win her hand he must prove victor in a contest of song. From the outset then, a clear association is drawn between artistic achievement and sexual conquest. Indeed, Walther seems to recognise this instinctively and so makes it the theme of his song.

Owing to the rich complexity of the ideas Walther explores in his song (as well as for dramatic reasons), we are offered three preliminary versions before the triumphant final creation. First of all, he awakens on the morning of the contest, claiming to have had a wonderful dream. Hans Sachs, his friend and mentor (and the real hero of the opera),[105] persuades him to transform it into a "Meisterlied" (Wagner is here drawing attention to the importance of dreams as a source of poetic inspiration - and the correspondent Romantic belief that artistic talent emanates from within, from Nature, rather than being learned by strict adherence to the accepted rules.) Walther complies with Sachs's suggestion by improvising the following "Stollen" (strophe):

Bright in the sunlight
At dawn of the day,
When fragrance fair
Filled all the air,
With rapture teeming,
Past all dreaming,
There smiled a garden gay
That bade me stay.[106]

This, then, sets the suitably idyllic scene for what is to follow. At Sachs's prompting, Walther continues the tale of his dream in a second "Stollen", in which he describes a tree in the midst of the garden bearing an abundance of radiant, fragrant fruit.[107] Again at Sachs's instigation, he completes the Meisterlied by adding an "Abgesang", similar in outline to the Stollen but somewhat extended. In this the vision reaches its climax: a beautiful woman appears and directs his attention to "The golden fruit that filled/The Tree of Life!" [108] Even without the music, the impression created by this completed Meisterlied is one of richly satisfying, mellow joy, conveying an appropriately dreamlike sense of a softly shimmering golden light.

As far as the imagery itself is concerned, I shall confine myself as far as possible to those elements pertinent to the comparison with Joyce. Clearly, the dreamer is reliving the experience of Adam in the Garden of Eden – except that there is no hint of guilt or sin or disobedience. The symbolism surrounding the Tree of Life is far too elaborate to go into in detail here, but primarily the notion of a mythic dawn of human consciousness and self-knowledge can be seen as something very nearly akin to poetic inspiration. The figure of the maiden obviously suggests the biblical Eve and also casts her in the role of the artist's muse.

Significantly, the choice of setting subtly implies that the figures of the dreamer and the woman would both be naked, and an awareness of this lends the poem a richly erotic undercurrent. Coupled with this is the central image of the fruit, which – apart from its

spiritual and inspirational qualities – traditionally contains a sexual meaning as well, implied in the popular saying "forbidden fruit tastes sweeter". The song thus expresses the poet's intimation that an attractive and sexually desirable woman is the source of his inspiration to reach out and acquire spiritual enlightenment – which itself is seen as being made possible by her gift of physical and emotional love. The triple goal of sexual, aesthetic and spiritual fulfilment is presented as a unified essence, attainable through a bold act of love.

The similarities this treatment has with Joyce's portrayal of Stephen Dedalus will already be obvious but, before we consider them, we need to examine the continued development of Walther's song (of which this is only the first version). Sachs, after commending Walther's first complete Meisterlied (consisting of its two "Stollen" and the "Abgesang"), advises him to create a second just like it – because the rather innovative style is difficult to grasp at a single hearing.[109] Walther, fortunately, has more of his dream to tell: the occasion now changes from morning to evening and the setting to a mountaintop which, from the details of a stream and a laurel tree, we might guess to be Mount Parnassus, the home of the muses. The figure of the maiden is still present, her eyes apparently being compared to two stars. The appearance of the laurel tree suggests a natural parallelism with the Tree of Life in the first stave, and so confirms the impression conveyed there that the enlightenment associated with eating the forbidden fruit is akin to the poetic gift whose reward is the crown of laurel.[110]

Claiming fatigue, Walther then rejects Sachs's suggestion that he compose a third stave. For sound dramatic reasons, this is delayed until later when, upon seeing his beloved Eva again, he is inspired on the spot to complete the story of his dream (or perhaps to improvise upon it). The figure of the woman now appears to be crowned with stars,[111] while her eyes are compared to twin suns. She crowns the dreamer as well, not with stars but, prophetically, with the victor's laurel.[112] As Eva is now physically present, and especially as the mere sight of her seems to have triggered this latest effusion, it can safely be assumed that Walther associates her with the figure in his dream. Although the eroticism is not as pronounced as in the earliest version, there are now much stronger

hints of the beloved having adopted the role of muse. However, although the dream now seems complete, the impression it creates is still largely confused and distorted, hinting at deeper meanings rather than expressing them clearly, and containing a serious rift in that the Edenic and Parnassian parts of the vision are not sufficiently well connected. In other words, it now requires to be interpreted and made into a logical, coherent and self-sufficient work of art. Furthermore, being somewhat unwieldy in its present form, it will have to be condensed into a single Meisterlied, rather than spread out over three. How this formidable task is to be accomplished is not revealed until the final scene, when the contest takes place before the assembled multitude.

Walther begins by singing the opening lines of his first Stollen exactly as before (it was, after all, an excellent beginning). Then, after noticing that he has made a good impression on his audience, he suddenly starts to improvise, taking the stanza in a new and totally unforeseen direction, broadening it substantially and thereby transforming it into an entirely different structural and poetic unit.[113] In this, Walther condenses the content of his entire first Meisterlied into a single – albeit extended – Stollen, and actually adds new information, absent even from the whole of his earlier three staves. The original mood of mellow joy is unchanged, the important details of the garden, the tree, its fruit and the fair maiden are all incorporated and, as a climactic gesture, she is for the first time identified by name as Eva – both the poet's beloved and the original Eve (Eva in German) in the biblical story to which he is referring. This confirms his earlier, erotic vision of the woman who brings him grace and enlightenment in the form of the forbidden fruit, and goes still further in consciously connecting her with the real woman he is wooing.[114]

Warming to his theme, the young poet goes on to create an entirely new second Stollen - condensing the material of the complete second Meisterlied while adding more explicit information, namely that the woman, now explicitly identified as the muse, anoints him with water from her sacred stream, presumably consecrating him to her service thereby.[115] The image is also suggestive of baptism (a recurrent theme of the drama) and this helps to draw stronger parallels between the artistic and religious aspects of the vision.

Finally, in a new Abgesang that continues to expand in relation to the extended Stollen, Walther relates that on awakening he discovered that his dream had in fact come true, and in so doing he reconciles its two contrasting but related images:

> My muse before me stood,
> So holy, pure and sweet,
> Whom boldly there I wooed;
> The sunlight shone upon me,
> By might of song I'd won me
> Parnassus and Paradise![116]

The entire song thereby becomes self-reflexive. Walther attains Parnassus because his song is a genuine triumph and he is loudly acclaimed by one and all as a great poet and, as in the dream – now come true – Eva does crown him with the victor's laurel wreath. He also achieves Paradise, because he simultaneously wins the hand of the woman he loves and is blissfully united with her. However, the spiritual connotations of the word are also relevant – and here we penetrate to the heart of Wagner's secret message.

Throughout much of the opera, one has a distinct impression that Nuremberg really is Eden.[117] The sun shines, the people are happy and all seems well. There is another side to things, though. The potential for disaster always lurks just beneath the surface, and there is a serpent in the garden in the shape of Beckmesser. This duality is best expressed by Hans Sachs during his so-called "Wahn" soliloquy, very much the philosophical heart of the entire work. Alone in his workshop, he reflects on the idyllic qualities of the town he loves so deeply:

> Thy peaceful ways pursuing,
> Serene thou dost abide,
> Far from the clash of nations,
> Dear Nuremberg, my pride![118]

He considers however that even in such an environment human folly is ever present. He is thinking about the riot of the previous night, the difficulty aroused by Walther and Eva's attempt to elope together and the danger posed by Beckmesser. His own tenderness and love towards Eva (whom he knows he must renounce for the sake of the younger man) also trouble him and so too do the broader political problems that are posed by the dawning Reformation.[119] He recognises, then, that the world is not Edenic at all, even when it appears to be so. As in much great comedy, the conclusion eventually reached is that it is nothing more than a vast cosmic joke, in which everyone is blindly bumbling about, fondly supposing their actions to be real and consequential when in fact they are all part of an illusion. Sachs reasons that, if this is so, the only thing to be done is to make things right again – by participating in the illusion, while still seeing it for what it is. One can thereby improve upon it, making it a better illusion, so to speak. One time-honoured way of doing just this, moreover, is to create those other illusions, works of art, in which all can then participate, thereby colouring the nature of their existence a rosier hue.[120] Sachs will in fact explain something of this theory to Walther:

> In truth, man's best and wisest thought
> In quiet dream oft comes unsought.
> All poems that the soul rejoice
> Are nought but dreams that find a voice.[121]

The rules governing all great art, he goes on to explain, were originally created by disillusioned Masters "[t]o give their souls the old free wing,/And fill them with perpetual Spring".[122] It is in fact under the influence of this teaching that Walther creates his song and, when he at lasts produces the triumphant final version, it is clear that Sachs's hope has been realised: Paradise on earth, through the agency of the poet's re-creation, has become a reality. Beyond simply winning the prize, Walther successfully unites all present in a state of euphoria, so that the worries of their daily lives are temporarily forgotten. It is almost as if a new golden age had dawned. In Wagnerian terms, the process is best described as "redemptive". In order to see how this works, it is necessary to look at it in relation to the central biblical motif of the drama, namely baptism.

Throughout the opera, Hans Sachs is frequently compared to John the Baptist (on whose feast day the song-contest takes place), and this would seem to imply, since Sachs is Walther's mentor and, more importantly, his "precursor", that Walther should himself be considered as a kind of new Messiah.[123] It is not that Sachs goes about "preparing the way of the Lord" exactly, but he does, in a sense, help to smooth Walther's path. For example, during the trial scene in Act I, he constantly urges his pedantic fellow Mastersingers to be more progressive in their outlook and to at least give the young man a fair chance, in spite of his revolutionary new approach to singing. Sachs's characteristic humility is also suggestive of John and forms a marked contrast with the aristocratic air of Walther. This contrast is shown most strongly when Walther sings his third and final practice version of the song: Sachs, wearing his cobbler's apron, is kneeling down on the floor of his workshop, examining Eva's shoe, while she rests her foot on a stool for him to do so. Walther, on the other hand, appears in the doorway to an inner chamber, at the top of a flight of stairs leading up to it and so physically raised above the others. The light is behind him, forming a sort of halo, and he is clad in "splendid, knightly array"[124] – usually white and silver. As with Lohengrin, the music – played by harps, horns, woodwind and (notably) violins in their seraphic, higher register – forms an additional, aura-like halo around him. The overall impression is most striking and the fact that Sachs is in his shoemaking capacity recalls John's reference to Him Whose shoe he was unworthy to fasten. Then again, in the final scene, Sachs calls for a "witness" to give evidence that the song (falsely attributed to him by Beckmesser) is in fact far too good for the humble shoemaker to have accomplished. In answer, Walther makes his way through the crowd to the singer's podium where he prepares to deliver his final version. In context, the manner in which he does this is suggestive of Christ's coming forward to receive baptism. Sachs, like John, has already earned the veneration of the people but deliberately steps down in favour of one whom he declares to be his better – and who is shortly to baptise them all not with water but with the Holy Ghost.

Interestingly, the opera begins in a church (St Katherine's), where the congregation is singing a hymn addressed to the Baptist (as it is the eve of his feast-day) in which they importune him to "[l]ead us by the hand,/Home to Jordan's strand".[125] In retrospect, it can

be seen that this is a (largely unconscious) plea for the spiritual benison that is to be achieved in the final scene. In essence as stoutly Protestant as *Parsifal* is Catholic, *Die Meistersinger* is to a large extent underpinned by this idea of crossing over the River Jordan to the land of milk and honey on the other side. Consequently, the town and all its inhabitants (Beckmesser excluded) seem to be in a constant state of grace. Pogner, for example, neatly sums up the classic Protestant work ethic with his hearty "God's made me a wealthy man!"[126] Sin, guilt, loss and confusion are conspicuous by their absence.[127] Presumably, they are things that happen to other people, people who are unfortunate enough to live in towns less carefree than Nuremberg. Even the River Pegnitz (which is supposed to wind across the back of the stage during the final scene) is directly compared to the Jordan at one point (in David's comic song about St John), so that it almost seems as if the townspeople are in the Promised Land already. (As a matter of fact, because the river is shown to lie between the field where the contest takes place and the town itself – whose silhouette forms the backdrop – the people literally have crossed over to the other side. Many of them, including the Mastersingers themselves, are shown being ferried across the river at the beginning of this scene. The spiritual significance of this becomes clarified - as will be demonstrated shortly - by the apotheosis of Walther's Prize Song.)[128]

As far as the act of baptism itself is concerned, this is conferred not on Walther but – curiously enough – on his song. After the original version has been completed, Sachs initiates a rather quaint ceremony in which the song is named and blessed. As he speaks, the orchestra quietly plays the theme of the hymn heard at the beginning of the drama, thereby emphasising the point that Sachs is meant to suggest John the Baptist. One half expects the Holy Spirit to descend over the hero's head in the form of a dove (as is indeed the case in *Parsifal*). However, if one looks closely enough, it becomes clear that this has already happened (albeit in a symbolic sense – and with extreme subtlety). Some time earlier, just after Walther's creation of the second stave, Sachs tells him that his faithful servant has somehow managed to track him down, bringing him the festal garments he will need for the contest, and opines that "Some dove sure must have shown the nest/In which his master dreams".[129]

On the face of it, there is nothing to suggest that this "dove" has any religious implications. However, in the context of the Baptist/Messiah imagery centred on Sachs and Walther, it seems impossible to ignore. Of course, the characters themselves are unconscious of this imagery, so Sachs's remark clearly has some additional surface meaning. Fortunately, this is not hard to trace: "Taubschen", the word used by Sachs (literally "little dove"), is (or was) a common term of endearment in German, and as there is only one character who could possibly have known Walther's whereabouts, the "dove" referred to here must be Eva.[130] As we already know that the Prize Song describes her (in her role of muse) as "bedewing" the poet's brow with water from the holy spring, it is easy to trace the connection. When, during the christening scene, Sachs invites "the young godmother" to bless the song – which she does by initiating the superb quintet that follows (the same, as it happens, in which the young James Joyce once sang one of the two tenor parts)[131] – it becomes clear that she, dressed in her wedding gown, is the white dove, the Holy Spirit to Walther's Christ and Sachs's John. Furthermore, of course, like both the Tree of Life and the muses' spring, the Holy Spirit is traditionally considered to be a source of divine inspiration and so neatly fits the role already ascribed to Eva by the song.

The Prize Song itself, of course, if one continues to follow this line of reasoning, corresponds to, say, the Sermon on the Mount, and, as we have noted, it certainly does have a decidedly beatific effect on its audience. The conflation of Parnassus and Paradise suggests that the muses' spring has now become synonymous with the Jordan and the poet's walking along its banks recalls Christ's coming there for His baptism. The climactic, inspirational vision of the beloved that follows likewise suggests the heavens opening and the Spirit descending like a dove. As the singer reaches the line "The sunlight shone upon me", the chorus joins in with "Upborne on wings of song I seem",[132] and so follows the Chosen One through the waiting gates of Paradise.

Paradoxically, Walther's being associated with Christ in this way is offset by his own strikingly secular view of life. This first becomes apparent right at the beginning of the opera which, as mentioned before, is set in a church. While the citizens as a whole are united in their earnest devotions, Walther stands apart from them, making gestures of an

amorous nature to Eva, who is seated in the last pew, torn between her lover and a sense of propriety. He has presumably only entered the church to find Eva and so pays no attention at all to the service that is in progress. His flirting with her in this context creates a mood of gentle irreverence coupled with a warm-hearted affirmation of life and love that is to characterise the work as a whole. It is noteworthy that, where many of the other characters (including Sachs) make numerous references to God (usually casual ones such as "God grant" and "God willing" but sometimes intentionally devout as in, for instance, the Night Watchman's "Praise to God the Lord"),[133] Walther is conspicuous in not doing so (except by way of hot-tempered blasphemies). When asked by Kothner during the trial scene whether he plans to choose a sacred theme for his song, he replies "Most sacred I hold/Love's banner of gold/This most worthy of song I deem!", to which Kothner dourly responds "That we'd call worldly".[134] The exchange is clearly meant to raise a smile, and the opera as a whole presents a strictly humanist world-view, in which God, even when mentioned, does not bother to make an appearance (providing a striking contrast with the numerous miracles and sanctimonious posturings of *Parsifal* and some of the early operas). At the same time, as noted before, there is a wealth of religious imagery, as well as an underlying sense that life itself is divine, as are love and the forces of nature. Walther himself embodies this paradox in his Prize Song which, as we have seen, uses a partly biblical subject but treats it most unconventionally not to say blasphemously by suggesting that there is nothing sinful in eating the fruit of the Tree of Life.[135] It is as if, beneath the surface interpretation of the opera as a happy tale of love fulfilled, there is a subversive declaration of a revolutionary new pseudo-religion, a philosophical movement based on the composer's attempt to glorify his own art. The moral of *Die Meistersinger* seems to be that the works of Wagner (represented in the opera by Walther's songs) are capable of redeeming mankind, that the composer, having grasped the secret of how to have life more abundantly, is sharing it with the world through these works, and that anyone who immerses himself in them will experience a similar transfiguration.[136] Outrageous as it may seem, this message is an extremely convincing one for devoted Wagnerians, and it certainly is true (and copiously documented) that all of the seven great operas (and especially the last four) do instil feelings of ecstasy in sympathetic listeners – often so intense that they are like altered states of consciousness, or so profound that they

amount to "the peace which passeth understanding".[137] This phenomenon reaches its culmination with *Parsifal* – in which its composer's apparent attempt at self-deification can be most clearly traced and for which *Die Meistersinger* is, in a very real sense, "preparing the way".

Whether and, if so, to what extent James Joyce was aware of this hidden meaning in the opera will probably never be known, but it seems at least certain that he had aspects of Walther von Stolzing in mind when he created the persona of Stephen Dedalus. Of course, there are obvious differences between the two heroes, and it is worth considering these at the outset in order to delineate each of the two clearly and so understand the relation between them more easily.

Primarily, of course, the nature of opera is flamboyant while that of literature tends to be more subtle. This at least partly accounts for Walther's being splendidly attired and effortlessly voluble, whereas Stephen is drab in appearance and introverted in character. This distinction is deepened by the widely differing perspectives of Joyce and Wagner. While the latter is a late German Romantic, steeped in history and legend and firmly committed to extravagant excess, the former is an Irish Modernist, steeped in the real-life atmosphere of Dublin and, more often than not, given to using irony. Consequently, although both works are disguised autobiographies, *Die Meistersinger* is allegorical, its setting far removed in time from the real situation it represents (its composer's own artistic triumph), whereas *A Portrait of the Artist* is really quite close to the reality of Joyce's experience. Furthermore, although both works end in triumph, Walther's is actively realised (he gets his girl and everyone cheers), Stephen's is symbolic and postponed until after the novel. Curiously, in fact, we never do witness Stephen's triumph as an artist – literally, at least. Even in *Ulysses*, all his victories are symbolic. He never appears to create a masterpiece – he just happens to be in one![138] The situation, then, is that Wagner creates a vision of himself in triumph, whereas Joyce paints a decidedly more subdued picture of himself merely dreaming of glory - a dream that is apparently never realised.

What Walther and Stephen do have in common, as mentioned before, is that they are inspired - not just to create particular works of art, but actually to *be* artists - by their visions of beautiful women. That is to say, not only their careers as artists but their very lifestyles and personalities as artists are shaped by this inspiration. In other words, both portraits are explorations of the more mystical aspects of being an artist (or, rather, The Artist),[139] with each being presented as a kind of spiritual awakening (almost suggesting that of the shaman or medicine man in pre-civilised cultures). Both seem to enter trance-like states, as if in some mystical initiation ceremony, and both have a sense of being called to fulfil some sacred destiny. Also, both are shown to reject or ignore traditional, orthodox approaches to religion, and yet both create what amount to counter-religions based on the glorification of natural processes that involve themselves, their idealised objects of passion, their own creations, their sensual indulgence in a variety of feelings and their celebration of the very intoxication of being alive. Both, however, continue to use the language and images of the religions they have foresworn or ignored and both make particular use of the allied concepts of rebirth and baptism. We have already conducted a detailed analysis of this process in Walther's case. Now, Stephen's will be similarly investigated - with further parallels being drawn between the two where necessary.

We have already seen how, after rejecting the offer of a religious calling, Stephen experiences a moment of intense emotional exaltation on seeing a beautiful girl on the beach, which in turn leads him to consider himself seriously as an artist. Thereafter, during his years as an undergraduate, her image continues to haunt him, as he constantly works on refining his aesthetic philosophy. Then, one morning, Stephen has an experience that, to anyone familiar with *Die Meistersinger*, is immediately suggestive of the inspiration and gestation of Walther's song:

> Towards dawn he awoke. O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music. His mind was waking slowly to a tremulous morning knowledge, a morning inspiration. A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was inbreathed, how passionlessly, as if the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him! His soul was

> waking slowly, fearing to awake wholly. It was that windless hour of dawn when madness wakes and strange plants open to the light and the moth flies forth silently.[140]

There are many clues linking this to *Die Meistersinger* that will become more apparent on closer inspection, but one in particular immediately stands out. This is the phrase "a morning inspiration" – which at once recalls the repeated term "Morgentraum" (morning dream) used by Sachs to refer to Walther's song. In context, the words "dream" and "inspiration" can be considered, if not quite interchangeable, then at least interrelated, since Walther's dream is his immediate source of inspiration and Stephen's inspiration seems to come to him in a state strangely between dreaming and waking. Indeed, if we read on, this is confirmed and, at the same time, still stronger parallels with the Wagnerian version emerge:

> An enchantment of the heart! The night had been enchanted. In dream or vision he had known the ecstasy of seraphic life. Was it an instant of enchantment only or long hours and years and ages?[141]

Needless to say, "the ecstasy of seraphic life" is not very far removed from Walther's vision of Paradise. Fewer details of the dream's content are given than in Wagner, but the unifying mood or atmosphere of the experience is virtually identical. The time of day is the same in each case: Both dreams occur or are recalled during the very early hours of the morning. The blissful mood of the dreamer is also the same in each case. Compare, for example, the above passage with Walther's first remark to Sachs upon entering the workroom: "A dream I have had so wondrous fair."[142] Then there is the telling sentence "O what sweet music!" Of course, Joyce does not identify this as being any particular music but the reader is left to imagine that it was appropriately "seraphic" in tone. In the opera, on the other hand, it is unnecessary to incorporate music into the dream – since the orchestra can provide it as an accompaniment to the process of awakening. Here, then, is an excellent example of a continuing trend to be found in Joyce: that of giving words the power to express a character's inner feelings in the same way that Wagner's orchestra does in his operas.

In Wagner, each and every stage action is reflected in a suitable musical accompaniment. In this case, Walther's entrance is underpinned by a sustained orchestral chord that conveys a feeling of blissful wonder and expectancy. As such, it helps to depict Walther's intoxicated state of mind, as he vainly tries to grasp the essence of his dream. It also, as it happens, expresses precisely the same quality of feeling that pervades the "faint sweet music" of Stephen's "morning inspiration". As an example, let us consider the single phrase "pale cool waves of light". Wagner's music, more than that of any other composer, is noted for its almost uncanny ability to recreate very precise states of feeling. For instance, there is the famous "orgasm" of *Tristan und Isolde* and, at the very opposite end of the spectrum, the indefinable "sacrament" of *Parsifal.* In the scene in which Walther attempts to describe his dream, on the other hand, the tranquil, gliding harmonies evoke a feeling precisely akin to that of "pale cool waves of light". It is not that waves of light are physically present onstage (according to the stage directions, there is sunlight spilling through the open window but this is more likely to be warm and golden than cool and pale) but rather it is that the ineffable, radiant atmosphere of the dream that seems to linger in the air suggests something very much like the pale waves of Stephen's dream. Besides, in Stephen's case, we are told that these waves passed "over his limbs in sleep". It is unclear whether this was the actual substance of the dream or merely Stephen's waking effort to characterise the sensation. Therefore, the "waves" are hardly more concrete than in Wagner. It is really the kinetic experience of a very precise state of feeling that is conveyed in each case, by means of music and language respectively.

Another striking similarity between the two dreams is their spiritual dimension. We have already considered this in some detail in Walther's case, paying particular attention to the metaphor of baptism. This can be compared with Stephen's experience: "A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music." In both the context and the language used, this undeniably recalls biblical descriptions of baptism received of the Holy Ghost – a process that we have already acknowledged to be symbolically linked with artistic inspiration. Furthermore, the sentence "He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music" simultaneously reminds us of a baptismal ceremony (specifically one where the "soul" itself is washed) and the music that in the

opera describes this very process. The pervasive atmosphere of celestial sweetness is common to both cases, as is the inner symbolism of a spiritual calling or consecration. Taken in conjunction with the other similarities we have noted, it seems highly unlikely that this is merely coincidental, particularly when one remembers that Joyce knew the opera well enough to sing in a concert performance of some of the all-important "christening" quintet.[143]

So far, there is nothing in the passage that would seem to indicate the beloved muse. However, if one looks closely enough, the two are connected by means of a particular motif, that of "the ecstasy of seraphic life". Turning back to the scene where Stephen first sees the girl, we find this foreshadowed in a passage that describes, with great clarity, his understanding of the process of inspiration:

> Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on![144]

She, then, is an "angel" and comes to him from the "fair courts of life". From these linguistic clues, one might, even at this early stage, suspect her of playing a part in the "seraphic inspiration" that comes later, particularly considering that from the outset she is undeniably given the role of muse. This suspicion then becomes clarified, as one continues to read through Stephen's complex and richly suggestive reaction to and analysis of his dream. First comes the disclosure that

> The instant of inspiration seemed now to be reflected from all sides at once from a multitude of cloudy circumstances of what had happened or of what might have happened. The instant flashed forth like a point of light and now from cloud on cloud of vague circumstance confused form was veiling softly its afterglow.[145]

The actual circumstances of the dream, then, are fast fading from memory, and it is the task of the poet to salvage whatever he can of it and translate it, however imperfectly, into concrete terms. This too has its exact counterpart in *Die Meistersinger*, though expressed in rather more straightforward terms. When Walther demurs that "The dream, I fear, has fled my brain", Sachs reassures him, saying "Then call the poet's art to aid/It oft recalls what from mem'ry's strayed".[146]

Returning to Stephen, we now read "O! In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh. Gabriel the seraph had come to the virgin's chamber."[147] Here we find the traditional reference to impregnation as a metaphor for artistic creation, combined with a religious allusion. Although the metaphor of the virgin birth has no place in Wagner, this is clearly of a pattern with the baptism motif common to both works. It is also noteworthy both for its subtle blasphemy and for its sexual connotations.[148]

Reading on, we are told in a pentecostal image that "[a]n afterglow deepened within his spirit, whence the white flame had passed, deepening to a rose and ardent light".[149] This last phrase recalls Stephen's earlier vision, drifting asleep on the beach after seeing the girl: "an opening flower . . . breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose".[150] It is an image associated with his initial "awakening", sensual, rich, indulgent, somehow suggesting the figure of the girl. As the "morning inspiration" progresses, Stephen, for the first time, goes on to make a direct connection with her:

> That rose and ardent light was her strange wilful heart, strange that no man had known or would know, wilful from before the beginning of the world; and lured by that ardent rose-like glow the choirs of the seraphim were falling from heaven.[151]

Stephen here is in a realm neither of theology nor biology but of poetic speculation, drawing implausible inferences from things half-suggested by his fancy, and yet seeming to touch some deep, essential truth. This kind of thinking about "the nature of woman", inherited from Goethe and also found in Wagner, is explored far more fully in *Ulysses*, particularly in the presentation of Gerty MacDowell and, to a still greater extent, Molly

Bloom. Typically, the male artist finds "woman" to be not only supremely desirable and fascinating, but also infinitely mysterious and somehow amoral. That is, she is permitted to be "wilful", to have and to satisfy dark desires, because, it is strongly implied, it is her nature, the essence of her being. "Man", on the other hand, is supposed to be made in the image of God, stern, cerebral, inviolate, and in turning against that nature is committing an intentional disobedience, and therefore "sin". Man, then, fallen from grace, seeks it again in unfallen, amoral woman.[152] This process, mirrored in Stephen's allusion to the falling angels, though unorthodox to the point of blasphemy, demonstrates a kind of innocence and purity in the very act of falling – a factor which we have already identified in Walther's Prize Song (in that it also presents the Fall in an entirely sinless light).

Stephen does not merely share Walther's "morning dream", though. He also goes on to translate it into poetry, albeit of a very different kind. As a matter of fact, it is hardly a masterpiece, being somewhat maudlin and sentimental. Stephen, it seems, has yet to develop his art to its proper stature:

> Are you not weary of ardent ways,
> Lure of the fallen seraphim?
> Tell no more of enchanted days.[153]

This, decides the budding bard, will be an appropriate opening for a villanelle, which means he must cast about in his mind for more rhymes. Fortunately, his semi-mystical state of exalted inspiration continues unabated:

> The rose-like glow sent forth its rays of rhyme; ways, days, blaze, praise, raise. Its rays burned up the world, consumed the hearts of men and angels: the rays from the rose that was her wilful heart.[154]

After this reflection, Stephen is ready to go on and create a second tercet. (Like Walther, he produces just one stanza at first and then, after giving some thought to the overall form he is aiming to achieve, composes another just like it. He does not have a Hans Sachs available to guide him, but plays both roles himself, alternating moments of youthful

inspiration with more restrained consideration of the techniques he has to employ - and which he has obviously learned previously. In other words, his creativity, like Walther's, is characterised by a compromise between immediate inspiration and compliance with tradition. This in turn leads to his poem being set out in precisely the same format as Walther's: one verse after another – but each separated from the other by passages describing further reflection, represented in the opera by dialogue and in the novel by narrative prose.) Stephen's second tercet reads as follows:

> Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze
> And you have had your will of him.
> Are you not weary of ardent ways?[155]

This does not advance the argument much further, but serves simply to intensify the somewhat reproachful tone, a tone that is curiously ill at ease with the supposedly rapturous dream experience. Unlike *Die Meistersinger*, where Walther's song blends in perfectly with the exalted tone of the work as a whole, Stephen's rather halting lines are strikingly at variance with the mature Joyce's evocative prose. The impression this contrast creates is that Stephen, at least at this early stage of his career, is unable to realise the full richness of his inner vision. It is as though Joyce is deliberately creating a more realistic picture of artistic progress through long years of trial and error, to contrast with Wagner's more Romanticised view of the artist springing up fully armed from the head of whatever it is that artists spring up from, Nature or myth or poetic tradition. Again, like Walther, Stephen must pause a while to come up with a new idea: "And then? The rhythm died away, ceased, began to move again and beat. And then? Smoke, incense ascending from the altar of the world."[156] This in turn inspires a third tercet:

> Above the flame the smoke of praise
> Goes up from ocean rim to rim
> Tell no more of enchanted days.[157]

At first this image seems unrelated (although it too has obvious religious connotations), but Stephen continues to reflect upon it: "Smoke went up from the whole earth, from the

vapoury oceans, smoke of her praise. The earth was like a swaying censer, a ball of incense, an ellipsoidal ball."[158] It is the idealised beloved herself who is the object of worship and all of nature is united in worshipping her, in a rite that seems part pagan, part Christian. After this, though, Stephen's inspiration seems to dry up:

> The rhythm died out at once; the cry of his heart was broken. His lips began to murmur the first verses over and over; then went on stumbling through half verses, stammering and baffled; then stopped. The heart's cry was broken.[159]

Again this mirrors the composition scene in *Die Meistersinger* which is interrupted when Walther gets too tired and irritable to continue. In Stephen's case, the dawning day itself is a cause of distraction:

> The veiled windless hour had passed and behind the panes of the naked window, the morning light was gathering. A bell beat faintly very far away. A bird twittered; two birds, three. The bell and the bird ceased; and the dull white light spread itself east and west, covering the world, covering the roselight in his heart.[160]

Similarly, Walther fears that the dry instruction given to him by Sachs in the sunlit workshop will drive the memory of his dream from him. Of course, this does not happen, the inner and outer lights become merged as one and Sachs's inspired tuition turns out to be anything but dry. He himself writes down the words as Walther sings them. More prosaically, Stephen preserves the memory of his verses by writing them down in pencil on the back of a cigarette packet.

Walther, it will be remembered, is only able to continue translating his dream into poetry when reunited with Eva. Stephen, on the other hand, is similarly inspired to compose more stanzas simply by thinking of his beloved, albeit at some considerable length and in combination with other related subjects, including religion. He begins by recalling various memories of her, including one "at the carnival" where she wore a "white dress" – like Eva during the "Johannestag" festivities. He specifically remembers the following brief

exchange between them, in which she is gently reproachful, slightly flirtatious and he in turn is teasing and ironic:

> - You are a great stranger now.
> - Yes. I was born to be a monk.
> - I am afraid you are a heretic.
> - Are you much afraid?[161]

He then continues to speculate about his thinking of himself as a monk, in spite of having renounced the church, "a profaner of the cloister".[162] It is an image that is to become irremovably attached to him, continuing into *Ulysses* where he is addressed variously as "parson"[163] and "you fearful jesuit".[164] He next turns to thinking about another priest, a real one this time, in whose company he last saw his beloved, "looking at him out of *dove's* eyes",[165] and whom he himself dismisses as the servant of "a church which was the scullery-maid of christendom".[166]

It will at once be seen from Stephen's slighting tone that his loss of faith has hardened into a spirit of rebelliousness, and that he is jealous. For a while, his anger gets the better of him, and he shatters her image into fragments which present distorted reflections of her, and of the faces of other girls he has seen and admired at one time or another. It is clear that this is meant to suggest that the beloved (who is never named, incidentally) somehow stands for the archetype of all womanhood, like Molly Bloom's Venus Metempsychosis, of whom all other women are merely faint reflections, although she is present in all of them. Eventually, his anger abates somewhat, though he still remains bitter at the thought that she will

> unveil her soul's shy nakedness, to one who was but schooled in the discharging of a formal rite rather than to him, a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life.[167]

It is this "radiant image of the eucharist" that finally inspires him to compose the next two tercets of his villanelle:

Our broken cries and mournful lays
Rise in one eucharistic hymn
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

While sacrificing hands upraise
The chalice flowing to the brim.
Tell no more of enchanted days.[168]

It is this image of himself as "priest of the eternal imagination" that is to characterise Stephen from here on. There is always something distant, aloof and cerebral about him (which is partly why he forms such a striking complement to the sensual, easy-going Bloom). Clearly, though, his usage of the image of the Eucharist is far from orthodox (recalling the similarly risqué treatment of the same image in *Parsifal*). It is essential to the paradox he embodies that, although he has renounced religion to the extent that he can openly mock its practitioners, the central sacrament on which the church is founded remains for him a "radiant image". Again in *Parsifal*, a work which it simply does not make sense to interpret as an orthodox Christian parable, the symbol of the Holy Grail is also singularly "radiant". It seems as if there is an inner truth in such symbols that remains unchangingly potent, in spite of the radically different interpretations of each subsequent age. In general terms, the Grail (as Wagner treats it, at least) is closely related to the "eternal feminine", suggesting in fact an entirely spiritualised version of it.[169] Stephen's recurrent vision of "ardent roselight", for example, has much in common with many traditional descriptions of the Grail.[170] Also, it will be obvious by now that Walther's vision, though differing in imagery, deals with the same essential theme of salvation or transfiguration. Stephen's persona as a kind of false priest mirrors that of Walther as a secularised Messiah. Similarly, his dismissal of his rival as "one who was but schooled in the discharging of a formal rite" recalls Walther's contempt for the pedagogic Beckmesser, though it is typical of Joyce that he reverses Fate's decision, transferring the woman's affections from the artist-hero to his undeserving rival. Consequently, Stephen's poem is correspondingly more pessimistic than the sanguine Walther's, though it still preserves the same all-important connection between the sexual and spiritual dimensions.

The villanelle now has five tercets and needs only a concluding quatrain to complete it. Like Walther's finished Prize Song, this is not allowed to happen immediately but must be postponed a while longer (in this case so that the poet can contemplate his subject more fully). Furthermore, although the finished poem is never shown to anyone, it does enjoy a quiet triumph of its own, even though Stephen himself is the only one to experience it. The public acclamation of the Prize Song is here contrasted with the intimate appreciation of the poet alone, though the underlying imagery is once again (as I hope to show) common to both works.

"The full morning light had come." It is time for the completed poem to be delivered. Ironically, Stephen turns away from the sounds of waking life in the household below him, buries himself in the blankets and faces the wall, where he half-heartedly tries to imagine that the wallpaper represents "a roseway from where he lay upwards to heaven all strewn with scarlet flowers". This of course recalls his earlier identification of "her wilful heart" with the falling seraphim, but the vision is less convincing now and seems almost a parody of Walther's high-spirited pilgrimage along the banks of the Jordan-Pegnitz. Thereafter, though, things begin to improve. As he feels himself gradually drifting towards sleep again, "a languorous weariness passed over him descending along his spine from his closely cowled head". Here we are back on familiar ground once more. The "languorous weariness" recalls the blissful swooning that is such a recurrent feature of Wagnerian music and audiences' responses to it, and as such may represent a kind of ironic or trivialised "love-death". It is also the same state of mind in which each of the "morning inspirations" was first conceived.

For some while after this, Stephen continues to muse about his beloved and the verses she has inspired him to write. At one point he poses the following question to himself:

> While his soul had passed from ecstasy to languor where had she been? Might it be, in the mysterious ways of spiritual life, that her soul at those same moments had been conscious of his homage? It might be.[171]

Stephen, it will be observed, is not yet entirely free from the purely Romantic view of life, unlike Joyce himself whose ironic detachment is more typically Modern. It is at this point of the narrative, though, that the two finally merge to some extent, and Stephen's dream for the first time seems to become explicitly erotic in tone, recapturing more fully the essence of Walther's "Paradise":

> A glow of desire kindled again his soul and fired and fulfilled all his body. Conscious of his desire she was waking from odorous sleep, the temptress of his villanelle. Her eyes, dark and with a look of languor, were opening to his eyes.[172] Her nakedness yielded to him, radiant, warm, odorous and lavish-limbed, enfolded him like a shining cloud, enfolded him like water with a liquid life; and like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the element of mystery, flowed forth over his brain.[173]

Here, the girl's nakedness clearly mirrors that implied in Walther's vision of Eden. At a less clearly definable but ultimately more meaningful level, the details describing this nakedness, like the "pale cool waves of light" mentioned earlier, evoke the very atmosphere of the Prize Song. Actually, the precise details of the situation are far more suggestive than the more subtle implications of the Wagnerian version, but it is the inner "feel" of the two poems that corresponds more closely though it is more difficult to interpret something so elusive. The "shining cloud" image for example recalls all the vague suggestiveness, ethereality, "feminine nature" of both Wagner in general and the composition scene in particular.

Finally, without giving the reader much indication whether he really is drifting off to sleep or is actively continuing the act of composition, Stephen concludes this episode simply by repeating all of his five tercets in order and then appending to them the following quatrain, thus completing his villanelle:

> And still you hold our longing gaze
> With languorous look and lavish limb!

Are you not weary of ardent ways?
Tell no more of enchanted days.[174]

Once again, this hardly gives justice to Stephen's inner vision, which is expressed more fully in the narrative itself. Hence, it is in this, rather than the poem, that one finds the deepest spiritual parallels with Wagner (although, of course, the mere fact of creating verses on the subject of the dream is itself a striking similarity, particularly given the closeness in subject matter and the importance placed in each case on the figure of a personal muse who is also clearly the object of sexual desire).[175]

A further parallel is seen in the way Stephen, like Walther, is an artist made Christ-figure. Little has been said about this here since it is a well-known and copiously documented feature of Joycean scholarship. Any critical edition of *Ulysses*, for example, will contain detailed notes on the association, which Stephen makes in his own mind[176] and in which he is supported by Joyce as narrative "arranger" (for example in the mock-Crucifixion of "Circe").[177] In the *Portrait* one of the chief ways the identification is made is by likening another character to John the Baptist, just as Wagner had done in *Die Meistersinger.* However, the character Joyce (and Stephen) chooses for this role is Cranly,[178] the same who is cast in the roles of Mime and Fafner to Stephen's Siegfried and these figures are not precursors at all but opponents. Once again, such symbolic roles are not fixed absolutes in Joyce but change according to context.

Before we move on to Stephen's final Wagnerian identification, that with Parsifal, it is worth noting that he also shares with Walther an association with the biblical figure of David. Like Adam, David is often considered a symbolic as well as an actual ancestor of Christ and this is clearly the chief reason Wagner chooses to refer to him in the opera, since it adds another layer to the hero's Messianic role.[179] In addition, however, the figure of David as harper was the conservative Mastersingers' chosen emblem of the dignity of their tradition and yet he was interpreted in Wagner's own time as a symbol for progressiveness in music.[180] Certainly, the overt comparison Eva makes between her lover and Dürer's

depiction of David's victory over Goliath is deliberately used to suggest the inexperienced Walther's own struggle against the authority and influence of the guild.[181]

In Joyce's work, according to Edmund Epstein, the figure of David is of central importance. As a representation of

> the artist as king and priest, [he] appears many times in many guises in the works of Joyce and sums up Joyce's mature conception of the development, nature and role of the artist. As an exceedingly full and complex symbol, Joyce's David includes within himself many of the interpretations of David throughout history, from Augustine to the German romantics. . . . Joyce was aware of traditional interpretations of David, and his employment of the symbol is based upon these interpretations.[182]

Epstein then outlines the chief phases in the historical representation of David, noting for example that "among the meistersingers, [he] is the symbol and inspirer of their deliberately controlled and shaped art" and adds "Joyce was familiar with this interpretation of David through Wagner's *Meistersinger*".[183] As I have discussed, though, this is only one part of the opera's dual presentation of David: as king and harpist, he is a stately model for the older masters; as giant-killer, he is an inspiration for the rebellious Walther. Moving on to the nineteenth century, Epstein adds that "[a] later interpretation of David was offered by the continental romantics, that of the young artist who fights the old-fogy Philistines"[184] and refers in this context to Schumann's *Davidsbundler*,[185] which "was designed to organise plots against the stodgy *grossvaters* of the world, to wake them up to the fact that a new generation had come along to destroy the old world with new art".[186] In one of Schumann's piano pieces

> a proud, thrusting youthful melody battles a fatuous old folksong, whose text originally praised "the way things were done in grandfather's time" and which represents everything Philistine, limited, and old.[187]

"In Schumann's circle", he adds, "David came to stand for the power of art to overthrow the forces of dullness, and for the power of rebellious youth to supersede age on the throne of

authority".[188] Wagner was not a member of this circle but would have sympathised strongly with its aims and aspirations at the time (during the late 1830s, when he was himself a young man), since they accorded so closely with his own. In later life, however, Wagner tended to speak most disparagingly of Schumann (and indeed almost every living or dead composer save Beethoven, his lifelong hero), though he remained as committed to his own progressive ideals as ever while his art became, if anything, more revolutionary than before. Indeed, it is almost certain he would have considered his so-called "music of the future" to have long since outstripped all rivals and the mantle of David to sit more fittingly on his own shoulders than any other's. Certainly the way he uses David in *Die Meistersinger* is, at least in part, a reiteration of the way the earlier generation of romantic artists had done so before.[189]

Lastly, it should be remembered that Walther is in some sense a variation of Siegfried, or perhaps even an interpretation of him. In other words, Siegfried's achievements as heroic conqueror are paralleled by Walther's musical triumphs. Both embody the Romantic ideal of youthful insurgency against the corrupt old order and both, therefore, can be seen as David-figures. Finally, all three heroes (among others) are incorporated in Stephen Dedalus. Commenting on Stephen's use of "Nothung" to defy patriarchal authority, Epstein concludes that

> [t]he sword is at the same time the symbol of his maturity as an artist and his maturity as a man. It is therefore the weapon of a "David", a double-faced creator and destroyer, an attacker and overthrower of the old order.[190]

The Messiah as Artist: Parsifal and Stephen Dedalus

A recurrent assertion of this study has been the way Wagner's heroes frequently suggest an affinity with Christ. Apart from the case of Walther von Stolzing discussed above in some detail, one might also consider the eternally suffering Dutchman and seraphic Lohengrin in this regard. Siegfried, too, in his world-redeeming role, might be seen to fit

the same pattern, particularly in the way his undeserved death is shown to atone for the primal sin of Wotan. Speaking of her decision to sanction his murder, Brünnhilde says

> Took I my due, all the blood of the world
> Never could wash out your guilt!
> But the one man's death gluts now my vengeance:
> Siegfried falleth – his death shall atone for all![191]

However, as discussed in the opening chapter,[192] it is Parsifal, above all, who seems deliberately intended to typify the Artist-Hero as Messiah. In this (intentionally) final work, Wagner's aim seems to have been to surpass even the *Ring*, if not in scope (since that would be plainly impossible) then in sublimity. From the very opening bars, the work strives to create the impression of awe, of heightened sanctity, as though the listener were being ushered into the presence of the ultimate mystery, the Holy of Holies. Nor is it possible to ignore this impression as the work proceeds. The text of the entire work is suffused with sacramental images and surcharged with extreme religious emotion that is only intensified further by the frequently anguished music.[193] In the first act, for example, Amfortas, inspired by his contemplation of the Grail, suffers excruciating pangs of guilt and self-loathing:

> A power within the Chalice moves;
> And thrilled with rapturous and holy pain
> The fountain of Blood divine
> Pours its flood into my heart:
> In maddest tumult, by sin defiled,
> My blood back on itself
> Doth turn and rage within me . . .
> In torrents it poureth forth,
> Here through the spear-wound,
> Alike to His, and dealt me
> By the selfsame deadly spear
> That once the Redeemer pierced with pain,
> As, tears of blood outpouring,

The Holy One wept for the shame of man,
In pity's godlike yearning.[194]

Conversely, in Act II, the religion is juxtaposed with a Tristanesque seduction sequence, representing Wagner's most explicit fusion of the sacred and the erotic; finally, Act III presents an undiluted essence of Christian mysticism, centred on Gurnemanz' sermon on the significance of Good Friday. Clearly, then, religion can be seen to provide the central focus of the work just us sexual love does in the case of *Tristan* and art in that of *Die Meistersinger*. In Joyce's work, obviously, the use of religion needs no artistic precedent since he had been steeped in its practice since childhood. Ironically, Wagner, given a typically lacklustre Protestant upbringing and making a natural transition to free-thought early in life, continually expresses an almost conventional piety in many of his works (albeit at a superficial level), whereas Joyce, fiercely indoctrinated into Catholicism, is flagrantly iconoclastic in his. In the *Portrait* certainly, the use of complex religious metaphors to dramatise the hero's actual break with the church is strikingly modern in tone and this at least bears no obvious resemblance to the *fin-de-siècle* Christology of *Parsifal*.

The exact meaning of *Parsifal* (if there is such a thing) remains a hotly contested issue. My own feeling is that the work presents a mirror image to *Die Meistersinger* (in a different sense from that in which it does the same to *Tristan*[195]). In both works, a young man brings a sorely needed vitality to a brotherhood of older men. These brotherhoods (the Masters' guild and the Knights of the Grail) are each entrusted with preserving a noble cultural enterprise and, when they gather together, after ceremonial processions, it is in the form of a circle, connoting both completeness and exclusivity. In each case, the younger man is at first rejected on account of his naivety and lack of understanding of the group's traditions and values; however, after undergoing further trials and being in some sense initiated by an older man (who is a highly respected senior member of the group), he makes a sudden and unexpected entry into the midst of the circle, from which privileged position he spontaneously initiates its rejuvenation. The chief difference is that the situation in *Die Meistersinger* is secular (albeit coloured by numerous sacred references) whereas in *Parsifal* it is overtly sacred. However, when one considers that what is missing

from the Grail brotherhood is the phallic Spear (corresponding to the symbolic castration of Amfortas) and that the hero's restitution of this to its female counterpart, the Chalice, is what brings about the final transfiguration, it appears as if what is really needed is the creative and regenerative energy they represent. When one considers, furthermore, that *Parsifal* seems to offer its audience the experience of Holy Communion in an artistic form, and that Wagner apparently believed he was resurrecting the dead rituals of the Church for the modern age, the message of the work, supported by the assertions of *Die Meistersinger*, appears to be that it is the role of art (specifically Wagnerian art) to supplant, replace or become religion. Indeed, as was argued in Chapter I, this is precisely what it is for many who consider themselves "Wagnerians".

Parsifal is also routinely described as a hero in the same mould as Siegfried, an innocent child of nature. Taking into account, then, that Stephen Dedalus is Joyce's version of Siegfried, that he can also be likened to Walther (and other Wagner heroes) and that he is an ironic priest and consubstantial son of the consubstantial father, it almost seems impossible not to liken him to Parsifal as well. Although, in this case, there are no direct allusions or correspondences to support such a relationship, Stephen's moments of "purity", of his implied kinship to the ethereal, bring him closer to Parsifal than any other Wagnerian character. Indeed, these features have already been examined in relation to *Lohengrin* and it should not be forgotten that Lohengrin is Parsifal's son and that the Grail and the dove and the spirituality associated with them that are already present in the earlier opera become still more prominent in the later one.[196] Stephen's great moment of inspiration, when "[h]is soul was soaring in an air beyond the world",[197] or, conversely, when he considers that

> [t]he attitude of rapture in sacred art, the raised and parted hands, the parted lips and eyes as of one about to swoon, became for him an image of the soul in prayer, humiliated and faint before her Creator[198]

are nowhere foreshadowed more strongly in Wagner than in the last scene of his last work, the visionary sequence in which

[a] ray of light falls; the Grail's glow is at its brightest; a white dove descends from the dome and hovers over Parsifal's head; Kundry, with her eyes uplifted to Parsifal, slowly sinks lifeless to the ground before him; Amfortas and Gurnemanz kneel in homage before Parsifal, who waves the Grail in blessing over the worshipping brotherhood of knights; the curtain closes slowly.[199]

[1] For example, Blake ("Hear the voice of the bard!"), Coleridge ("Weave a circle round him thrice", etc.) and Shelley ("Be through my lips . . . The trumpet of a prophecy!")
[2] Carlyle, *The Hero as Poet* (1938), p 184.
[3] Ibid., p 186.
[4] In Wagner's case, although few would accord him the same status as Carlyle's chosen giants, his devotees tended to heap still more extreme (and, to most modern ears, sycophantic) praise upon him.
[5] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1992), p 275.
[6] *Der fliegende Holländer* (1938), stage direction.
[7] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 220.
[8] "'The Flying Dutchman' preaches the sublime doctrine that woman can moor the most erratic soul, or to put it into Wagnerian terms 'save' him. Here we venture to ask a question. Supposing that this were actually true, would it therefore be desirable? – What becomes of the 'eternal Jew' whom a woman adores and *enchains*? He simply ceases from being eternal; he marries, - that is to say, he concerns us no longer" (Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner* (1911), p 7).
[9] *Ulysses* (1992), p 64.
[10] Ibid., p 60.
[11] *Joyce and Wagner* (1991), p 66.
[12] *Der fliegende Holländer* II, i, l 70 ("Der fliegenden Holländer lasst in Ruh!")
[13] Ibid. III, iii, l 12 ("Entsetzlich! Dieser Blick!")
[14] *Ulysses*, p 60.
[15] Ibid., p 858.
[16] *Der fliegende Holländer* I, ii, ll 49-50.
[17] *Ulysses*, p 870.
[18] Act II, pp 71-72.
[19] Ellman refers to an amusing question posed to the tenor, John Sullivan, "What sort of a fellow is this Tannhäuser who, when he is with Saint Elizabeth, longs for the bordello of Venusberg, and when he is at the bordello longs to be with Saint Elizabeth?" (*James Joyce* (1959), p 632).
[20] *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1949), p 166.
[21] *A Portrait of the Artist as aYoung Man*, p 65.
[22] Ibid., p 102.
[23] Ibid., p 105.
[24] *Tannhäuser* (1900) I, ii, ll 57-64 ("Doch ich, aus diesen ros'gen Düften,/Verlange nach des Waldes Lüften,/Nach uns'res Himmels klarem Blau,/Nach uns'rem frischen Grün der Au',/Nach uns'rer Vöglein liebem Sange,/Nach uns'rer Glocken trautem Klange,/Aus deinem Reiche muß ich flieh'n!/O Königin! Göttin, laß mich zieh'n!")
[25] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 106.
[26] *Wagner* (1996), p 81.
[27] *Tannhäuser* III, iii, stage direction.
[28] Ibid., ll 99, 101, 102, 108-9 ("milde Lüfte"; "holde Düfte"; "jubelnde Klänge"; "Entzücken dringt durch meine Sinne,/Gewahr' ich diesen Dämmerschein!")
[29] Ibid., ll 106-7 ("Weh! Böser Zauber thut sich auf!/Die Hölle naht mit wildem Lauf!")
[30] Ibid. II, iv, ll 210-16 ("Ein furchtbares Verbrechen ward begangen;/Es stahl mit heuschlerischer Larve sich/Zu uns der Sünde fluchbelad'ner Sohn!/Wir stoßen dich von uns, bei uns darfst du/Nicht weilen! Schmachbefleckt ist unser Herd/Durch dich, und dräuend blickt der Himmel selbst/Auf dieses Dach, das dich zu lang' schon birgt!")
[31] Ibid. III, iii, ll 71-78 ("Hast du so böse Lust getheilt,/Dich an der Hölle Gluth enflammt,/Hast du im Venusberg geweilt,/So bist nun ewig du verdammt!/Wie dieser Stab in meiner Hand/Nie mehr sich schmückt mit frischem Grün,/Kann aus der Hölle heißem Brand/Erlösung nimmer dir erblüh'n!")
[32] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 112. The quoted phrase is from Cardinal Newman's "Glories of Mary" in *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*; the description of Mary as the morning star is traditional and occurs in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, notes, p 297).
[33] Translated by Ernest Newman in *Wagner Nights* (1949), pp 137-8.
[34] For an alternative interpretation of the same music, see Baudelaire's paraphrase: "Then, involuntarily, I evoked the delectable state of a man possessed by a profound reverie in total solitude with *vast horizons* and *bathed in a diffuse light*; immensity without other décor than itself. Soon I became aware of a heightened *brightness*, of a *light growing in intensity* so quickly that the shades of meaning provided by a dictionary would not suffice to express this *constant increase of burning whiteness*. Then I achieved a full apprehension of a soul floating in light, of an ecstasy compounded of *joy and insight*, hovering above and far removed from the natural world." (Quoted in *Lohengrin*, DECCA programme notes).

[35] Since Joyce partly satirises Stephen's "ninetyish" affectations, it is especially appropriate to flesh out his Symbolist leanings with hints of *Lohengrin*.
[36] Cf., for example, the nun's vision in *The Holy Grail*, ll 117-18: "And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,/Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive".
[37] This is certainly true of *Parsifal*. In *Lohengrin* there is no redemption as such, although the Grail does seem to offer some degree of consolation to the hero in spite his enforced parting from Elsa.
[38] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 235.
[39] Ibid., p 236.
[40] Cooper, J. C. (ed.), *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (1988), p 76; in Wagner's *oeuvre*, this balancing of female Grail and male lance is most fully depicted in *Parsifal*.
[41] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 187.
[42] *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, p 70.
[43] Ibid., pp 141-42.
[44] Ibid., p 142.
[45] Of course, the very etymology of the words "inspiration" and "spirit" is connected as, literally, they connote breath and breathing.
[46] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, pp 160-61.
[47] Ibid., p 183.
[48] Ibid., p 67.
[49] Tanner, *Wagner*, p 212.
[50] Zuckerman, *The First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan (1964), p 186.
[51] *Wagner and Literature* (1982), p 124.
[52] Ibid., p 125.
[53] *Ulysses*, p 791.
[54] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, pp 275-76.
[55] Ibid., p 258.
[56] *Wagner and Literature*, p 124.
[57] *Siegfried* (1912) I, i, ll 354-71 ("Aus dem Wald fort/In die Welt zieh'n:/Nimmer kehr' ich zurück./Wie ich froh bin,/Daß ich frei ward,/Nichts mich bindet und zwingt!/Mein vater bist du nicht;/In der Ferne bin ich heim;/Dein Herd ist nicht mein Haus,/Meine Decke nicht dein Dach./Wie der Fisch froh/In der Fluth schwimmt,/Wie der Fink frei/Sich davon schwingt:/Flieg' ich von hier,/Fluthe davon,/Wie die Wind über'n Wald/Weh' ich dahin-/Dich, Mime, nie wieder zu seh'n!")
[58] *Joyce and Wagner*, p 42.
[59] *Siegfried* I, i, ll 365-66 ("Wie der Fink frei/Sich davon schwingt").
[60] Ibid., ll 156-60 ("Was dem Vögelein ist der Vogel,/Wenn er im Nest es nährt,/Eh' das flügge mag fliegen:/Das ist dir kind'schem Sproß/Der kundig sorgende Mime").
[61] Ibid., ll 164-72 ("Es sangen die Vöglein so selig im Lenz,/Das eine lockte das andre:/Du sagtest selbst,/Da ich's wissen wollt',/Das wären Männchen und Weibchen./Sie kosten so lieblich/Und ließen sich nicht;/Sie bauten ein Nest/Und beide pflegten der Brut.")
[62] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, pp 244-45.
[63] Ibid., pp 178-79.
[64] Ibid., pp 247-48.
[65] Although it may be stretching things a bit, it is tempting to consider that *The Bride of Lammermoor* was famously adapted for the operatic stage by Donizetti as *Lucia di Lammermoor*, a work that is the epitome of the *bel canto* school and the absolute antithesis of Wagnerian music-drama, suggesting again that Joyce is polarising pro- and anti-Wagnerian elements.
[66] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 248.
[67] Ibid., p 195.
[68] Ibid., pp 197-98.
[69] As Davin claims, his cousin, who was playing goalkeeper, came very close to receiving a blow to the temple from an opponent's camann (or hurling stick) (ibid., pp 196-97). In each case, the elements of ancient cultural traditions of ritual warfare, the fierce rivalry of tribal clans and a powerful sense of loyalty towards one's kinsmen are equally present.
[70] It is not entirely certain, by the way, whether Davin has taken part in the match or merely been a spectator. This is incidental, however, since, either way, he has been passionately involved.
[71] In addition, the fact that Davin reads this information "in the look of her eyes" recalls Hunding's recognition of the similarity between the twins' eyes and his suspiciously noting guile in them.
[72] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 193.
[73] Ibid., 268.

[74] Incidentally, it is curious to note that, while Joyce routinely spells the name as "Nothung", Wagner's original spelling, according to all the sources I have encountered, is "Notung". Homer, presumably, nods.
[75] Ibid., p 276.
[76] Another legendary figure who does combine the talents of blacksmith, inventor, magician and artist is Daedalus's Teutonic counterpart, Wayland the Smith. Interestingly, Wagner once toyed with writing an opera about him - *Wieland der Schmied* - and even sketched a prose scenario for it, but its ideas were overtaken by and - to some extent - incorporated into the creation of *Siegfried*. However, as Vicki Mahaffey argues in "Wagner, Joyce and Revolution" (*James Joyce Quarterly* vol. 25 (1988), pp 237-47), there may be a more direct link than this between *Wieland* and *A Portrait*. Most important is the envisioned work's finale, in which Wieland forges the wings he then uses to fly to freedom, at the same time adding that his triumph is in reality that of the folk's, whose aspirations he embodies (see Mahaffey, p 243). The parallel here with Stephen's symbolic flight is indeed obvious and it is certain, as Mahaffey argues, that Joyce is intentionally drawing on his knowledge of Wagner's *Wieland*. However, it is also true that the *Wieland* parallels reinforce those with *Siegfried*, since Joyce essentially interprets both Wagnerian works just as the composer himself did, as celebrations of the heroic artist-figure who liberates his countrymen from an oppressive and limiting mental stagnation.
[77] *Das Rheingold* (1912) iii, ll 113-19 ("Im kalten Loch,/Da kauernd du lag'st,/Wer gab dir Licht/Und wärmende Lohe,/Wenn Loge nie dir gelacht?/Was hülf' dir dein Schmieden,/Heizt' ich die Schmiede dir nicht?").
[78] *Ulysses*, p 45.
[79] Ibid., p 246. (This is the episode in the National Library referred to in Chapter II (see note 12, p 55) when Stephen quietly listens to the discussion about Moore being the man the write Ireland's national epic, thereby linking the Siegfried persona clearly to his own artistic mission.)
[80] In the *Nibelungenlied*, for instance, Siegfried's sword is called "Balmung", while in the *Volsungasaga*, Sigurd's is called "Gram".
[81] This important theme of paternity will be considered in more detail in Chapter IV (see especially pp 161-76).
[82] For example, in Siegmund's remark to Sieglinde, "As bride-gift I bring you this sword", *Die Walküre* I, iii,
I 276 ("Als Brautgabe bringt er dies Schwert").
[83] *Ulysses*, pp 680-81.
[84] Ibid., p 683.
[85] The connection with Nietzsche is explored independently in *Ulysses*, for example in Mulligan's flippant remark: "I'm the *Uebermensch*. Toothless Kinch and I, the supermen. . . . Thus spake Zarathustra" (p 27). Kinch is one of Mulligan's nicknames for Stephen but his humorously coupling the two of them together as "supermen" mocks Stephen's isolation and his more serious claim to this role.
[86] Significantly, this is one of the few events in the cycle for which there is absolutely no precedent in any of Wagner's sources, since it would have been unthinkable for the ancients to have any mortal, however heroic, successfully challenge the gods. As a consequence, the incident acquires considerable self-reflexive undertones. To the extent that Siegfried represents Wagner, it can be seen to signal his break with tradition and the assertion of his own artistic identity. Moreover, as we have been discussing, this is precisely Joyce's concern in *Ulysses*, a text which is perhaps unique in being so obviously derivative and yet, simultaneously, so profoundly original. So it is, then, that Stephen's cry of "Nothung!" actually asserts Joyce's own claim to artistic independence by drawing a parallel with Wagner's.
[87] *Ulysses*, p 683.
[88] Ibid., pp 694-95.
[89] Ibid., pp 565-66.
[90] *Götterdämmerung* (1912) III, iii (stage direction).
[91] *Ulysses*, pp 563-64.
[92] In Chapters IV and V, the Stephen-Siegfried parallels will be explored further, in relation to the father-son and mother-son relationships respectively (see pp 161-76; 202-7).
[93] *Ulysses*, p 590.
[94] *Götterdämmerung* I, ii, ll 116-8 ("Blühenden Lebens/Labendes Blut/Traüfelt ich in den Trank").
[95] Ibid. ll 119-21 ("Bruder-brünstig/Muthig gemischt,/Blüh im Trank unser Blut").
[96] As does the "Spear" motif, reminding us of the uneasy juxtaposition of the "free" hero and the contract-based society of the Gibichungs. It is especially ironic that this episode takes place after the Spear itself has already been broken by the Sword, as if to suggest that social contracts can only be considered defunct in a universe where the rule of law has officially ceased to function.
[97] *Wagner and Literature*, p 125.

[98] Ibid.
[99] *Die Walküre* (1912) I, ii, ll 178-9.
[100] We could perhaps interpret this as an allusion to Joyce usurping the role of his own surrogate "father", Wagner.
[101] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 186.
[102] Ibid., p 187.
[103] Ibid., p 186.
[104] See Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Reworking History: Wagner's German Myth of Nuremberg" (in *Re-Reading Wagner* (1993), pp 39-59).
[105] Or, at least, its central character, as Wotan is of the *Ring*.
[106] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1913) III, ii, ll 101-8 ("Morgenlich leuchtend/Im rosigem Schein/Von Blüth' und Duft/Geschwellt die Luft,/Voll aller Wonnen,/Nie ersonnen,/Ein Garten lud mich ein,/Gast ihm zu sein").
[107] Ibid., ll 113-20 ("Wonnig entragend/Dem seligen Raum,/Bot gold'ner Frucht/Heilsaft'ge Wucht/Mit holdem Prangen/Dem Verlangen,/An duft'ger Zweige Saum,/Herrlich ein Baum").
[108] Ibid., ll 135-48 ("Sei euch vertraut,/Welch' hehres Wunder mir gescheh'n:/An meine Seite/Stand ein Weib/So hold und schön ich nie geseh'n:/Gleich einer Braut/Umfaßte sie sanft meinen Leib,/Mit Augen winkend,/Die Hand wies blinkend,/Was ich verlangend begehrt,/Die Frucht so hold und werth/Vom Lebensbaum").
[109] Which would seem to suggest that Wagner was fully aware of the difficulties his "music of the future" could pose to listeners who, like Leopold Bloom, find it "a bit too heavy . . . and hard to follow at the first go-off" (*Ulysses*, p 770).
[110] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, ii, ll 161-90 ("Abendlich glühend/In himmlischer Gluth/Verschied der Tag,/Wie dort ich lag:/Aus ihren Augen/Wonne saugen,/Verlangen einz'ger Macht/In mir nur wacht'./Nächtlich umdämmert/Der Blick mir sich bricht:/Wie weit so nah'/Beschienen da/Zweilichte Sterne/Aus der Ferne,/Durch schlanker Zweige Licht,/Hehr mein Gesicht./Lieblich einQuell/Auf stiller Höhe dort mir rauscht;/Jetzt schwellt er an/Sein hold Getön',/So stark und söß ich's nie erlauscht:/Leuchtend und hell,/Wie strahlten die Sterne da schön!/Zu Tanz und Reigen/In Laub und Zweigen,/Der gold'nen sammeln sich mehr,/Statt Frucht ein Sternenheer/Im Lorbeerbaum.")
[111] A feature which also connects her (importantly – cf. Joyce) with the Virgin Mary, a point made by M. Owen Lee: "Some Metaphors in the Text of *Die Meistersinger*" (in *Wagner in Retrospect* (1987), p 67).
[112] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III iv, ll 43-72 ("Weilten die Sterne/Im lieblichen Tanz?/So licht und klar/Im Lockenhaar,/Vor allen Frauen/Hehr zu schauen,/Lag ihr mit zartem Glanz/Ein Sternenkranz!/Wunder ob Wunder/Nun bieten sich dar:/Zwiefachen Tag/Ich grüßen mag;/Denn, gleich zwei'n Sonnen/reinster Wonnen,/Der hehrsten Augen Paar/Nahm' ich da wahr./Huldreichstes Bild,/Dem ich zu nahen/Mich erkühnt!/Den Kranz, von zweier Sonnen Strahl/Zugleich geblichen und ergrünt,/Minnig und mild/Sie flocht ihn um das Haupt dem Gemahl:/Dort Huldgeboren,/Nun Ruhmerkoren,/Gießt paradiesische Lust/Sie in des Dichter's Brust/Im Liebestraum!")
[113] Ibid., ll 217-29 ("Morgenlich leuchtend/Im rosigen Schein,/Von Blüth' und Duft/Geschwellt die Luft,/Voll aller Wonnen/Nie ersonnen,/ein Garten lud mich ein,/Dort unter einem Wunderbaum,/Von Früchten reich behangen,/Zu schau'n in sel'gem Liebestraum,/Was höchstem Lustverlangen/Erfüllung kühn verhieß,/Das schönste Weib:/Eva im Paradies!")
[114] The names of both Walther and Eva were only added when Wagner came to compose the final version of his libretto. In the revised prose draft of 1861, they are still "Konrad" and Emma", whereas in the original 1845 draft, they had merely been "The Young Man" and "The Beloved". In Robert Rayner's *Wagner and*Die Meistersinger (1940), essentially a study of the opera's genesis, we are told that Wagner chose the name Walther when he "came to realise how his hero reincarnated the personality of Walther von der Vogelweide" (p 73). The change from "Emma" to "Eva", on the other hand, "must have been connected with the adoption of a new subject for the Cobbler's Song in Act II [which] was developed from some semi-humorous verses by the historical Sachs, relating how Eve had to take to shoes to protect her feet against the sharp stones which she encountered after her expulsion from Paradise. . . . Realising how much point would be added to the scene if his heroine, who overhears the song, were to hear her own name mentioned in it, [Wagner] must have adopted that name for her" (pp 73-74). Clearly, this explanation is insufficient, since, if that had been Wagner's only intention, another name would have sufficed just as well. What actually prompted the particular choice of "Eva" can only have been the growing importance of the Paradise theme.
In addition, Rayner quotes a letter of Wagner's to Mathilde Wesendonck, which provides a further clue that the allusions are not red herrings but an integral part of the work. Enclosing a copy of the Cobbler's

Song, Wagner comments "It's an extraordinary work. The old draft was of little use – practically none. One must have been in Paradise to discover the hidden meanings that lurk in such a thing" (p 83).
It is also worth noting that the original idea for the Prize Song was also quite different from the finished version. As Rayner explains, it concerned "the wandering forth of a noble youth in search of love and beauty. . . . As Wagner's grasp on the implications of his drama strengthened there dawned on his mind the idea of associating the Beloved with the Muse of Song – Paradise with Parnassus; and he shaped a revised version of the Prize Song with this as its theme" (pp 91-92).

[115] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, v, ll 236-48 ("Abendlich dämmernd/Umschloß mich die Nacht;/Auf steilem Pfad/War ich genaht/Zu einer Quelle/Reiner Welle,/Die lockend mir gelacht:/Dort unter einer Lorbeerbaum,/Von Sternen hell durchschienen,/Ich schaut' im wachen Dichtertraum,/Von heilig holden Mienen,/Mich netzend mit dem edlen Naß,/Das hehrste Weib,/Die Muse des Parnaß!")

[116] Ibid., ll 255-71 ("Huldreichster Tag,/Dem ich aus Dichter's Traum erwacht!/Das ich erträumt,/Das Paradies,/In himmlisch neu verklärter Pracht,/Hell vor mir lag,/Dahin lachend nun der Quell/Den Pfad mir wies;/Die dort geboren,/Mein Herz erkoren,/Der Erde lieblichstes Bild,/Als Muse mir geweiht,/So heilig ernst als mild,/Ward kühn von mir gefreit;/Am lichten Tag der Sonnen,/Durch Sanges Sieg gewonnen/Parnaß und Paradies!")

[117] Cf. Hohendahl, p 43: "Nuremberg suggests a lost *Heimat* that possibly never existed".

[118] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, i, ll 104-7 ("Wie friedsam treuer Sitten,/Getrost in That und Werk,/Liegt nicht in Deutschland's Mitten/Mein liebes Nürnberg!")

[119] This last point, however, is less apparent in the completed opera than the earlier sketches. It survives in Wagner's inclusion of the historical Sach's most famous poem "Die wittembergisch Nachtigall" ("The Nightingale of Wittemberg"), written in praise of Luther, and revived in the opera as a Lutheran chorale that obviously celebrates the values of Northern Protestant folk culture.

[120] Cf. Tanner: "[A]rt is an illusion, like everything else . . . but it is a conscious illusion" (p 161); "Sachs has realised that everything is "Wahn", that there is no getting round it or beyond it. So if there is to be positive value in the world, as well as ineliminable evil, that will be by ingenious manipulation of illusion, not by its replacement by truth, or reality. Optimism can only, but it can, be cultivated within the framework of pessimism" (p 164). Indeed, one can go further than this. Inasmuch as Wagner is present in Sachs as well as Walther (and it is evident that he is), the inevitable logical implication of the "Wahn" monologue is as follows: the sorrow of the world's illusion (that Wagner learned of from Schopenhauer) can only be healed by the "ingenious manipulation of illusion" that is offered by Wagner's works, and specifically by *Die Meistersinger*, with its illusory portrayal of a world filled with joy, love, warmth and understanding. Once again, Wagner takes it upon himself to "prove" he is the Messiah.

[121] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, ii, 11-14 ("Glaubt mir, des Menchen wahrster Wahn/Wird ihm im Traume aufgethan:/All' Dichtkunst und Poeterei/Ist nichts, als Wahrtraumdeuterei").

[122] Ibid., ll 73-80 ("Das waren hochbedürft'ge Meister,/Von Lebensmüh' bedrängte Geister:/In ihrer Nöthen Wildniß,/Sie schufen sich ein Bildniß,/Daß ihnen bliebe/Der Jugendliebe/Ein Angendenken, klar und fest,/D'ran sich der Lenz erkennen läßt").

[123] Cf. Hohendahl: "[*Die Meistersinger*'s] new configuration [of art and politics] is predicated on the New Testament, specifically on the role of St. John the Baptist, whose patron's day is celebrated on the 24th of June. Hans Sachs, in the role of the Baptist, points to the Messiah. These unmistakeably religious echoes clearly serve to legitimize the future in terms of the old and established." ("Reworking History", p 57.)

[124] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, iv, stage direction.

[125] Ibid. I, i, ll 1-10 ("Da zu dir der Heiland kam,/Willig deine Taufe nahm,/Weihte sich dem Opfertod,/Gab er uns des Heil's Gebot,/Daß wir durch sein' Tauf' uns weih'n,/Seines Opfers werth zu sein./Edler Täufer!/Christ's Vorläufer!/Nimm uns gnädig an,/Dort am Fluß Jordan.")

[126] Ibid., iii, l 103 ("Nun schuf mich Gott zum reichen Mann").

[127] Strictly speaking, these things are not entirely absent from the work; the riot scene at the end of Act II, for example, demonstrates a high point of social disorder, while Sachs's "Wahn" monologue reveals a very depressing insight into human nature. Nonetheless, the overwhelmingly dominant mood of the work remains one of untroubled joy.

[128] Several insights regarding this "baptism" theme in the opera are made in the brief but excellent essay by M. Owen Lee, "Some Metaphors in the Text of *Die Meistersinger*" (cited above; see note 111, p 139). Most significantly, he relates it to "Wahn" (folly or illusion – the subject of Sachs's most famous monologue). After explaining that St John's Day was celebrated at midsummer, a time traditionally associated with the free interplay of good and evil spirits and the madness of midsummer night's dreams (such as that in which Walther's song is first conceived), he goes on: "*Wahn* – the irrational, the potentially destructive side of the unconscious – is also the source of artistic creation. . . . What Wagner

calls *Wahn*, traditional Christianity (the metaphorical world of *Die Meistersinger*) has been (sic) called the effect of Original Sin. It is right that baptism be the central symbol in the opera, for it is the purpose of baptism to wash away the evil effects of Original Sin and give the soul the new life of grace. In Wagner's terms, it is the purpose of art to free us from the destructive effects of *Wahn* and release its creative potential within us" (p 68).

[129] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, ii, ll 107-8 ("Ein Täubschen zeigt ihm wohl das Nest,/Darin sein Junker träumt").

[130] A point made by Ernest Newman, although he does not attribute any deeper significance to the reference: "[I]n the poem of the Morning Dream in its original (and later discarded) form the Beloved had appeared to the knight, in his dream, as a dove" (*Wagner Nights*, p 392).

[131] See note, p 54.

[132] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, v, ll 269 (see note 116); 272 ("Gewiegt wie in den schönsten Traum").

[133] Ibid. II, v, ll 73 ("Lobet Gott, den Herrn!")

[134] Ibid. I, iii, ll 327-30 ("Was heilig mir,/Der Liebe Panier,/Schwing' und sing' ich, mir zu Hoff'!"/"Das gilt uns weltlich.")

[135] The Tree of Life, significantly, is the *other* forbidden tree in Eden – not the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that Eve was tempted to plunder. Furthermore, as the biblical account makes abundantly clear, God's stated reason for evicting the disobedient pair is not so much a punishment for their original crime as a preventative measure to ensure they don't repeat it: "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (*Genesis* 3, 22-23). Quite apart from the vexed question of what "one of us" portends, this motive makes God sound rather more jealous of His position than is traditionally accepted, suggesting a curious parallel with Zeus forbidding Prometheus to give man the gift of fire. Of course, both myths are quite strongly related, with Prometheus functioning as a benevolent counterpart to Lucifer. Furthermore, this relationship is implicit in Joyce's *Portrait*, where Lucifer (overtly) and Prometheus (covertly) are both among the mythic personae that inform the hero's personality. The Prometheus myth, moreover, can also be traced in Brünnhilde's rebellion against Wotan (in *Die Walküre*) and her subsequent punishment, with Siegfried as her deliverer corresponding to Hercules (both of whom can in turn be interpreted as Christ-figures). The ramifications of such correspondences between multiple myths and their modern adaptations would seem to be endless, and it would obviously be implausible to pursue them all here. However, as far as our examination of *Die Meistersinger* is concerned, the following points may be taken into consideration:

Traditional Christian exegesis has it that, since God cannot be jealous or wrong or unjustly vengeful, his denying man the right to live forever in fact conceals a greater good. The Tree of Life is seen to correspond directly to the Tree of Death, the Cross, which through Christ's sacrifice becomes the Tree of Life Everlasting, its fruit the body and blood of Christ present in the Eucharistic bread and wine. That Wagner makes Walther refer directly to the Tree of Life (Lebensbaum) and *not* the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, suggests that his role is not that of Adam after all but of the Second Adam, Christ. This, as our analysis of the opera has shown, is already hinted at by numerous other details in both the text and the music. The essential point, once again, is that the gift the Artist-Hero offers mankind is not the awakening of consciousness (which we have already possessed since the time of the original Fall) but the transfiguration of earthly life into a kind of time-transcending Paradise.

[136] See note 120, p 140.

[137] See, for example, the references to Magee (note 5, p 42), Walter (note 6, pp 42-43) and Tanner (note 25, p 43).

[138] The question to what extent Stephen does represent the young Joyce, before his public recognition, obviously lies outset the ambit of this discussion. *Ulysses* is famously riddled with self-reflexive comments that refer to the work Stephen is going to write, most notably in the "Scylla and Charybdis" and "Oxen of the Sun" chapters.

[139] Cf. Carlyle, quoted above (p 56).

[140] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 235.

[141] Ibid.

[142] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, ii, l 5 ("Ich hatt' einen wunderschönen Traum").

[143] See note 1, p 54.

[144] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 186.

[145] Ibid., pp 235-36 .

[146] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* III, ii, l 92-94 ("Ist mir's als ob verwischt er wär'."/"Grad' nehmt die Dichtkunst jetzt zur Hand:/Mancher durch sie das Verlorner fand.")
[147] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 236.
[148] Features which become much more prominent in *Ulysses*, for example in Buck Mulligan's uproarious "Ballad of Joking Jesus", p 22.
[149] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 236.
[150] Ibid., p 187.
[151] Ibid., p 236.
[152] The same process can be detected time and again in Wagner's operas.
[153] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 236.
[154] Ibid. (This burning up of the world recalls the catastrophe of *Götterdämmerung*, itself but one aspect of the recurrent Wagnerian concept of love-death or transfiguration. The above quotation demonstrates very clearly an understanding of this process as a merging with the "eternal feminine".)
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., pp 236-37.
[159] Ibid., p 237.
[160] Ibid. This short passage, furthermore, suggests a composite of allusions to several of the operas we have already considered. The twittering birds are familiar from *Siegfried* (where they also serve as guides to the sleeping Valkyrie). At the same time, they recall the recurrent imagery of birdsong in *Die Meistersinger*, as in Walther's Act I Trial Song for example, in which he claims to have learned the art of singing from the voices of birds in springtime. The faint bells, on the other hand, (earlier linked to the girl on the beach) recall those in *Tannhäuser*, where they accompany the hero's release from the Venusberg. Finally, the contrast between the "dull white light" of the dawn and the mystical "roselight" in Stephen's heart, seems to invite comparison with *Tristan*, in which the illusions of the waking world are placed in irreconcilable conflict with the inner vision of the *Liebesnacht*. Taken as a whole, this web of subtle allusions demonstrates both the sophistication of Joyce's technique and his evident knowledge of the various music-dramas and the connections between them.
[161] Ibid., p 238.
[162] Ibid.
[163] *Ulysses*, p 563.
[164] Ibid., p 1.
[165] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 238; my emphasis. It has already been shown that Wagner makes subtle use of the image of a dove to link Eva symbolically with the inspiring influence of the Holy Ghost (see pp 113-14). Whether or not Joyce does the same, it can be conclusively shown that Stephen's "muse" is also likened (on a number of occasions) either to a bird in general or else specifically to a dove. It is most unlikely that this similarity is coincidental, particularly as there are so many other pertinent references to the opera that we have already noted. On the occasion that Stephen sees the girl on the beach, she is immediately described in birdlike terms:
"She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips, where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove" (pp 185-86).
This "dove" does not appear to be that of the Holy Spirit (since it is "dark-plumaged") and the function of the image seems simply to be that of accenting the wild and "wilful" nature of the girl. However, since Wagner's Eva is also likened to a dove and since the girl in each case becomes the aspiring poet's muse, this too is presumably intentional.
[166] Ibid., p 239.
[167] Ibid., p 240.
[168] Ibid.
[169] See p 69.
[170] See, for example, Tennyson's version, referred to in note 36, p 137.
[171] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 242.
[172] Here again, there is a possible allusion to Wagner's Siegfried, this time with the image of the girl's eyes "opening to his" suggesting his awakening of Brünnhilde.
[173] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 242.

[174] Ibid., p 243.
[175] The matter of Stephen's and Walther's is further complicated by the fact, mentioned earlier, that both Walther von Stolzing and Siegfried (among other Wagnerian heroes, most notably Parsifal) share certain attributes, so that, by alluding to each of them singly, Joyce naturally recalls features common to both.
[176] He usually does this in a half mocking manner. In "Proteus", for example, he reverses the wording of the Apostles' Creed: "Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten. . . . From before the ages He willed me and now may not will me away or ever. A *lex eterna* stays about him. Is that then the divine substance wherein Father and Son are consubstantial?" (*Ulysses*, pp 46-47). Nonetheless there is an underlying seriousness, as if Stephen considers his vocation qualifies him for Messianic status. By contrast, when Mulligan also assumes the role of Jesus in places (e.g. "Mulligan is stripped of his garments", ibid., p 19), it is entirely light-hearted, but Mulligan is a mocker and Stephen considers him a usurper of his own rightful "kingship".
[177] Several complex theological parallels are noted, in addition, by Blamires in *The Bloomsday Book* (1983).
[178] Stephen thinks of him as "the child of exhausted loins . . . . those of Elizabeth and Zachary" and so concludes "[t]hen he is the precursor" (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 270). He does not say "*my* precursor" but then he hardly needs to. The sweeping tone is sufficient, coupled with the fact that if Stephen's friend *is* the precursor at that particular historical period then some other living individual must be the ascendant Messiah – and Stephen himself is all too clearly the only contender. The claim is finally justified by his (Wagnerian) determination to save his people through his art.
[179] Epstein notes "in medieval illustrations of the psalms he is often painted as Christ in majesty with the dove of the Holy Spirit descending on his head" (*The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus* (1971), p 118).
[180] Schumann, for example, unofficially dubbed himself and those who shared his Romantic aspirations, the *Davidsbündler* (the Brotherhood of David).
[181] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* I, i, ll 81-84.
[182] *The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus*, p 117.
[183] Ibid., p 124.
[184] Ibid., p 127.
[185] See note 180, above.
[186] *The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus*, p 127.
[187] Ibid., pp 127-28.
[188] Ibid., p 128.
[189] Epstein also makes a point of mentioning the importance (for Joyce) of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, the *Portrait*'s ultimate model as a *bildungsroman*. Goethe here uses David in the same way Schumann does, as "the inspiration of the romantic artist, and his ally against the Philistines" (ibid., p 129). Goethe is also an obvious source for Wagner, and Joyce can be considered to receive his influence both directly and indirectly, via Wagner.
[190] Ibid., p 163.
[191] *Götterdämmerung* II, v, ll 77-80 ("Wär' ich gerecht, alles Blut der Welt/Büßte mir nicht eure Schuld!/Doch des einen Tod taugt mir für alle:/Siegfried falle zur Sühne für sich und euch!")
[192] See pp 36-37.
[193] The nature of this theme and Wagner's treatment of it are considered by many, regardless of personal belief, as distasteful, embarrassing, sickly or even perverse.
[194] *Parsifal* (1912) I, iii, ll 52-58; 62-69 ("[Es e]rglüht mit leuchtender Gewalt/Durchzückt von seligsten Genußes Schmerz/Des heiligsten Blutes Quell/Fühl ich sich giesen in mein Herz:/Des eignen sündigen Blutes Gewell'/In wahnsinniger Flucht/Muß mir zurück dann fließen. . . ./Daraus es nun strömt hervor/Hier durch die Wunde/Der Seinen gleich, geschlagen/Von des selben Speeres Streich/Der dort dem Erlöser die Wunde stach/Aus der mit blut'gen Thränen/Der Göttliche weint' ob der Menschheit Schmach/In Mitleids heiligem Sehnen").
[195] In that it proposes denial rather than fulfilment of sexual desire as a means of attaining Nirvana (a point to be considered more fully in Chapter V, see especially p 209).
[196] See p 39.
[197] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 183.
[198] Ibid., p 162.
[199] *Parsifal* III, iii, stage direction. In the context of Wagner's works as a whole, this final statement seems calculated to produce the effect of an irrefutable conclusion given added weight by the accummulated bulk of the premises on which it is based. Inasmuch as *Parsifal* represents a mirror-image (in diffferent senses) of both *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* (see above, p 134), the former in that it celebrates the denial rather than the fulfilment of passion, the latter in that it presents a sacred rather

than a secular version of the Messiah legend; and insofar as it is the only logical extension of the *Ring* (in that the sheer grandeur and epic sweep of the cycle can only feasibly be outdone or surpassed by the kind of transcendent sublimity that the Buhnenweihfestspiel (or "sacred stage festival drama" as Wagner himself attempted to categorise *Parsifal*) offers its audience. By thus ending his career by saying, in effect, "I am my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased", Wagner brings to a logical conclusion the sequence of steps through which he had dramatised his life from the time of *Der fliegende Holländer*, with a seriousness and daring that can be interpreted as either sublime or ridiculous, depending on one's frame of mind, but scarcely anything else in between.

Chapter IV

"A SWORD MY FATHER DID PLEDGE ME"

It is well known that the father-son relationship is one of the recurring obsessions in Joyce's fiction. In the *Portrait*, it is clearly in evidence from the very beginning and it loses no time in acquiring metaphysical and theological overtones. To begin with, Stephen, as "baby tuckoo"[1] (a childish approximation of cuckoo), is too large to fit comfortably in his parental nest. That his father "looked at him through a glass"[2] echoes St Paul's "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."[3] That this frequently quoted verse concludes "now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known",[4] is surely significant, in that Stephen's initial glimpse of his "father" – through the "dark glass" of his biological father – prefigures the great metaphysical quest of the novel – and of its still greater sequel – that of finding and coming to "know" the true father even as he is known by him.

As the novel progresses, it is more and more strongly suggested that Simon Dedalus and everything that is associated with him – "Irishness" in particular – does not merit the paternal status he tries to impose on the hero. In response to this, Stephen begins both to defy the authoritarian father figures he is expected to venerate, thus asserting his own independence, and, paradoxically, to seek out surrogate fathers to aid and strengthen him in his quest.[5] The former comprises both the British Empire and the (as yet unrealised) Irish free state, as well as (scarcely) less concrete abstractions such as the idea of "manliness" in general; the latter a somewhat more complex list. As Christ, the eternal Son, Stephen seeks the Father in an ideal, spiritual guise. As Hamlet (a role not fully explored until *Ulysses*), he identifies himself with a dispossessed son whose father is doubly hard to locate in that he is an insubstantial phantom and may even be an impostor.[6] As Icarus, he seeks to emulate, become and (thus) supplant the great artist-father. The ultimate underlying meaning of this last (central) identification, strongly implied in *Ulysses*, is that the semi-autobiographical figure of Stephen is meant to suggest the author's own quest for artistic independence from such inescapable patriarchs as Shakespeare, Dante

and Homer (and, it might be argued, Wagner). The question of what Stephen represents as Siegfried (and other Wagnerian heroes) in relation to this overarching theme of paternity must now provide, at least in part, the focus of this chapter.

However, insofar as Leopold Bloom is the figure most widely assumed to represent the father Stephen eventually comes to accept, attention must first be paid to his own characterisation in terms of Wagnerian models.

The Wanderer as Artist: The Flying Dutchman and Leopold Bloom

The previous chapter noted some slight similarities between Stephen and Wagner's Flying Dutchman. However, as has been most fully explored to date by Martin in *Joyce and Wagner*, there are much stronger and more overt allusions made in *Ulysses* to connect this figure with Bloom. In fact, this particular connection rivals that of Stephen and Siegfried in its primacy and the central importance it has in determining the entire Wagnerian dimension of the text. It could be realistically argued, moreover, that Joyce deliberately associates the novel's two chief male characters with these two Wagner heroes in particular, because they are the most obvious exemplars of the two heroic types that predominate in his operas: the innocent, world-redeeming, revolutionary type (Siegfried) and the tragic, doomed, redemption-seeking type (the Dutchman).

Whether or not this is the case, there is no question of Bloom's affinity with the Dutchman. It is signalled by several notable references in the text, beginning in the climactic and hallucinatory "Circe" episode, in which Bloom, imagining himself as a great social reformer, gives an impassioned speech about the evils of materialism, in which he refers first to "the music of the future" and then, in the same breath, to

> our buccaneering Vanderdeckens in their phantom ship of finance . . . . These flying Dutchmen or lying Dutchmen as they recline upon their upholstered poop, casting dice, what reck they? Machines is their cry, their chimera, their panacea. Laboursaving

> apparatuses, supplanters, bug-bears, manufactured monsters for mutual murder, hideous hobgoblins produced by a horde of capitalistic lusts upon our prostituted labour.[7]

Like much of this nightmarish episode, this is a piece of pure fantasy, in which Bloom's secret desires and ambitions, good or ill, are realised and given graphic expression. At this point, however, he is characterised as a third-rate politician whose high-blown rhetoric consists only of jumbled, rather tacky sounding metaphors. Exactly how unscrupulous entrepreneurs can be said to resemble flying Dutchmen is uncertain. There is also considerable irony in Bloom's being made to contradict himself within the course of a few lines. He has in fact shown himself to be all in favour of "laboursaving apparatuses", having proposed running a tramline from the cattlemarket to the river.

As in the opera itself, there is a recurrent Dutchman motif in *Ulysses*. Furness refers to this complex of allusions, pointing out that it provides "a gloomy parallel to the wanderings of Ulysses",[8] while DiGaetani, Stoddard Martin and especially Timothy Martin make more detailed comments upon it. Stoddard Martin points out that Bloom resembles the Dutchman in wearing black and in being the archetype of the Wandering Jew, compares his resigned reaction to Molly's infidelity with the Dutchman's distrust of Senta's faithfulness, and concludes that Bloom "is Wagner's hero with the devils of paranoia, self-pity and despair substantially exorcized".[9] DiGaetani uncovers more allusions, and, most importantly, identifies the old sailor (W. B. Murphy)[10] in the "Eumaeus" episode as a comic version of the Dutchman, for example in his seven-year separation from his wife.[11] By far the most detailed commentary, however, is that provided in the entire chapter devoted to the subject in Timothy Martin's study. He begins by attributing to Wagner the intention of portraying himself in the opera in a way that immediately suggests Stephen Dedalus:

> In comparing himself to the Wandering Jew and his nautical cousin, Wagner was expressing a Romantic notion of the artist as "cursed" with superior sensitivity and "exiled" by his refusal to conform to artistic and moral standards.[12]

He also makes a clear case for Joyce's awareness of Wagner's intentions:

> [In *A Communication to my Friends*, Joyce] would have read of Wagner's identification of the Dutchman with the Wandering Jew, of the relationship of both figures with Odysseus, and of the circumstances surrounding the opera's composition, which would have invited his empathy.[13]

Having established this, he then goes on to repeat (albeit in greater detail) many of the points first made by DiGaetani, notably that concerning the old sailor of "Eumaeus":

> Murphy is midway between the Dutchman and his nautical cousin Odysseus: the prior existence of a wife from whom he has been absent many years parallels the *Odyssey*, and, as Senta's Ballad tells us, the seven year period matches the Dutchman's term at sea before he can come ashore to seek a woman.[14]

At the point both critics refer to in the novel, Bloom has taken Stephen to a cabman's shelter to recover from his recent misadventure. There, they encounter the said Murphy, a greying, redbearded sailor, who entertains anyone who will listen with rather spurious tales of the things he claims to have seen and done. This character's relationship to Wagner's hero is explicitly noted by Bloom, whom he puts in mind of a certain

> Ludwig, *alias* Ledwidge, when he occupied the boards of the Gaiety . . . in the *Flying Dutchman*, a stupendous success, and his host of admirers came in large numbers, everyone simply flocking to hear him though ships of any sort, phantom or the reverse, on the stage usually fell a bit flat as also did trains.[15]

This resemblance is clearly not coincidental. Although Bloom himself is probably only thinking in terms of outward appearance, at a deeper level it reinforces a rich symbolic connection between the sailor and Wagner's Dutchman. That is, although the former is a comic rather than a tragic figure (occasionally bordering on the ludicrous, in fact), he has also spent an indefinite time at sea, having, as he puts it "circumnavigated a bit since I first joined on".[16] Also, though evidently not a Dutchman himself, he is similarly something of a stranger: "[he] scarcely seemed to be a Dublin resident".[17] Indeed, his place of origin

remains uncertain, thereby adding to his characterisation as a rootless wanderer, though he claims at one point to hail from Carrigaloe, saying "My little woman's down there. She's waiting for me, I know. . . . She's my own true wife I haven't seen for seven years now, sailing about."[18] Bloom then wonders how many stories there are on this age-old theme of searching "[a]cross the world for a wife".[19] He thinks of Rip van Winkel for one, but the two most obvious cases do not occur to him, though Joyce is clearly drawing attention to them through his reference to this ubiquitous theme. They are, of course, the Flying Dutchman and Ulysses himself. Evidently, the reader is being invited to take note of the similarities between the two. After all, one of the main themes of the novel is that most stories are essentially retellings of one another. If Ulysses is one famous wanderer of legend who had to journey by sea for many years before finding his home and his faithful wife, then the Flying Dutchman is another.[20] Bloom, then, as a recreation of Ulysses (albeit a comic one), inevitably embodies certain characteristics of the Dutchman as well, as this encounter with the sailor reminds us.[21] At this stage, Bloom goes on to envisage a scenario in which the returning wayfarer finds his place taken by another: "No chair for father. Boo! The wind!",[22] suggesting something of the Dutchman's disappointment in Act III of the opera, when he discovers that Senta already has a sweetheart (as well as the onomatopoeic phrase from Senta's ballad of the Dutchman in Act II: "Hui! How roars the wind!"[23])

In addition to this, there are innumerable references throughout the text to ships, sailing and homeless wanderers that further serve as indicators of Bloom's figurative persona. As considered in the previous chapter, moreover, many of these references are also linked to Stephen and can even be traced back as far as the *Portrait*. The most significant of these, however, is that noted at the close of the "Proteus" episode, when Stephen, unknowingly, sees the ship that brings W. B. Murphy into harbour.[24] Long after this (in "The Lestrygonians") and in a seemingly unrelated incident, Bloom throws a crumpled YMCA pamphlet (announcing the coming of Elijah) into the river, whereupon it starts on a mock-heroic journey of its own, bobbing aimlessly through Dublin's docklands:

> Elijah, skiff, light crumpled throwaway, sailed eastwards by flanks of ships and trawlers, amid an archipelago of corks, beyond new Wapping street past Benson's ferry, and by the three-masted schooner *Rosevean* from Bridgwater with bricks.[25]

Some four hundred pages later, it is revealed that the ship first seen by Stephen, and which this "Elijah" sequence later links to Bloom, is the same which, that very day, has brought the sailor of "Eumaeus" into port: "We come up this morning eleven o'clock. The threemaster *Rosevean* from Bridgwater with bricks. I shipped to get over. Paid off this afternoon".[26]

Again like the Dutchman in Wagner's opera, then, Murphy has just ended a period at sea, but there is also considerable significance in the fact that the pamphlet discarded by Bloom sailed past the same ship earlier that day, since this very pamphlet (and the information it contains) relates to another of Bloom's recurrent personae, the prophet Elijah. He is also a wanderer, of course, although he differs from the others in that he has a religious mission, travelling from town to town, preaching the kingdom of God. Bloom, though entirely secular, also spreads a message of peace and universal brotherhood. He continually demonstrates, in his thoughts and actions alike, kindness and compassion towards all living things. He is always courteous, good-tempered and charitable. His discarded "Elijah is coming" pamphlet, then, comes to represent his symbolic role as a returning saviour. The fact that it is described as a boat coming into the harbour links it more closely to the motif of Ulysses' homecoming, and the fact that it bypasses the vessel that brings the old sailor into port serves as a reminder that both he and Bloom are representatives of the same type, combining the features of Elijah, Ulysses, Rip van Winkel and Wagner's Flying Dutchman. With quite remarkable skill and attention to detail, Joyce weaves all these disparate elements into a unified and cohesive whole.

There is yet another archetypal wanderer with whom Bloom is associated, moreover, and that is the Wandering Jew. This in turn strengthens his connection to the Dutchman – whom Wagner referred to as an "Ahasuerus of the sea".[27] The resemblance is indeed clear. Ahasuerus, having mocked Christ on the way to His crucifixion, is condemned to roam the earth until the Day of Judgement. The Dutchman, having made a vain oath to

round the Cape in the teeth of a gale, is cursed by the devil to follow a similar fate, only at sea. Wagner's anti-Semitism is well known, but it is not usually remembered that he identified personally, through the hero of this opera, with a centuries old Jewish stereotype, one that he closely associated with that sense of a fallen, cursed or doomed state of existence so prevalent in his operas. The same themes of homelessness, exile and alienation, of the curse of being outcast, condemned to an eternity of rootless wandering over the face of the earth and shunned by all with whom one comes into contact, are clearly present in *Ulysses* as well.[28]

There are added details, furthermore, that contribute still more strongly to the Wagnerian aspect of the old sailor in "Eumaeus". Some of these are rather tenuous, but, given the overall context, probably not accidental. One such is the remark that the sailor preferred to drink "good old Hollands and water".[29] Another is his comment, "I hate roaming about".[30] Also suggestive are Bloom's thought, "somebody or other had to sail on it and fly in the face of providence",[31] references to a "Norwegian captain"[32] and the "wreck of that illfated Norwegian barque",[33] and the information that

> He [the sailor] had doubled the Cape a few odd times and weathered a monsoon, a kind of wind, in the China seas and through all those perils of the deep there was one thing, he declared, stood to him, or words to that effect, a pious medal he had that saved him.[34]

This in particular recalls once more the Dutchman's own ill-fated attempt to round the Cape, his continual exposure ever since to such "perils of the deep" as violent tempests, sudden reefs and attacks by pirates, all of which threaten to destroy him (as he in fact desires) and yet always spare him so that he may be forced to endure still more. He also has one thing that saves him, not a medal but his pious belief in the angel of mercy who has promised to deliver him and who is none other than the faithful beloved he seeks – in Joyce paralleled by the figure of the wife waiting at home. This theme however must wait until Chapter V to be explored in full.[35]

A more pressing question at this stage of the argument is whether there is any relationship between the Flying Dutchman and Siegfried, apart from the stated one of their representing the two chief types of Wagner hero. Initially, the answer would seem to be that there is not. How then is the relationship between Bloom and Stephen affected by their identification with these figures? Is it entirely a matter of coincidence that both are from the Wagnerian canon? Or is there, as in the Ulysses-Telemachus partnering, a link between them?

One clue is provided by the fact that Stephen is also (however cursorily) likened to the Dutchman. This indeed is unsurprising, since it is obvious to readers of *Ulysses* that Bloom and Stephen have much in common. It has been shown that Stephen shares with the Dutchman his "artistic" isolation; but if he is the archetypal artist, then Bloom, the archetypal wanderer, has "a touch of the artist about [him]".[36] As far as the father-son relationship is concerned, however, it is appropriate that the Dutchman, a *very* ancient mariner, is closer to Bloom, the older man. The Dutchman, moreover, laments the fact that he has neither wife nor *child*, and Bloom's chief regret is that he is, in reality, sonless. On the other hand, if one considers Stephen as a Dutchman-like figure, Bloom plays a role similar to Daland in the opera: the prospective father-in-law. In "Ithaca", Bloom briefly considers the prospect of "a permanent eventuality of reconciliatory union between a schoolfellow and a jew's daughter".[37] Such a union, he imagines, would "save" Stephen from his dissolute lifestyle. He himself would benefit from the proximity of educated company. In the opera, conversely, Daland agrees to offer the Dutchman his daughter in exchange for his vast wealth. If there is a connection here, it prefigures the treatment of character in *Finnegans Wake*, where individual figures continually swap roles and merge with one another.

In general, "fatherly" roles do not occur significantly in the work of the younger Wagner (before the *Ring*, that is). The most that could be said is that Bloom bears a faint resemblance to the more "brotherly" figure of Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, in that his sober and courteous manner counterbalances the wilful debauchery of the artist-hero. In seeking more convincing prototypes for the Stephen-Bloom relationship in Wagner, however, one

is obliged to move on to the mature music-dramas of the tetralogy itself and the works that follow it.

The Sorrowful God: Wotan and Leopold Bloom

As discussed in the previous chapter, Siegfried is a natural model for Stephen as revolutionary, Nietzschean artist-hero in that he embodies an ideal of freedom and a refusal to serve any laws but those of nature.[38] Furthermore, it is already implicit that this struggle for freedom is closely bound up with the conflict of generations, since Siegfried's ultimate act of defiance (and the one most closely echoed by Stephen in *Ulysses*) is his breaking of Wotan's spear, the supreme symbol of patriarchal authority and dominance. However, this is only one instance of an elaborately developed theme in Wagner that informs the texts of Joyce's novels. In order to establish just how this happens, it will first be necessary to consider the relationships in the *Ring* in more detail.

Wotan and Siegfried are quite clearly the two chief male figures of the cycle and, in an archetypal sense, embody the attributes of Father and Son. Wotan, like the God of the Old Testament, is a stern and domineering figure, capable of ruthlessness and even violence, and his powerful presence looms over the whole cycle, even in *Götterdämmerung* when he no longer appears in person. He is also a multi-faceted figure, combining the attributes of god-king, warrior, statesman, magician and wanderer. He travels between worlds, assumes various guises during the course of the cycle, including those of Walvater (the war-god, "Father of Battles"), Wälse (the quasi-mortal progenitor of the Volsungs), Wolfe (a half-savage wild-man of the woods) and Wanderer (a travelling sage and riddle-master) and ultimately becomes the joyful acceptor of his own spectacular downfall and that of the world he has helped to shape.

Siegfried, on the other hand, is both a Christ-figure (in that his undeserved death is symbolically necessary in order to purge the world of the evil that was initiated by Wotan's and Alberich's primal sins) and, in direct opposition to the gloomy, brooding figure of

Wotan, the incarnation of a pagan sun-god, Balder or, in the manner of his death, Tammuz-Adonis.

It should be remembered, however, that Wotan and Siegfried are not father and son at all – but grandfather and grandson. This in itself would not be important were it not for the attention it draws to the intermediary generation, represented by Siegmund. There are thus three main father-son pairs: the overarching, metaphorical one of Wotan-Siegfried and the two actual ones of Wotan-Siegmund and Siegmund-Siegfried. All three can be seen to throw some light on the characterisation of Stephen Dedalus.

Siegmund lacks the mythic dimension accorded to both his father and his son. He is also a far more straightforwardly likeable character than either, since (if one excludes incest – and Wagner's dramaturgy plainly invites us to do so) his actions are all entirely honorable. He remains steadfastly loyal, courageous and selfless, even in the face of death. For this reason, audiences are more likely to identify with him than with his more successful but morally ambiguous son. What Siegfried represents at the allegorical level is an impossibly idealised figure, the perfectly free "man of the future", whereas Siegmund stands for the more realistic type of social-revolutionary who fights furiously against the system but without success. That Wagner intended such a parallel is clear from the close patterning of the plots of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, in terms of which all Siegfried's triumphs can be seen as more successful versions of his father's efforts.[39] In addition, this difference can also be sensed in the contrasting temperaments of the heroes. Siegfried gives the impression of always being irrepressibly joyful and vigorous. Siegmund, on the other hand, is an altogether more sober character. Whereas Siegfried, as hunter, explodes onto the scene with the bear he has captured, Siegmund first appears as the hunted, a wounded, exhausted and pitiful figure.

It will at once be seen from this, then, that Stephen's self-identification with Siegfried is more than a little unconvincing, since his prevailing mood of melancholy is much more in keeping with Siegmund, as is the transitory and incomplete nature of his triumphs. It

seems likely then, that Joyce's use of "Nothung" is meant to suggest a juxtaposition of both its wielders.

When we first meet Siegmund (in *Die Walküre* Act I), he has been alone and friendless for some time, the latest in a succession of Wagnerian outcasts that began with the Dutchman and Tannhäuser. He had been raised by Wotan in his mortal guise of Wälse, for the specific purpose of winning the Ring from Fafner (although this task will ultimately only be performed by Siegfried), and he has been deliberately subjected to hardships and trials and finally abandoned by him in order to toughen him. He is then led (seemingly by fate but in reality by Wotan's unseen guidance) to the hut where his long-lost sister is kept as the enslaved wife of Hunding and where Wotan has also left the Sword, driven into the ash-tree pillar, that he once promised Siegmund he would find when he needed it most. In all this, then, Siegmund is the unwitting agent of Wotan and is following a destiny that was carefully mapped out for him before he was even born. In fact, Wotan may even be said to have conceived his son intentionally for this very purpose.

In order to clarify this point, it will be helpful to go back to the closing scene of *Das Rheingold*, when the Sword motif is heard for the first time. Here, unlike the subsequent *Ring* dramas, there is no sword physically present, so that it is only with the benefit of hindsight that we are able to identify the motif at all. There can be no doubt, though, that the motif is intended to signify the Sword, as *Die Walküre* Act I makes this abundantly clear. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the single, very powerful statement of the motif in *Das Rheingold* (in which it is the last new motif to appear and where it forms something of a climax) is left unexplained until the next opera. It only becomes clear in the context of the whole that it represents Wotan's inspired realisation that he can use another to regain the Ring on his behalf, since he is prevented from doing so himself. So, from this early point in the cycle, the musical motif that is later to be connected inseparably with the weapon by which that aim is to be achieved here becomes prophetically assigned to the aim itself. Note also the driving, phallic quality of this inspiration: Wotan will deliberately use his own virility to create a free agent, who will then further his own aims by wielding the sword bequeathed to him.[40]

Unfortunately for Wotan, however, it all backfires when Fricka, in *Die Walküre* Act II, points out with merciless logic that Siegmund cannot be free since Wotan has conditioned him to behave as he does. Forced to uphold the Law, by which alone he has power, Wotan has no choice but to perform an abrupt about-face, withdrawing his aid from the son he has created, breaking the Sword he has helped him to win and abandoning him to be struck down by the vengeful Hunding.

Insofar as Wotan represents all patriarchal authority figures, be they God, Church or State, so Siegmund stands in direct opposition to him as all defiant, rebellious sons, free-thinkers and revolutionaries prominent among them. When we come to consider Joyce, the figure of Stephen Dedalus immediately invites comparison with Siegmund in that he too makes a point of defying patriarchal authority in the strongest possible terms. Just as Siegmund is prepared to die rather than submit, asserting that Hella (the underworld of Germanic mythology) may swallow him up, so Stephen, without ever actually claiming to disbelieve in Catholicism, is prepared to gamble his soul for the sake of asserting his independence against the domination of the Church:

> I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another or to leave whatever I have to leave. And I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake, and perhaps as long as eternity too.[41]

An important difference between the two works is that, in Wagner, the role of the father is clearly and absolutely embodied in Wotan, on both the literal and metaphorical levels, whereas, in Joyce, it is dispersed among a mixture of real persons and abstractions. Simon Dedalus is Stephen's father only in terms of biological fact, whereas the original Daedalus, whom Stephen attempts to claim as his ideal father at the end of the book, seems to stand for the mature artist that the young hero himself aspires to become. The implication here is that the "father" signifies a role which, by claiming it for himself, the son succeeds in taking away from its former claimant (so that, in *Ulysses*, Stephen can dismiss his biological father as "the man with my voice and my eyes").[42] While much of this is

implied so clearly by Joyce as to seem almost self-evident, it succeeds nonetheless in resisting attempts to explicate it. Once again, however, it throws up intriguing points of similarity with the plot of the *Ring*, this time in relation to Siegmund's and Stephen's parallel quests to find their fathers. Although, as remarked above, the specifics are different in each case, each hero has, in one sense or another, lost his father – Siegmund in reality, Stephen at a psychological level. Each expresses a desire to regain this missing father, is haunted by an attendant sense of abandonment and inadequacy, and is to some extent confused or mistaken about the identity of the father. In Siegmund's case, this is because he knows his father only as Wälse, a mortal warrior, and has no idea of his really being Wotan himself, the supreme god of the pantheon worshipped by the society among whom he is an outcast. In Stephen's, it is because he comes to deny Simon Dedalus's right to be called his father, associating instead that role with mythical figures and, ultimately, God the Father, essentially the same supreme figure against which both he and Siegmund are pitted in a struggle to maintain their sense of spiritual integrity. One can only conjecture as to whether it was Joyce's recognition of this inherent resemblance between the plots of his novels and Wagner's *Ring* that led him to underscore it with the sequence of "Nothung" allusions. In any event, the fact that Stephen eventually comes to find a father (of sorts) in Leopold Bloom might carry the indirect suggestion that Bloom is Wotan to his Siegmund or Siegfried. True, there are no direct parallels between Bloom and Wotan as between Stephen and Siegfried, and it seems little short of ludicrous to connect Joyce's placid, good-natured hero with the guilt-tormented deity who presides over the *Ring* cycle. The ludicrous, however, was never something Joyce shied away from, and different as Bloom and Wotan may be as *personalities*, they nonetheless fulfil similar *roles* in relation to Stephen-Siegfried, as will hopefully become more plain during what follows.

Siegmund and Stephen, as we have seen, have in common the fact that they do not know the true identity of their fathers. From this it follows naturally that they are equally ignorant (at least to begin with) of their own divine origins, nature and destiny. All Siegmund is aware of when he first appears is that he has lost everything he has ever had and suffered the enmity of almost everyone he has ever met. His existence has become conditioned by

continual fighting, running and hiding in a universe that seems intrinsically malevolent towards him. The only thing, it seems, that has given him any hope at all is his father's long-remembered promise that a sword would come to him when he most needed it. When, in the course of the drama, this hope is realised along with the unlooked-for reunion with his sister, it seems as if his life is to be transformed, though he remains strikingly fatalistic, saying that the sword will lead him to "deeds and death".[43] He obviously has no idea of the purpose for which Wotan intends him to use the Sword and, like Siegfried after him, he is never to be enlightened. He certainly considers it an important heirloom, something of his father's, sent to help him, but apart from this it is simply a useful weapon, a means of defending himself and Sieglinde against the cruelty of the world. Thus, when he triumphantly brandishes it at the climax of Act I, the tremendous sense of optimism this unleashes is nothing more than an instinctive response to Wagner's rhetorical use of the orchestra – the sense of a great destiny strongly implied but, on closer inspection, uncertain. Certainly the rescue of Sieglinde constitutes a victory, however short-lived, against the forces of power and aggression that have dominated the cycle until this point, but that is all.

In Stephen's case, this sense of the Sword being an heirloom is also present but it is further complicated by the immense symbolic fabric Joyce creates, in which multiple references to Wagner are combined and interwoven with those made to Homer, Shakespeare, the Bible and other sources.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the "Nothung" incident in "Circe" is prepared for in advance by numerous subtler descriptions of Stephen's walking stick as an "ashplant", a "sword" and, most notably, an "ash sword". Clearly, this serves a dual purpose: the stick itself is made of ash; and it can thus be compared to Siegmund's Sword, which was drawn out of an ash tree. This then serves as a reminder of the Sword's divine origins, since it was Wotan who placed it in the tree in the first place. For Stephen, then, the "ash sword", which is also his "augur's rod" and the "life wand" with which he makes the dead speak, comes to symbolise the magical and spiritual powers that he feels are part of his divine birthright as the Artist. (This is also a further indication that Stephen is associated with

Siegmund as well as Siegfried: it was Siegmund who drew the Sword from the tree and who, at the same time, gave it its name.) We are never told, by the way, where Stephen acquires his ashplant but it is unimportant. It is simply something he has and as such it is intrinsic to him and not a debt he owes to another. It is also worth noting that it first appears in the final chapter of *A Portrait*, the stage when Stephen has finally reached adulthood and is preparing for his flight into exile. The properties of the ashplant, though, are such that they connect with the divine and magical realms that Stephen feels are his true heritage. It is in this sense alone, if any, that he may be said to have had the "sword" from his father.

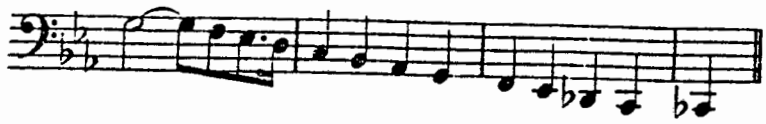
There is also a possibility that Stephen, in becoming his own father, is meant to suggest Wotan himself, in addition to his heirs, just as he is associated with both Daedalus and Icarus. The reason for this is that the "ashplant", as well as the Sword, suggests the Spear. Although, as discussed in Chapter III, these two primary symbols of male power, Sword of Freedom and Spear of Law, are used in direct opposition to one another, they are also akin in some ways, most importantly in that they are both "ashplants" of one kind or another. As mentioned earlier, the Sword is drawn out of the ash tree in Hunding's hut where it was first placed by Wotan. The tree itself is given considerable visual and symbolic importance, dominating the stage as it does. In the context of the richly erotic love-scene between Siegmund and Sieglinde, with all its talk of spring and fertility, it suggests a powerful phallic image, just as the Sword itself will come to do. This particular tree, however, is merely the shadow of the great World-Ash-Tree, Yggdrasil, which, although it never appears on stage (it is too large, for one thing), is mentioned several times in the cycle, has its own musical motif, and is another of the drama's most important symbols.[44] It is from this Tree that Wotan originally tore the branch he used to make the shaft of his Spear (an action which foreshadows Siegmund's winning of the Sword on a more truly mythic scale). As well as its obvious parallels with Genesis, this act, as Deryck Cooke has shown, functions as a direct counterpart to Alberich's theft of the Rhinegold.[45] Both are violent acts that take some magical potency from the realm of nature in order to create a talisman that exercises power through domination. Both require heroic but potentially tragic acts of self-sacrifice (Alberich's renunciation of love; Wotan's loss of one

eye – which, Cooke argues, makes him blind to the claims of love).[46] The Spear is then inscribed with runes that encode the legal treaties by which Wotan holds power. He also uses it to conjure and control his wayward adviser, Loge, as well as to summon Erda herself when he requires her advice. Later in the cycle, when Loge has regained partial freedom by returning to his elemental form, Wotan is still able to control him in the form of the Magic Fire with which he surrounds the sleeping Brünnhilde and, when he announces that anyone who fears his Spear will be unable to pass through this Fire, he stretches out the shaft, according to the stage directions, "as if imposing a spell". Furthermore, according to Cooke's most convincing analysis, what Loge ultimately represents is the intellect.[47] This is why he has no loyalty to anyone but himself and why he is so elusive and hard to pin down. When bound to Wotan in human form, he is intellect harnessed for a practical end, that of advising his master in the right uses of his power. But he chafes at this control and yearns to be freed from it, a change that is symbolised by his turning back to his fire form. It is only, Cooke continues, when Brünnhilde has taught her father what it means to love and when he has learnt to renounce power that he can control the Magic Fire, no longer the intellect bound and controlled but freed as creative thought and inspiration, the power of the mind that makes possible the transformation of the world.[48]

Although this analysis remained unfinished at Cooke's death, it contained valuable hints as to how it might be continued. In the remainder of the cycle, the Magic Fire continues to exercise a vital symbolic function, notably when Siegfried penetrates it (his ultimate heroic act prior to waking Brünnhilde) and thereby reaches a stage of self-fulfilment and enlightenment. Finally, of course, it is the dominant image of the ambiguous finale, the apocalyptic fire that ends the rule of the gods but seems to lead the way to something better, perhaps the ultimate illumination of the mind entirely freed from all constraints and limitations.

It is clear enough, at any rate, that the talismans borne by both father and son derive from the same ultimate source. They are indeed both "ashplants". In Joyce, both Sword and Spear coalesce, to become one, just as, on a different level, father and son become one. The Sword, as we have seen, is an ascending motif, symbolising the Will to Freedom. It is

thus diametrically opposed to the descending motif of the Spear, which evokes the oppressive weight and majesty of Universal Law:



In terms of its function and attributes, Stephen's ashplant resembles Wotan's staff of power more closely than it does the Sword. Like it, it is associated with conjuration, prophecy, writing, imagination, inspiration and intellectual power.[49] Making it thus combine the features of both Notung and the Spear, whose relationship is already implied in the *Ring*, is an effective way of making Stephen both father and son, wandering magus and youthful rebel.

If Siegmund's role as son is clearly delineated, the same cannot be said of his role as father. The very fact that he is Siegfried's father is easily overlooked or forgotten and with good reason. He dies very soon after begetting Siegfried and only knows of his existence because Brünnhilde's prophetic insight allows her to tell him of it. When Siegmund offers to kill both Sieglinde and himself rather than submit to their fate, Brünnhilde tries to deter him by telling him that Sieglinde will bear him a child. Siegmund, however, does not give this a second thought. If both wife and child are to endure the cruelty of the world without his protection, he seems to imply, then he had far better kill them both, the latter before it is even born. This is his only conscious reaction to the knowledge that he has a child, his only moment of active "fatherhood": the misguided but courageous decision to prevent its life from even happening. He clearly has no more notion of his son's completing his own failed mission than he does of even having such a mission in the first place. The divine plan of the primary father, Wotan, continues to work without the knowledge of its enactors and Siegmund's brief role as father will also be taken over by him. Siegfried then emerges as what Siegmund was intended to be, a man entirely free of the direct influence of the

gods but who, in the course of shaping his own destiny, will drastically affect the outcome of theirs.

Siegfried then finds himself in essentially the same position as Siegmund before him: that of a young man in search of his father. The exact circumstances, however, are different (and more closely echoed by Stephen Dedalus). Whereas Siegmund was separated from his father early in life and spent the following years searching for him, Siegfried has never known his true parents, nor has he ever come into contact with other human beings. In addition, his foster-father, the Nibelung Mime, has raised him entirely for purposes of selfish gain, so that they remain bound together only by mutual antipathy. This, as discussed previously, is the situation most closely mirrored by Stephen's in *A Portrait.* Both heroes feel that their alleged parents are impostors who have no real claim over them. Both feel restricted in their immediate environments and sense that it is in the wider world that lies beyond that they will find freedom and their true home. Both are compared to fledglings who seek to leave the nest (and both will eventually be guided to freedom by actual birds).

With Siegmund's death, Wotan feels that his plan is forever thwarted, bitterly bequeaths the world to Alberich's heir and the powers of darkness, and consoles himself with thoughts of his own oblivion. He is at first resistant and then deeply moved when he learns from Brünnhilde that her rebellion has enabled Sieglinde to escape with her unborn child, who will prove to be the hero Wotan has longed for. The triumphant declamation of the Siegfried motif at the end of *Die Walküre*, when Wotan issues his challenge to the hero, provides a musical sequel to the first appearance of the Sword motif at the end of *Das Rheingold.* The particular character of this invincible superman is powerfully evoked by it and it represents a clear advance on the more generally heroic implications of the Sword. Wotan, while aware that the young man's triumph necessitates his own defeat, is evidently willing to accept this as preferable to seeing the world fall into Alberich's hands. His tone is therefore a compound of resignation, joy and pride. In *Siegfried*, then, in which he appears only in his mortal guise as the Wanderer, Wotan has already accepted that he must relinquish his own power. He remains on the sidelines, watching over the hero's

progress and taking a kind of gleeful satisfaction in the discomfiture this causes Mime and Alberich. Without needing to interfere, it seems as if his master plan is being unwittingly carried out by his grandson, against all his previous expectations. With each of Siegfried's victories then, he becomes more and more delighted. It seems as if the world is to be saved after all. When, in Act III, he summons Erda, it is to announce this new-found confidence. He predicts that, free from the power of the curse, the hero will give the Ring to Brünnhilde and she, remembering what he told her of it in *Die Walküre* Act II, will know to return it to the Rhine-daughters.

However, when he finally comes face to face with Siegfried shortly after this, Wotan is sadly disillusioned. This magnificent scene, in which the two principal male figures of the cycle meet for the only time, is loaded with dramatic and ironic significance. While the elder of the two knows everything there is to know about the other, his origin and mission and the fate of the world that he holds in his hand, the younger is astoundingly ignorant, naively blundering through a world whose complexity he does not even begin to guess at and never will. Unfortunately, while Wotan had staked everything on the young man's growing up as a child of nature, unspoiled, fearless and free-willed, he now finds him to have inherited his own most destructive qualities: he is hot-headed, impatient and self-willed and treats the older man with a boorish disrespect that seems to portend no good for his future success.

For his part, of course, Siegfried knows nothing whatsoever of Wotan. On learning that it was the old man's Spear that originally broke his Sword, he ironically rejoices in the opportunity he has to avenge his father, without the least inkling that both he and his father before him owe their very existence to this mysterious opponent.

This brings us to the question of how Bloom relates (if he does at all) to Stephen's Siegfried persona. If, as the evidence suggests, Stephen himself has more of Wotan's attributes than Bloom does, is there any need to ascribe Wagnerian personae to Bloom at all? On the other hand, since Bloom has already been shown to resemble the Flying Dutchman in several respects, and since Stephen is also connected to this figure, is it not

more likely that the Wagnerian roles, like the Homeric, Shakespearean and biblical ones, shift and merge throughout the text?

To begin with, it ought to be considered, briefly, just how Bloom can be said to function as Stephen's father at all. Of course this is one of the central points of *Ulysses* and there is not room to consider all its ramifications here.[50] Obviously, since the text establishes beyond question that Bloom "is" Ulysses and Stephen Telemachus, a father-son relationship of some kind must exist between them. However, Stephen has boldly renounced all traditional father-figures, striven to achieve some form of metaphysical connection with an abstract father of his imagination and, to some extent at least, succeeded in assuming the father's role himself. How then can he possibly associate such a role in relation to the passive, bumbling Bloom, a man with whom his rapport seems tenuous indeed? No clear answer seems to be provided by the text; however, to the extent that Stephen is Joyce, he is indeed both father and son, since as Daedalus-Joyce, he has succeeded in building the labyrinth in which, as his own creation, he wanders. Joyce the Father, creator of the world of words that is *Ulysses*, is consubstantial with Joyce the Son, who enters into his creation as Stephen to suffer, die and rise again.[51] But where does this leave Bloom?

There is probably more autobiographical content in *Ulysses* than will ever be known. As it is, the well known fact about the book – that it is set on the day of Joyce's first "date" with Nora Barnacle – may suggest as much as it conceals. For example, if Stephen, at twenty-two, is the age Joyce was at the time it is set, then Bloom, at thirty-eight, is the age he was at about the time of completing it. Similarly, Gerty MacDowell, at eighteen, and Molly Bloom, at thirty-four, correspond to the respective ages of Nora Joyce. Thus, if Bloom, as well as Stephen, can be said to represent aspects of his creator, then Joyce essentially meets himself in the novel, or, to be more specific, the younger and older Joyces, past and present selves, meet one another.

Bloom, as Ulysses, as is well known, is looking for his son. Joyce's interpretation of this is to have Bloom's only son, Rudy, die in infancy, eleven years previously. Like Stephen's,

then, his quest takes him into the realms of the dead, the gods and the infinite;[52] it takes place on the metaphysical rather than the actual level of reality. Eleven, as we know from *Finnegans Wake*, is Joyce's number of resurrection, and Stephen, being twenty-two, is eleven again or, in a sense, Rudy returned from the grave as a grown man, full of promise and potential. Once again, the counterpart this provides with Wagner is substantial. In so far as Stephen is Siegfried, he represents for Bloom exactly what Siegfried represents for Wotan: a resurrected form of the son he once lost, in whom he placed his hopes of a better world and for whose death he feels himself to be responsible.

But when Siegmund finds his father, it is only to be struck down by him, whereas when Siegfried meets him it is only to strike him down in turn, without even recognising him. These encounters, as we have seen, involve juxtapositions of Sword and Spear, both of which seem to be contained in Stephen's ashplant. What role, if any, is played by Bloom in this context?

First there is the fact that, like Wotan in *Siegfried*, Bloom shadows the younger man for a long time before confronting him directly. Wotan's role at this point of the cycle, significantly, is that of the Wanderer and it is stating the obvious to say that this is a role shared by Bloom. As Bloom incorporates the related personae of Ulysses, the Wandering Jew and the Flying Dutchman, so Wotan-Wanderer is also a version of the same wandering figure who returns again and again in Wagner's work. If, in *Holländer*, he appears in his best known maritime guise, then, as the land-based Wanderer of *Siegfried*, who "On the earth's broad back far [has] traveled"[53] he is much closer to the endlessly perambulating Bloom. Both are secretive figures, dark and seeming to stoop beneath their inner burdens. Bloom too carries his equivalent of the Spear borne by both Wotan and Ulysses, his rolled-up *Freeman* baton. Like Wotan's Spear in particular, it is engraved with the runes of power: in this case, the language of the business world that governs Bloom's life. Among the secrets it contains are Plumtree's Potted Meat (the keys to a happy home life), Paddy Dignam's obituary (keys to the underworld) and news of the Gold Cup race to be held that afternoon. If the *Freeman* baton is Bloom's Spear, it probably connotes a deliberate parallel with the name of the horse backed by Boylan: "Sceptre".[54] The paper

introduces the theme of the race, the significance of which is to provide a sort of counterpoint to Bloom's attempt to reach home and Molly and to oust his rivals from her bed. "Throwaway", the rank outsider who wins the race, is an obvious counterpart to Bloom as Hynes' remark "He's a bloody dark horse himself" indicates,[55] whereas the favorite, "Sceptre", is similarly associated with the swaggering, phallic Boylan. If the race to win the Cup suggests sexual activity, Sceptre's defeat indicates Boylan's failure to win Molly's affections, in spite of his success in bed, whereas Throwaway's unexpected win hints at the unlikely Bloom's eventual triumph.

It is Bloom's pedestrian, passive baton "bearing . . . the secret of the race"[56] that achieves a kind of victory over the vainglorious, martial qualities implied by Boylan's bid, just as Wotan's Spear proves more potent in defeat than as a weapon of oppression. The renunciation suggested by "Throwaway" leads to Wotan's ultimate increase in moral stature, wisdom and dignity, as opposed to the arrogance, ruthlessness and pomposity he displays earlier in the cycle – qualities that are equally evoked by "Sceptre".

To return to the point in question, though, Bloom as wanderer crosses and recrosses Stephen's path many times, taking an increasing interest in him which, again like Wotan's in Siegfried, combines benevolence with anxious concern. Slowly and surely, Bloom draws closer and closer to the young man, almost as if he is stalking him (suggesting the black panther of Haines' nightmare with whom he is compared). In "Hades" he sees him in passing from the window of his carriage. In "Aeolus" their paths cross without their actually meeting. At the very end of "Scylla and Charybdis" (structurally the middle of the book), they come face to face for the first time but exchange little more than the distant nods of slight acquaintances (which is, after all, what they are). In "The Wandering Rocks", their paths cross again without their meeting as first Bloom and then Stephen visit the same bookstall, the latter wondering "Who has passed here before me?"[57] Stephen then disappears until "The Oxen of the Sun", which marks the beginning of the closer contact between them, initiated by the concerned and inquisitive Bloom.

At this point of the story, it might be noted, Stephen seems to bear a particularly close likeness to Siegmund, and there are a number of oblique references in the text to support such a correspondence. Like Wotan-Bloom, he is a wanderer. He has been continually seeking the father and vice versa but both remain hidden from one another by their numerous disguises. Like Siegmund, Stephen is emotionally and spiritually exhausted. Unlike him, he is drunk but this actually corresponds in a more general way to the hero's bitterness, disillusionment and desire to escape his situation. He seeks temporary shelter in a strange house (Hunding's hut/the Holles St hospital) and is entertained there and offered refreshment, but without knowing it he has fallen into the hands of his enemies (Hunding/the medical students). His hope of safety lies in the fact that his father, unbeknown to him, is watching over him. The possible connection is supported by the mock-archaic quality of the episode, which Joyce decided to present as a series of parodies representing the "gestation" of the English language from its beginnings to his own era. Consequently, much of it is written in a variety of historical styles, giving the impression that the hospital's waiting room is in fact the great hall of a castle:

> And whiles they spake the door of the castle was opened and there nighed them a mickle noise as of many that sat there at meat. . . . And in the castle was set a board that was of the birchwood of Finlandy and it was upheld by four dwarfmen of that country but they durst not move for enchantment. . . . And there were vessels that are wrought by magic of Mahound out of seasand and the air by a warlock with his breath that he blares into them like to bubbles. And full fair cheer and rich was on the board that no wight could devise a fuller ne richer.[58]

And into this environment, Bloom enters like the uninvited guest who thrusts the Sword into Hunding's house-tree:

> Some man that wayfaring was stood by housedoor at night's oncoming. Of Israel's folk was that man that on earth wandering far had fared. Stark ruth of man his errand that him lone led until that house.[59]

There is also a storm raging outside, as in *Die Walküre* Act I, in which Siegmund seeks shelter both from it and from his pursuers. Stephen, with his own sense of being hunted and persecuted, seems very like Siegmund in this context.[60] As if to strengthen the possibility of such an allusion, more overtly Wagnerian details are added:

> A black crack of noise in the street here, alack, bawled back. Loud on left Thor thundered: in anger awful the hammerhurler. Came now the storm that hist his heart. And Master Lynch bade him have a care to flout and witwanton as the god self was angered for his hellprate and paganry. And he that had erst challenged to be so doughty waxed pale as they might all mark and shrank together and his pitch that was before so haught uplift was now of a sudden quite plucked down and his heart shook within the cage of his breast as he tasted the rumour of that storm. . . . He drank indeed at one draught to pluck up a heart of any grace for it thundered long rumblingly over all the heavens so that . . . Master Bloom, at the braggart's side spoke to him calming words to slumber his great fear . . . .[61]

Considering the fact that, at this point, the novel is beginning to approach the "Nothung" incident and that Siegmund seeks shelter from the storm in the very hut where his father has left the Sword for him to find, it seems all the more likely that a deliberate allusion to this scene is intended. The reference to Thor (Wagner's Donner) is particularly significant here in that the orchestral prelude that introduces this scene paints a graphic picture of the storm and reaches a climax with the "Donner" motif (recalling the spectacular "Conjuration of the Storm" from the end of *Das Rheingold* – when Donner himself wields the hammer to produce the appropriate "crack"). Also significant is the sense of Stephen's being threatened by the god as a punishment for his hubris. Once more, this corresponds to the prelude, in which a strong sense of urgency is imparted, together with a suggestion of the thunderer from a human perspective, almost as a titanic silhouette reared against the cloud-wrack. In each case, also, the hero's courage is to be revived by his father's subtle aid. In Siegmund's case, he finds the Sword that was promised him. In Stephen's, although the ashplant has been with him all along, he finds the "father" himself, albeit without recognising him, and is soothed and comforted by him.

The real connection between the two, however, is to occur in the next episode, "Circe". It is only then that Bloom consciously decides to follow Stephen in order to protect him from the unscrupulous companions who are taking advantage of his drunkenness. As discussed at length in Chapter III, this is also the section in which Stephen undergoes his "crucifixion", the episode that draws most heavily on his close identification with Siegfried. Throughout it all, though, he is continually shadowed by Bloom – just as the Wanderer is never far behind Siegfried. The crucial difference is that when the inevitable confrontation finally occurs, Bloom's role is conciliatory rather than hostile.

In what appears to be a direct inversion of Wagner's symbolism, Bloom restores Stephen to consciousness after his unfortunate encounter with Private Carr, and returns his ashplant to him. In the *Ring*, it will be remembered, the son used his weapon to destroy that of his grandfather, who then removes the broken pieces from the battlefield and later uses them to kindle the great fire. In *Ulysses* it is the father figure who "resurrects" his symbolic son, and gives him back the "weapon" which he had lost in battle.

If it finally seems odd to equate the powerful, authoritarian figure of Wotan as Wagner presents him (vocally, a stentorian bass-baritone; visually, a man of full build, bearded and dignified) with the consummately ordinary Bloom, one need look no further than the fact that Bloom is also meant to be Ulysses to see that this is in no way at odds with Joyce's anti-heroic purpose. If Wotan is a moving figure (in the final scene of *Die Walküre*, for instance), so is Bloom. He ultimately shares the humanity of Wagner's "traurige Gott", his nobility in the face of despair and his ability to resign himself with equanimity to his own failings and the spectre of his eternal demise.

Apostolic Succession: Hans Sachs, Amfortas and Leopold Bloom

The father-son relationship in Wagner is not, however, restricted to the *Ring*. It recurs in different forms in each of the later works. The bitterly painful relationship between Tristan and his uncle Marke is one example (most important to Joyce, of course, in *Finnegans*

Wake, where it forms a major theme); but most striking in the light they cast on *Ulysses* are the quasi-paternal relationships of *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*: those of the mentor and his protégé, and of the ailing custodian of the Grail and his Christ-like successor.

As discussed in Chapter III, there is considerable detail in the *Portrait* to support Stephen's identification with Walther as well as Siegfried. However, this role does not seem as prevalent in *Ulysses*; that is, it is not supported there by overt textual allusions. On the other hand, the broader characteristics that unite the two heroes continue to operate: both are artists in the literal sense, both are young, inexperienced and generally unappreciated, both are arrogant, vulnerable and determined that they deserve recognition. In addition, one might note that the work Joyce described as his favourite Wagner opera[62] is also the one that bears the strongest overall resemblance to *Ulysses*: both are comic works, both are strongly characterised by an infectious exuberance and fullness of texture, both blend humour, pathos, gaiety and wisdom.

On closer examination, the Stephen-Walther parallel can be traced in specific places in *Ulysses*. In "Aeolus", for example, the newsroom episode whose blustery atmosphere is presided over by Homer's wind-god, there is a gathering of prominent Dublin citizens, mostly newspapermen and other men-of-letters, who in their pompous bourgeois self-importance bear a distinct similarity to Wagner's guild-members. In their midst, Stephen, like Walther, is tolerated, humoured, patronised. Where Walther sings a song, Stephen improvises his "Parable of the Plums"; both are distinguished efforts and both are completely lost on their audiences.[63] In addition, the same episode presents a possible correlation between Bloom and Hans Sachs in the same scene (Act I, scene iii, that is). Both men try to make quiet assertions that are either ignored or ridiculed; both are quiet and reasonable in an environment that is characterised by noise and confusion. Finally, Bloom is aped by the newsboys, much as Sachs is teased by his apprentice, David, and everyone present is mocked and goaded by the apprentices in general.

Later in the novel, Bloom, like Hans Sachs, senses the younger man's artistic potential, takes him under his roof to cool off and come to his senses and encourages him to sing to

him. He also provides a more sympathetic audience for Stephen's parable (just as Sachs reflects with joy over Walther's song). The parable moreover likens Moses' sight of the Promised Land to a more disillusioned view of Dublin, and Bloom is frequently likened to Moses. The plums also connect with another of Bloom's attendant leitmotifs, "Plumtree's Potted Meat" – which is associated symbolically with domestic (and especially sexual) bliss, as are plums (and fruit in general) throughout the text. This in turn is reminiscent of the theme of Walther's dream-song. Finally, before Bloom and Stephen part company, Joyce bestows one of his most poetic images on them, which, if nothing else in the novel, suggests a deliberate reference to Wagner's *Meistersinger*:

> What spectacle confronted them when they, first the host, then the guest, emerged silently, doubly dark, from obscurity by a passage from the rere of the house into the penumbra of the garden?
> The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit.[64]

It will be remembered that the theme of Walther's song was the identity of religious and artistic vision, symbolised by the Tree of Life and the muses' laurel respectively; also that the second draft of the song specifically states "Not fruit but stars o'erspread/The Laurel-tree!"[65] In addition, this is the version completed when Walther and Sachs are alone together, the product of their artistic communion. Similarly, Joyce's "heaventree" appears somehow to sanctify the union of Bloom and Stephen. Like Wagner's, it symbolises an artistic triumph, since it is featured towards the close of a supreme masterpiece, and a quasi-religious one, since that masterpiece continually asserts that religious significance is no longer found anywhere, unless in the potential for human experience in relationships and in nature. Bloom considers "[t]hat it was not a heaventree, not a heavengrot, not a heavenbeast, not a heavenman" but "a Utopia" and is

> more convinced of the esthetic value off the spectacle . . . . in consequence of the reiterated examples of poets in the delirium of the frenzy of attachment . . . invoking ardent sympathetic constellations.[66]

In this, he is closer than ever to Sachs, who privately asserts that the Utopian "Paradise" of Nuremberg is the result of "Wahn" or illusion[67] and, because he is "more convinced of the esthetic value of the spectacle", encourages his protégé's "delirium of the frenzy of attachment". Both men, benevolent and resigned in character, dismiss the possibility of order or harmony in the universe and so seek it in art instead. Both cheerfully accept their limitations and celebrate life as they find it.

If, as was argued in Chapter III, *Parsifal* presents a kind of mirror-image to *Die Meistersinger*, in that both feature a young man who "redeems" a brotherhood of older men, there is only a partial correlation between the roles played by Hans Sachs in the comedy and Amfortas in the sacred work. In character the two could not be more different; Sachs overcomes his disillusionment through will-power, whereas Amfortas remains crippled by anguish and self-pity until Parsifal heals him. However, there is a parallel in that both function as precursors of the "Messiah".

Bloom, then, resembling Sachs inasmuch as he helps and guides the younger man, can also be likened to Amfortas in that he needs an heir to heal the disorder and imbalance in his house and restore its lost spirituality. In his and Molly's imaginations, Stephen becomes the representative of a kind of higher culture that can efface the disruption caused by Boylan. It is Molly, however, as Bloom's "Grail", who must provide the key to any potential parallel with *Parsifal* and this is an issue that must be deferred until the final chapter.

Meanwhile, there is still one more explicit reference to the composer in the novel that deserves consideration:

> Wagnerian music, though confessedly grand in its way, was a bit too heavy for Bloom and hard to follow at the first go-off . . .[68]

This takes place not long after the "Nothung" incident, when Stephen and Bloom are walking home together through the deserted streets, discussing music generally, Stephen

expressing admiration for the Elizabethan masters and Bloom, with his more "middlebrow" tastes, enthusing about some of the lighter operatic composers such as Meyerbeer and Mercadante. His reaction to Wagner is thus entirely in keeping with this broader outlook and with his character in general. It is in fact precisely the attitude one can expect to find from the typical "man in the street" whom Bloom is supposed to represent. Wagner is considered "grand" because it is his "grand" music that is best known, he is invariably thought of as "heavy" (in the sense of being both intellectually taxing and aurally and emotionally overpowering) and it is almost certainly impossible to appreciate his more advanced pieces "at the first go-off".

The reference also suggests, moreover, that Wagner must have arisen in the conversation at some point. One imagines that Stephen, having consciously alluded to the *Ring* (twice), is, like the young Joyce, a Wagnerite and so probably introduced the subject. On the other hand, Bloom's earlier reminiscence of a performance of *Holländer* suggests he must have been present at it[69] and so he could have raised the topic, it being uppermost in his mind at the time. Most of all, though, the allusion is ironic: an offhand remark that diverts attention from the sustained interest in Wagner found in the text as a whole. If Bloom, unlike Stephen, is unaware of the roles he plays in the novel, his own unconscious references to them are a rich source of humour.

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[1] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1992), p 3.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *1 Corinthians* 13,12.
[4] Ibid.
[5] This argument is most fully by Epstein in *The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus* (1971). His argument is essentially that, since "father" becomes a metaphor for "artist" (cf. *Ulysses* (1992), p 543: "[T]hose leaves . . . will adorn you more fitly when something more, and greatly more, than a capful of light odes can call your genius father"), and since there is only ever room enough for one archetypal father, Stephen must symbolically destroy all versions of the father that he encounters in order to assume this role for himself.
[6] See William M. Schutte: *Joyce and Shakespeare: A Study in the Meaning of* Ulysses (1957).
[7] *Ulysses*, pp 601-2. It might also be considered that this imagery evokes *Das Rheingold*, in which Alberich's "capitalistic lusts" are unleashed upon the "prostituted labour" of his fellow Nibelungs.
[8] *Wagner and Literature* (1982), p 125.
[9] *Wagner to* The Waste Land (1982), p 150.
[10] Is it any coincidence that the mischief-loving Joyce gives this character the proverbial Irish surname coupled with Yeats's initials?
[11] *Richard Wagner and the Modern British Novel* (1978), pp 149-50.
[12] *Joyce and Wagner* (1991), p 57.
[13] Ibid., p 59.

[14] Ibid., p 68.
[15] *Ulysses*, p 736.
[16] Ibid., p 720.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., p 719; (seven years, as noted by Martin, is *exactly* the term Wagner's Dutchman must (repeatedly) spend at sea before being allowed to land in order to seek a wife).
[19] Ibid.
[20] Furthermore, as noted, Joyce was aware that Wagner had already linked the two.
[21] In terms of the episode's Homeric parallels, the sailor represents a false Ulysses. The role of the faithful swineherd who is the first to recognise Ulysses on his return to Ithaca is played by "Skin-the-Goat", the proprietor of the cabmans' shelter - who keeps exchanging knowing looks with Bloom as if to indicate that he can see through the sailor's tall tales. In addition, this establishes a silent rapport with Bloom himself - symbolically representing his "recognition" of the true Ulysses, the unassuming man of integrity. Joyce thus blends elements of Homer and Wagner to create his own wanderer-hero.
[22] *Ulysses*, p 720.
[23] *Der fliegende Holländer* (1938) II, i, p 16; ("Hui! Wie pfeipft's ins Tau!; lit. "How it pipes in the rigging!")
[24] See p 60.
[25] *Ulysses*, p 321.
[26] Ibid., p 720.
[27] In his *Autobiographical Sketch*, quoted in Newman's *Wagner Nights* (1949), p 20.
[28] For example, in Mr Deasy's remark "They sinned against the light . . . . And you can see the darkness in their eyes. And that is why they are wanderers on the earth to this day" (*Ulysses*, p 41) and the characterisation of Bloom throughout the novel.
[29] Ibid., p 718.
[30] Ibid., p 728.
[31] Ibid., p 727.
[32] Ibid., p 73 (in "Calypso").
[33] Ibid., p 738 (the opera is set in Norway).
[34] Ibid.
[35] See pp 176-83.
[36] *Ulysses*, p 302.
[37] Ibid., p 815.
[38] This relationship between the two heroes is indicated again and again in *Ulysses*. In "Proteus", for example, Stephen, momentarily startled by a dog, thinks "Respect his liberty. You will not be master of others or their slave. I have my stick." (p 290). Here, the stick, as ever, is "Nothung" and the decision to be neither master nor slave mirrors Siegfried's freedom; not only does he refuse to bow to either man or god, he also completely ignores the power over the world that the ownership of the Ring confers upon him (and of which he is certainly aware, since the Woodbird tells him of it). It may be the case, incidentally, that the inspiration to base aspects of Stephen's character on Siegfried came directly from Nietzsche, whose *Case of Wagner*, according to Martin, was among the books on the composer Joyce had read (*Joyce and Wagner*, p 6). Not only in this text, but throughout his writings, Nietzsche remained obsessed with the subject of his former idol. Assuming he had come across it, one imagines Joyce would have found the following hint impossible to resist: "the most remarkable creation of Richard Wagner is not only at present, but for ever inaccessible, incomprehensible and inimitable to the whole latter-day Latin race: the figure of Siegfried, that *very free* man [Nietzsche's emphasis], who is probably far too free, too hard, too cheerful, too healthy, too *anti-Catholic* for the taste of old and mellow civilised nations [my emphasis]. He may even have been a sin against Romanticism, this anti-Latin Siegfried" (*The Living Thoughts of Nietzsche* (1942), pp 83-84).
[39] In the first acts of each, Siegmund draws the Sword from the tree; Siegfried reforges the broken Sword. In the second acts, Siegmund is killed and the Sword broken; Siegfried kills the dragon and wins the Ring. In the third, Wotan punishes Brünnhilde for trying to help Siegmund by laying her asleep on the mountain, surrounded by fire; Siegfried breaks Wotan's spear, penetrates the fire and awakens Brünnhilde.
[40] There is a deliberate emphasis in the cycle on the way Wotan's heroic children inherit their noble attributes from their father's generous outpouring of love, whereas the sinister Hagen is the natural fruit of Alberich's self-serving lust.
[41] *A Portrait of the Artist*, p 269.

[42] *Ulysses*, p 46.
[43] *Die Walküre* (1912) I, iii, l 183; ("Tat und Tod").
[44] In common with most world mythologies and religions, it is in fact the archetypal One Tree, which represents the whole universe and all living things. Wagner also connects it directly with Erda, the primal mother-goddess of the cycle, a point to be explored more closely in Chapter V (see pp 194-95).
[45] Cooke, Deryck, *I Saw the World End* (1979), pp 148-49.
[46] Ibid., pp 158-59.
[47] Ibid., pp 169-70.
[48] Ibid., pp 174-75.
[49] In the *Portrait*, for example, it is likened to "the curved stick of an augur" (p 244); throughout *Ulysses*, Stephen gestures and "conjures" with it.
[50] Epstein argues that Bloom does not actually become Stephen's father at all: "*Ulysses* is, in part, the story of a father's search for a son, but the easy parallel must not be drawn – the son is not in search of a father. The son is striving to *become* a father, to fulfil his Aristotelian drive toward completeness" (*The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus*, p 173). In fact, given that Bloom's search for a son is in some sense an attempt to *prove* he is a father, to assert his much-disputed manliness, he is really on the same level as Stephen: both are striving for fatherhood in differing but parallel ways.
[51] I have sought in vain for the original source of this idea; I suspect it may have been Burgess.
[52] That is, through the various metaphorical versions of Ulysses' actual adventures in *The Odyssey*.
[53] *Siegfried* (1912) I, ii, l 8; ("Auf der Erde Rücken rührt' ich mich viel").
[54] Primarily, this is an indicator of Boylan's sexual prowess but it may also refer obliquely to the Spear – which in Wagner also serves Wotan as a sceptre. At the same time, Bloom's "baton" is also the source of the confusion over "Throwaway" that erupts in Barney Kiernan's – so it is also linked with Boylan's "Sceptre" in this way. But perhaps Bloom's intention to "throw it away" also parodies Wotan's attempts to renounce his power. Interestingly, when the Spear is broken, Wotan still retains the pieces (as opposed to throwing them away) and, as the Norns predict in the prologue to *Götterdämmerung*, his final act will be to plunge them into Loge's breast, thereby releasing the fire that will consume him.
[55] *Ulysses*, p 435.
[56] Ibid., p 790; This is a typically Joycean pun, referring both to the outcome of the Gold Cup race and the spiritual heritage of the Jewish race.
[57] Ibid., p 312.
[58] Ibid., pp 504-5.
[59] Ibid., p 502.
[60] On several occasions in the novel, he even imagines himself as a fox being pursued by packs of hounds (notably after breaking the chandelier, pp 685-86) and, although this is primarily an allusion to another of Stephen's alter egos, Parnell (who used the pseudonym Fox), it also parallels Siegmund's self-identification as a "Wolfing" (wolf-cub) who is pursued by Hunding and his packs of hunting dogs.
[61] *Ulysses*, p 515-16.
[62] See note 42, p 44.
[63] Elsewhere, notably in "Scylla and Charybdis", Stephen is again snubbed by Dublin's literary fraternity. One also has the sense that, like Wagner in *Die Meistersinger*, Joyce is using the evident greatness of his work as a weapon – to revenge himself on those who failed to recognise this quality in his youth.
[64] *Ulysses*, p 819.
[65] *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1913) III, ii, ll 189-90; ("Statt Frucht ein Sternenheer/Im Lorbeerbaum").
[66] *Ulysses*, p 823.
[67] Cf. note 122, p 149.
[68] *Ulysses*, p 770.
[69] See p 148.

Chapter V

WOMEN AND WATER

So far we have been concerned with the exclusively male worlds of Stephen, Bloom and their respective Wagnerian counterparts. Now we must consider how both Joyce and Wagner treat women in their works and, in doing so, expand our scope to include the important sexual component in the works of both figures. Since both attach a particularly heroic and redemptive status to women and yet, at the same time, confine them to fairly subsidiary roles that are determined primarily by their relation to men, we can expect to find a strong emphasis on women as lovers (or even just objects of male desire) and as nurturing and protective mother-figures.

As with the male figures we have encountered, Joyce's women evoke the full range of Wagnerian heroines and can thus be examined systematically in relation to each of them in turn.

"Senta-mentality": Senta and Gerty MacDowell

The religious and sexual dimension present in *Der fliegende Holländer* also occurs in *Ulysses*, albeit tinged by a characteristic irony. In the "Nausicaa" episode, for example, Gerty MacDowell thinks with quaintly sentimental piety of "her who is in her pure radiance a beacon ever to the *storm-tossed* heart of man, Mary, star of the sea".[1] This image of a beacon is also underpinned by the references throughout this episode to the Kish lighthouse, which is clearly visible in the twilight from where Gerty is sitting. The traditional characterisation of the Blessed Virgin as "star of the sea" is often linked to her bringing succour to beleaguered mariners, whether literal or figurative, a point that is continually brought home by Joyce's careful choice of imagery: "They were there gathered together. . . in that simple fane beside the waves, *after the storms of this weary world*, kneeling before the feet of the immaculate";[2] "and fitly is she too *a haven of refuge* for the afflicted".[3]

Throughout this chapter, there is an important identification made between Gerty and the Virgin Mary by means of frequent direct references as well as such details as Gerty's favourite colour being blue (the Virgin's colour) and her having a "child of Mary badge",[4] a point that will be considered in more detail in relation to *Tannhäuser* (in which, as was pointed out in Chapter I, the figure of Mary is also an important presence). What is at issue here is the fact that the references to Mary as a source of solace after storm in particular (quoted above) serve to connect her obliquely with Senta in *Holländer*.

The subtle presence of Senta in *Ulysses* is first mentioned by Timothy Martin in *Joyce and Wagner* but, while he connects her with the unnamed beloved of Stephen's "pale vampire", the deserted wife of the sailor in "Eumaeus" and, ultimately, Molly Bloom herself, he does not comment on a possible connection with Gerty.[5]

The essential Homeric correspondence in "Nausicaa" is that Bloom, like Ulysses, is (metaphorically, if not literally) washed up on a beach after enduring storms, perilous escapes from Cyclopes and other mishaps and is found there by a young maiden. If, as is suggested in "Eumaeus", Bloom's identification with Ulysses and the Wandering Jew is augmented by a connection with the Flying Dutchman,[6] then Gerty, by association, would assume the role of Senta. Whereas Homer's Nausicaa merely comforts her Ulysses, Joyce's, like Senta, offers her "storm-tossed" wanderer something more metaphysical: the possibility of "redemption". In addition, there are several details in her romantic idyll that strongly recall elements of Wagner's drama.

First of all, both women throw over a former lover in favour of the hero. In Senta's case, this is her rather boring fiancé, Erik, whose purpose in the opera is largely to provide as great a contrast to the Dutchman as possible. This duality is important in that it pits the Romantic figure of the hero against an altogether more ordinary, not to say bourgeois one. Senta is not merely choosing between two men, but between what they represent: a safe, dependable life of domesticity and the thrill of the unknown – the sea, death and the infinite. Gerty's situation suggests a parody of Senta's. She too has tired of her all too

human young man and yearns for something more exotic. Interestingly, both women reject the conventional dashing lover, preferring instead an older man with something of a dark past (in Gerty's case particularly flavoured by the language of penny romance novels):

> He was too young to understand. He would not believe in love, a woman's birthright. . . Strength of character had never been Reggy Wylie's strong point and he who would woo and win Gerty MacDowell must be a man among men. . . . No prince charming is her beau ideal to lay a rare and wondrous love at her feet but rather a manly man with a strong quiet face *who had not found his ideal*, perhaps his hair slightly flecked with grey, and who would understand, take her in his sheltering arms, strain her to him in all the strength of his deep passionate nature and comfort her with a long long kiss. It would be like heaven. For such a one she yearns this balmy summer eve. With all the heart of her she longs to be his only, his affianced bride for riches for poor, in sickness in health, till death us two part, from this to this day forward.[7]

There is much in this to suggest a parallel with Senta. It could almost describe her state of mind before meeting the Dutchman, when she merely fantasises about doing so and about being the one destined to save him from his fate. Even the descriptive elements recall Wagner's Dutchman: a man who is undemonstrative and somewhat withdrawn, but who projects a kind of inner strength derived through suffering. Most important is the indication that he has not found his ideal, since this is precisely the Dutchman's predicament, the "ewig-weibliche" which alone can offer him the redemption he needs and which he has sought again and again without success. In each case, too, it is strongly implied that this particular woman will indeed prove to be his ideal. Gerty's amusing distortion of the marriage vows also indicates a comic version of Senta's repeated promise to be "faithful unto death". As she continues to muse on this subject, Gerty considers her own fitness to be a comforting and protective housewife: "A sterling good daughter was Gerty just like a second mother in the house, a *ministering angel* too with a little heart *worth its weight in gold*".[8]

Here, as so often elsewhere, Joyce manages to make language serve more than one purpose. Typically, he uses phrases to function both as clichés and as serious symbolic allusions. "Ministering angel" in this case recalls the Dutchman's characterisation of Senta: "Thou art an angel, and a love angelic/ Can comfort bring to one like me".[9] Without wishing to stretch the point, it is at least possible that Gerty's heart's being worth its weight in gold is a subtle reminder of Daland's willingness to sell his daughter to the stranger in return for his proffered wealth.[10]

In *Holländer*, the premonition of a lover coming from the realm of legend into the waking world, a theme that recurs in *Lohengrin*, takes the form of a portrait. Once again, there is an oblique suggestion of this in "Nausicaa". Gerty recalls "the picture of halcyon days" that she found in a magazine and hung on the bathroom door: "[y]ou could see there was a story behind it".[11] Not a direct precursor of the meeting with Bloom, the picture is nonetheless an example of the kind of amorous fantasy that Gerty hopes will become actualised in her own life. What follows, however, is far more overtly indicative of Wagner's *Holländer* : "the face that met her gaze there in the twilight, wan and strangely drawn, seemed to her the saddest she had ever seen".[12] There can no longer be any question here that this is a direct parallel with the opera. Whether she is gazing at the portrait or the man himself, Senta is always, almost obsessively, concerned with the Dutchman's sorrowful expression. When Erik tries to impress her with his own unhappiness, she dismisses it as inconsequential in comparison with the eternal suffering of the doomed sea-captain, using the portrait as evidence:

> Oh, vaunt it not! What can thy sorrow be?
> Know'st thou the fate of that unhappy man?
> Look, canst thou feel the pain, the grief,
> With which on me his gaze he bends?[13]

Indeed, this is one of the distinguishing features of the artist-hero that helps to raise him above the level of more ordinary mortals. Whereas Erik's sense of rejection is belittled as the insubstantial self-pity of a lovelorn yokel, the Dutchman's pain is raised, through its musical and dramatic presentation, to the level of near-Satanic grandeur, an overpowering,

existential *Weltschmerz*, irresistibly recalling Melville's unforgettable description of another doomed seaman: "moody stricken Ahab [who] stood before them with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe".[14] In *Ulysses*, of course, such histrionic self-obsession is mocked by being brought done to the level of the everyday. Nonetheless, Bloom *is* a figure of pathos and there is pathos too, as well as humour, in Gerty's romanticised compassion for him. In this context, the Dutchman parallels add an appropriately melodramatic undercurrent to her thoughts: "She gazed out towards the distant sea. It was like the paintings that man used to do on the pavement."[15] As a backdrop to both situations, the sea is a vital element, a symbol of the infinity the heroine yearns for. The painting motif, an important one in "Nausicaa", again suggests an oblique reminder of the portrait in *Holländer*. Then, again, as in the opera, her focus moves from the painting to the man himself: "Yes, it was her he was looking at and there was meaning in his look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul."[16] This time it is the first meeting of Senta and the Dutchman that is recalled, when the "meaning in his look" is also his need "to read her very soul", to ascertain whether this is the woman who will in fact redeem him, while the orchestra creates an appropriately subdued atmosphere, dark with veiled significance:

> *She stands as though spellbound, without taking her eyes from the Dutchman. The Dutchman moves slowly foreword, his eyes fixed on Senta . . . Senta and the Dutchman continue to be oblivious to Daland . . . The Dutchman and Senta stand motionless, lost in contemplation of each other.*[17]

As Gerty's fantasy continues to unfold, the frequency of the parallels increases:

> She could see at once by his dark eyes and his pale intellectual face that he was a foreigner. . . . He was in deep mourning, she could see that, and the story of a *haunting* sorrow was written on his face. She would have given worlds to know what it was.[18]

Bloom's frequent identification (by several characters) as a foreigner and an outsider is, as has been shown, an essential part of his characterisation as the eternal wanderer, forever exiled from his home. Here, moreover, his physical appearance becomes more closely

linked to that of Wagner's Dutchman, who is also dressed in black and is described as having a pale, ghostly countenance. The "haunting sorrow" speaks for itself, of course, while the heroine's intense fascination with the subject is equally evident in each case:

> Here was that of which she had so often dreamed. It was he who mattered and there was joy on her face because she wanted him because she felt instinctively that he was like no-one else. The very heart of the girlwoman went out to him, her dreamhusband, because she knew on the instant it was him. If he had suffered, more sinned against than sinning, or even, even, if he himself had been a sinner, a wicked man, she cared not. . . . There were wounds that wanted healing with heartbalm. . . . and she just yearned to know all, to forgive all if she could make him fall in love with her, make him forget the memory of the past.[19]

Here again the themes of the premonitory dream and the uniqueness of the hero are reiterated. The immediate and instinctual awareness that she has of his identity is also shared by both women. The unhesitating forgiveness and sense of his having been a victim of circumstance are also common to both. Finally, the image of a wound, which is to recur in *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, is implied by the Dutchman's words "A healing balm for all my sorrows/From out her plighted word doth flow!"[20]

Once Gerty has left the scene, the return to Bloom's inner world effectively deflates her fantasy. Herein lies the essential difference between the two authors: Wagner forcefully justifies the loftiness of his theme through the extreme power and earnestness with which he expresses it; Joyce, on the other hand, seems to take a mischievous delight in building up passages of exaggerated bombast or sentimentality only to stand them on their heads and render them ludicrous. In this instance, Gerty's idealisation of Bloom as the pale and interesting stranger of her adolescent daydreams gives way to the older man's matter-of-fact speculations about her and women in general. Nonetheless, pointed reminders of the Flying Dutchman theme keep inserting themselves into his monologue too. He considers, for example, that a distant cloud "[l]ooks like a phantom ship"[21] – the nearest thing to a direct reference in this episode.[22] Then comes a series of meditations, looking forward to those in "Eumaeus",[23] on the theme of the homecoming seafarer:

> Dreadful life sailors have too. Big brutes of ocean-going steamers floundering along in the dark, lowing out like seacows. *Faugh a ballagh.* Out of that, bloody curse to you. Others in vessels, bit of a handkerchief sail, pitched about like snuff at a wake when the stormy winds do blow. Married too. Sometimes away for years at the ends of the earth somewhere. . . . Wife in every port they say. She has a good job if she minds it till Johnny comes marching home again. If ever he does. . . . How can they like the sea? Yet they do. The anchor's weighed. Off he sails with a scapular or a medal on him for luck. . . . Something in all those superstitions because when you go out never know what dangers.[24]

Whether or not "floundering along in the dark", "bloody curse to you" and "when the stormy winds do blow" can be construed as having any direct connection to the opera is difficult to say, but they certainly add to the general sense of consonance between the works. The theme of the woman waiting at home, the doubt about the sailor's return, the dramatic weighing of the anchor and getting underway and the fear of unknown and possibly supernatural dangers all have their counterparts in *Holländer*. Finally, a shift in Bloom's thoughts to Molly's choice of him as a husband underscores the connection: "Looking out over the sea she told me. . . . I always thought I'd marry a lord or a gentleman with a private yacht. . . . Why me? Because you were so foreign from all the others."[25] Bloom is thinking here of what Molly has told him of her own recollections of her life as a young girl in Gibraltar, of which much more is revealed during her famous soliloquy:

> Molly darling he called me what was his name Jack Joe Harry Mulvey was it yes I think a lieutenant . . . he said hed come back Lord its just like yesterday to me . . . and I him yes faithfully Id let him block me now flying perhaps hes dead or killed or a Captain or admiral its nearly 20 years if I said firtree cove he would if he came up behind me and put his hands over my eyes to guess who I might recognize him hes young still about 40 perhaps hes married some girl on the black water and is quite changed . . . Molly darling I was thinking of him on the sea all the time after at mass.[26]

Mulvey in a way stands for the young departing Ulysses just as Bloom resembles the older returning hero, almost as if the one has become the other. It seems as if the younger

Molly, not unlike Gerty, spent a lot of time staring out to sea, dreaming of her departed beau who would one day come back to her, and then later chose Bloom because his exotic looks gave him the appearance of someone "foreign from the others", who had travelled in far places and made himself worthy of the Romantic hero's role.

Finally, there is just a hint of the opera's apotheosis in the closing passage of the novel: "O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets"[27] – which, given the sustained pattern of allusions and the context of the wandering hero redeemed by a woman's faithful love, provides a direct parallel to this closing tableau:

> *In the glow of the sunrise, are clearly seen, over the wreck of the ship, the transfigured forms of Senta and the Dutchman, clasped in each other's arms, rising from the sea, and soaring upwards.*[28]

It will by now be clear that in addition to the other points we have noted that connect *Ulysses* with Wagner's *Holländer*, both address the theme of way-weary, disillusioned men turning for solace to the comforting arms of women, who are at once virgins, lovers and mothers.

Tannhäuser, Sex and Decadence

In a fascinating chapter on "Wagner and Decadence",[29] Furness discusses the more salacious aspects of Wagner's art and the particular fascination they exercised on those artists, self-styled "décadents", who – during the 1880s and 90s – sought to create similarly risqué features in their own work. He describes how

> [t]he sultry religiosity of *Parsifal*, the death-intoxicated eroticism of *Tristan und Isolde* and the glorification of incest in *Die Walküre* could not fail to enrapture and appal . . . . In vain might Max Nordau . . . reject Wagner's music as immoral and harmful to the senses, and denounce the composer as a purveyor of sadistic delights . . . the Master of Bayreuth remained the paradigm, the godly dispenser of ultimate *frissons*, the

> magus who had created his own temple of art, and the supreme fount of unheard-of emotional excesses. Refinement and intoxication, voluptuous yearning and headiness, a world "in love with both death and beauty" - Thomas Mann thus described the cluster of associations that Richard Wagner's name brought forth, seeing in that artist the most perfect example of European *fin de siècle*.[30]

Furness then traces this phenomenon back to *Tannhäuser* and goes on to discuss Baudelaire's first encounter with Wagner's music, his description of feeling himself "ravished and flooded [by] a truly sensual voluptuousness . . . which resembled flying, or tossing in the sea",[31] and his attempt to recreate the impression *Tannhäuser*'s "Venusberg Music" had on him (in *Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris*):

> Languidness and febrile delights, delights fraught with anguish, incessant twists and turns towards that voluptuousness which promises to slake, but which never extinguishes, thirst; furious palpitations of the heart and senses, imperious demands of the flesh . . . . diabolical titillations of an ill-defined love . . . allurements . . . vertigo, cries of triumph, moans of gratitude.[32]

He then cites Huysman's still more flamboyant reaction to the same music (in the *Revue Wagnérienne*):

> The shadows spread rays of light, and the swirling clouds assume the forms of rearing haunches, of swelling breasts, throbbing and distended; the blue avalanches of space throng with naked forms, with cries of desire and appeals to lustfulness, with outbursts of the carnal life beyond, pouring from the orchestra . . . above the sinuous wall of nymphs who faint and swoon . . . .[33]

The influence of both Wagner and the "decadents" on modern writers' attitudes to sex appears to be largely negative. Whereas Wagner, to repeat Michael Tanner's phrase, portrayed sex "in musical code",[34] the decadents delighted in interpreting that code and derived the utmost from Wagnerian complexes of sin, guilt and perversion. Writers like Joyce and Lawrence, on the other hand, adopt a frank, open, often crudely physical

approach. In the light of Nietzsche's scathing attack on both Wagner and his followers as enemies to the life-force, modernists seemed determined to sweep away the suffocating incense-soaked atmosphere of indulgence and celebrate sex as a natural healthy instinct, entirely free from the moral strictures of the past. Paradoxically, they seem in the process to have set themselves up as moralists, praising robust sexuality but condemning the heady, drug-induced wallowing in sinfulness that they perceived in Wagner and his adherents. Lawrence, for example, writing in defence of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, denounced *Tristan* as pornography,[35] while Joyce once commented that "Wagner stinks of sex".[36]

We have already discussed how both *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Ulysses* introduce idealised women who conflate the characteristics of virgins, whores, lovers and mothers. We shall now see how *Tannhäuser*, probably the most generally influential of the early operas, deals with this particular theme in still more detail, using the opposing archetypes of virgin and harlot to depict two aspects of the "eternal feminine". On the one hand, there is the pure maiden Elisabeth who dedicates herself to the Virgin Mary in an attempt to save Tannhäuser's soul (while Mary herself is constantly invoked as a beneficent presence – to some extent mirrored in her devotee). On the other hand, the pagan goddess Venus is both celebrated as a source of infinite delight and condemned as a corrupt and damning influence. On the surface, the spiritual is ultimately shown to triumph over the sensual, but this simplistic "either-or" interpretation is actually undermined by a number of subtle ironies that link the two extremes together:

- The evening star is associated directly with Mary (Star of the Sea), but is in reality the planet Venus. Stars in general are also used as symbols of the remote, inaccessible and inviolate virgin archetype.

- Though the majority of the human characters condemn Venus as a malign and baleful influence, Tannhäuser himself never does (though he does repent of his pagan adoration of her). Moreover, the opera as a whole does not present an entirely one-sided picture of her. She is presented as grasping and power-hungry, but not

malevolent or evil. She genuinely appears to believe that her power is beneficial, and there is evidence to show that this is partially true. However, what she does offer Tannhäuser is somehow inadequate, as part of him requires more than merely sensual fulfilment.

- A shepherd boy at one point sings a simple, carefree folk-song in praise of Maytime and the fair Queen Holda who brings the flowers to life. This is a reference to Freya, Venus's counterpart in the Nordic pantheon (who will later feature prominently in *Das Rheingold*), and shows a more innocent aspect of the Venusian personality that has survived into Christian times. Venus herself claims to have been driven underground along with other gods of old to dwell in the "earth's warm heart"[37] - which the "world of loveless men"[38] sees only as the burning fires of hell. She says that if men ever turn from her completely, the world will become desolate and barren, suggesting a parallel with Freia in *Das Rheingold*, on whose golden apples the gods depend for their everlasting youth. Finally, Tannhäuser's salvation is shown by the papal staff (a possible phallic symbol) miraculously bursting into bloom. Thus, the imagery of fertility is used throughout to suggest a more wholesome aspect of Venus.

- Elisabeth is not as cold and passionless as she appears. She reveals at one point that Tannhäuser's (read Wagner's) music has awakened strange longings in her.[39] It is in fact his praise of Venus that unconsciously awakens her love for him. Thus, although it appears as if her intercession saves him from sin and damnation, it is also possible to interpret this "salvation" in an entirely different light: a vindication of his nature worship, proof that he never really sinned at all.

- As well as flowers and stars, there are also references to fountains as symbols of love and fertility. The other minnesingers use this image to describe something pure and inviolate, but the reckless Tannhäuser points out, quite sensibly of course, that the obvious thing to do with a fountain is to drink from it!

This interweaving of symbols and their meanings, then, would seem to suggest that, beneath the presentation of Venus and the Virgin as polarised opposites, they are really two aspects of the same experience, just as erotic and emotional love are two elements that, in order to produce "salvation", or a sense of wholeness and harmony, must ultimately combine (a combination that Wagner was to explore most fully in the grand passion of *Tristan und Isolde*).

Joyce, whose attitudes to Wagner, as we have seen,[40] were complex, once posed the question "What sort of fellow is this Tannhäuser who, when he is with Saint Elisabeth, longs for the bordello of Venusberg, and when he is at the bordello longs to be with Saint Elisabeth?".[41] In spite of this implied criticism, though, he was obviously intrigued by the opera and *Ulysses* actually demonstrates a similar treatment of "whore" and "virgin" archetypes, albeit on a more realistic level.

Each of the novel's eighteen episodes is given an attendant symbol, be it person, place or object, that is used to represent the Homeric original. In "Nausicaa" this is the virgin and in "Circe" the whore. The fair maiden Nausicaa, who finds Ulysses on the beach, is represented, as we have seen, by the young, beautiful and incurably sentimental Gerty MacDowell. Like *Tannhäuser*'s Elisabeth, she is pious and particularly devoted to the Virgin Mary (whose qualities both heroines are shown to embody). On the other hand, she also (and to a greater extent than the saintly Elisabeth) has secret desires – though these are greatly censored by her piety and her dreamy, romanticised ideas about sex. Typically, Joyce takes an idea that is glorified by Wagner and deflates it completely, at the same time producing a realistic portrait that is genuinely touching in its humanity, honesty and compassion. While Gerty's ideas about life are presented as ridiculous in their cloying sweetness and naiveté, the satire is both gentle and funny, while she herself is celebrated as the epitome of youthful freshness. Although presented in the third person, the episode is obviously supposed to represent Gerty's own thoughts – which, when focused on herself, are a delightful study in harmless vanity (as well as hinting at a number of Marian attributes):

> [L]ost in thought, gazing far away into the distance, [Gerty MacDowell] was in very truth as fair a specimen of winsome Irish girlhood as one could wish to see. . . . She was pronounced beautiful by all who knew her . . . . Her figure was slight and graceful, inclining even to fragility . . . . The waxen pallor of her face was almost spiritual in its ivorylike purity though her rosebud mouth was a genuine Cupid's bow, Greekly perfect.[42]

It is in this character, also, that her feelings towards men (and specifically the mysterious "foreign-looking" gentleman sitting on the rocks a short distance away) are expressed:

> And while she gazed her heart went pitapat. Yes, it was her he was looking at and there was meaning in his look. His eyes burned into her as though they would search her through and through, read her very soul. Wonderful eyes they were, superbly expressive, but could you trust them?[43]

Her religious sentiments are also expressed in much the same vein:

> Well has it been said that whoever prays to her with faith and constancy can never be lost or cast away: and fitly is she too a haven of refuge for the afflicted because of the seven dolours that transpierced her own heart.[44]

Finally, in an amusing blend of puritan disapproval and insatiable curiosity, she allows Leopold Bloom ("for it is he")[45] to masturbate surreptitiously while gazing up her skirts:

> His hands and face were working and a tremor went over her. She leaned back far to look up where the fireworks were and she caught her knee in her hands so as not to fall back looking up and there was no one to see only him and her when she revealed all her graceful beautifully shaped legs like that, supply soft and delicately rounded, and she seemed to hear the panting of his heart, his hoarse breathing, because she knew about the passion of men like that, hot-blooded, because . . . the gentleman lodger that was staying with them . . . had pictures cut out of papers of those skirtdancers and highkickers and . . . used to do something not very nice that you could imagine sometimes in the bed.[46]

In spite of his professed incomprehension of Tannhäuser's motives, Joyce must really have understood them very well, if we are to judge from episodes like this one. Like a fusion of both Elisabeth and Venus, Gerty becomes the realised object of Bloom's desire and yet remains inviolate. She allows a complete stranger to have an unrestricted view of her legs and underclothes while doing "something not very nice", but still preserves her cool, reserved and haughty demeanour. After Bloom's orgasm (which will be studied in more detail in relation to *Tristan* and its "Liebestod"),[47] she gives him "a pathetic little glance of piteous protest, of shy reproach under which he coloured like a girl".[48] There are also a number of clues in the imagery used in the passage to suggest that Gerty becomes, in symbolic terms, the Blessed Virgin herself, who, in Catholic theology especially, is regarded as a second Eve – who reverses the transgression of her predecessor by crushing the serpent's head beneath her heel, and who is ultimately celebrated as the all-embracing Mystic Rose (itself a concept with powerful sexual undertones). For example, before Bloom actually begins his act of onanism, we are told that

> He was eyeing her as a *snake* eyes its prey. Her woman's instinct told her that she had raised the *devil* in him and at the thought *a burning scarlet* swept from throat to brow till the lovely colour of her face became *a glorious rose*.[49]

Then again, after Bloom blushes at her glance of "shy reproach", she forgives him – in decidedly Marian terms: "there was an infinite store of mercy in those eyes, for him too a word of pardon even though he had erred and sinned and wandered".[50] Importantly, this provides a close parallel with the crucial scene in Act II, when Elisabeth urges forgiveness for Tannhäuser after he has revealed his unholy worship of Venus (by singing his wild paean to her during the otherwise restrained and elevated song contest). Using her own body to shield him from the vengeful knights determined to cut him down, she upbraids them for their eagerness to judge him before he is given a chance to repent.

Equally suggestive is the description of the silent parting, a brilliantly satirical evocation of the kind of maudlin piety and sentimentalism that is typical of late Romantic works like Tannhäuser:

> Their souls met in a last lingering glance and the eyes that reached her heart, full of a strange shining, hung enraptured on her sweet flowerlike face. She half smiled at him wanly, a sweet forgiving smile, a smile that verged on tears, and then they parted.[51]

This time, it is Elisabeth's final exit in Act III that is recalled: after a heartfelt prayer to the Virgin, offering her own life so that Tannhäuser may be saved, she slowly and silently departs. At this point, the hero is not present, but his friend and fellow minnesinger Wolfram (who is also in love with Elisabeth) is. As mentioned in Chapter IV, Wolfram can be seen to embody other attributes of Bloom's, such as his prudence and courtesy for instance, certainly in relation to the more overtly Tannhäuserian Stephen.[52] In the opera, he presents a striking contrast to the impassioned and demented hero, in that he is the chief spokesman for chaste love and courtly veneration, attitudes he particularly demonstrates towards Elisabeth. During the scene in question, he overhears her prayer and, greatly moved by it, offers to escort her back to the castle of the Wartburg. On her silently refusing him he remains behind and sings the famous "Song to the Evening Star":

> O pure and tender Star of Eve,
> Sweet is the comfort thou dost give!
> This faithful heart's unheeded sigh,
> Bear to her when she shall pass thee by,
> When, borne aloft on angel pinions,
> Her soul shall enter heav'n's dominions.[53]

As well as demonstrating both understanding and acceptance of Elisabeth's sacrifice, this song clearly highlights the paradox (alluded to earlier) of the Evening Star being both Venus (a planet supposed to influence love) and, by association, Mary the Star of the Sea. In the corresponding passage in "Nausicaa", the departing virgin is also (at least in her

mind) idolised by the man who watches her leave. In each case, too, it is early evening and the atmosphere of serene twilight pervades the scene.

Gerty's fantasy, as noted before, is deflated immediately after her exit by a sudden return to the familiar mental world of Bloom himself, who is not at all embarrassed really but actually rather smugly delighted with his "conquest". Seeing that she is limping, he realises that she is lame (in symbolic terms, having been stung by the serpent). But a little later comes a subtle reminder of Wolfram's song again. Bloom, remaining in the same place after Gerty has left (just as Wolfram lingers after Elisabeth's departure), looks up at the sky and thinks "A star I see. Venus?"[54] Moreover, this happens almost immediately before the *Holländer* allusion noted earlier: "Looks like a phantom ship".[55] Is this a subtle indication that Joyce is simultaneously playing with and weaving together ideas drawn from both operas? Certainly, the role of redeeming virgin is common to both.

The direct antithesis to the "pure" Gerty is the "massive whoremistress"[56] of "Circe", Bella Cohen, a very different figure from that of Wagner's radiantly seductive Venus but one who nonetheless plays a similar role in terms of the overarching symbolism of the novel: that of the archetypal whore-figure that is diametrically opposed to the Virgin. In Joyce's case, of course, the situation is constantly undercut by irony. Bella Cohen is in fact presented as extremely repellent: "She has a sprouting moustache. Her olive face is heavy, slightly sweated and fullnosed, with orangetainted nostrils."[57] These hints of latent masculinity in fact become realised during Bloom's most nightmarish fantasy in which "Bello" sits on his face, extinguishes a cigar in his ear and forces him to reveal his most private sexual idiosyncrasies. The Romantic idealisations of Wagner have given way to the uncompromising harshness of the Freudian age.

Of course, it would be impossible to prove that Bella Cohen is a direct reaction to Wagner's Venus. The situation is in reality much more complicated than that. Essentially, both *Tannhäuser* and *Ulysses* are concerned with (heterosexual) male desire. Both use the figure of the Virgin Mary as an embodiment of an ideal purity and set it against different images of sensuality and/or harlotry. In each case, there is an element of irony. In

Wagner, this is confined to the subtle suggestion that the two images are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In Joyce, it is much more blatant and is concerned with presenting a far more detailed, complex and multi-faceted conception of "the nature of woman".

Just as Wagner was ultimately to combine the attributes of Venus and Elisabeth in the figure of Isolde, so Joyce eclipses both of the "half-women", Gerty and Bella, with the "all-woman", Molly. Like them, she too has an important symbolic function in the novel, arguably the most important of all: the redemptive wife-lover-mother-daughter to Bloom's wandering hero. As such, she combines and transcends features of both virgin and whore, although the dominant note in her character is that of an amoral, primal, free sexuality, the essence of Venus herself. Conversely, she is occasionally identified with Mary as well. Although she only appears in person in "Calypso", "Ithaca" and, of course, "Penelope", she is constantly present in Bloom's mind throughout the other episodes and frequently seems to function as a beneficent agency in his life. In "Circe" she becomes one of the three charms with which Bloom protects himself against the enchantments of the brothel (and which form parallels with the "moly" used by Odysseus). The other two are the lucky potato (given to him by his mother) that he keeps in a pocket (possibly representing a kind of earth magic) and his recent orgasm (which accounts for his lack of interest in the whores). The latter, it will be remembered, was the outcome of his "chaste" encounter with Gerty, herself a type of the Virgin. The symbolic patterning behind this is extremely elaborate, but the important point for this study is that it recalls not only Homer but, once again, Wagner, specifically *Tannhäuser*. There, in Act I, the hero invokes Mary as a means of escape from Venus' realm, and this pattern is then developed throughout the rest of the work: Elisabeth, dedicated to Mary, dies a virgin and sues for Tannhäuser's soul at the Throne of Grace. A similar pattern is clearly at work in *Ulysses*. The Marian figures of both Gerty and Molly have cast their influence over Bloom and it is this, more than anything, that allows him to endure the ordeal of "Circe" and eventually escape unscathed.

Molly Bloom herself, though, as hinted above, is also a Venus figure. This is made clear in several different ways. For one thing there is her remarkable sex appeal. Her husband, in

spite (or perhaps because) of not having enjoyed his conjugal rights for eleven years, remains quite clearly besotted with her. In addition, she reveals in her famous soliloquy an impressive list of past lovers. Her unfaithfulness to her husband is also typical of Venus (as goddess of natural love independent from the purely social concept of marriage).

In the "Calypso" episode (which marks the beginning of Leopold Bloom's wanderings), the following illuminating exchange takes place between husband and wife:

> She . . . began to search the text with the hairpin till she reached the word.
> - Met him what? he asked.
> - Here, she said, what does that mean?
> He leaned downwards and read near her polished thumbnail.
> - Metempsychosis?
> - Yes. Who's he when he's at home?
> - Metempsychosis, he said, frowning. It's Greek: from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls.
> - O, rocks! she said. Tell us in plain words.[58]

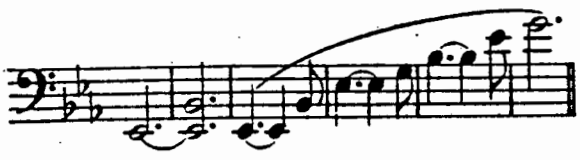
This introduces one of the most important underlying ideas of the novel, the notion that archetypal personalities can – metaphorically speaking – "transmigrate" into ordinary people in real life. This explains how Ulysses and Telemachus can "become" Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, while both Penelope, to whose marital bed Ulysses returns, and Calypso, from whom he must escape in order to there, can together "become" Molly Bloom. Thus, somewhat confusingly, Molly is her own rival – but the difficulty is cleared up once we realise that "metempsychosis" as the novel understands it is not a fixed process since characters can assume different roles at different times. This is particularly apt in Molly's case, moreover, since she is supposed to embody those cycles of change that are archetypally associated with women. This becomes clearer still when we recognise that she is primarily Venus incarnate. To make certain that we grasp this point, Joyce liberally scatters the whole text with references to the figures of nymphs and goddesses.[59] Thus, just as Wagner's *Tannhäuser* tries to show that the opposed figures of Venus and Elisabeth (or Venus and Mary) are merely different aspects of the same ur-woman, so

Ulysses, with still greater complexity, reconciles both the bestial Bella Cohen and the sanctimonious Gerty MacDowell in the rich, wonderful, multi-faceted figure of Molly Bloom.

The Mother-Goddess: Erda and May Goulding

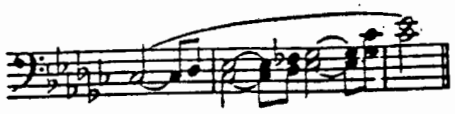
The important father-son patterns that were the subject of the preceding chapter become further complicated by the existence of equally elaborate mother-son patterns, which in turn are only part of the huge complex of material concerning female paradigms at work in both Joyce and Wagner and which presuppose a certain amount of interaction between the two.

The World-Ash-Tree, from which Wotan took the branch used to make his Spear and which also stands behind the ash from which Siegmund draws the Sword,[60] is closely connected with the figure of Erda, the primal Earth-Mother. This means that the relationship between father and son, essentially one of rivals, is rooted in and contained by the more profound relationship each has with the mother, from whom both originate. As so often in Wagner, the connection (between the Tree and the Goddess) is made less explicit by the poem than it is by the music. A simple illustration will make this apparent. As Deryck Cooke has pointed out in his detailed analysis of the motifs of the *Ring*, the very first motif to be heard in the cycle, the rising E flat arpeggio known as the "Nature" motif:

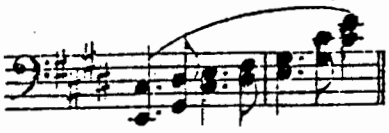


later gives rise, either directly or indirectly, to all the myriad other motifs which are subsequently heard throughout the cycle. In this way, Wagner not only succeeds in imposing a close-knit organic unity upon the whole vast work, but creates a musical

counterpart for the dramatic concept he is describing, that of the "inter-connectedness" of all things. Two of the most direct transformations of this original "Nature" motif are the gently swaying "World-Ash" motif:



and the sombre, minor key version known as the "Erda" motif:



A profound connection is thus being drawn between the mystic origin of all things and its two primary symbols, the archetypal Ash-Tree and its personified counterpart, Erda. Both reflect some aspect of the primal, unconscious life-force. The Norns, Erda's daughters also reveal that at the beginning of time they sat and spun their rope beneath the Tree and it was from them that Wotan bought the right (with his eye) to take the branch that he wanted.

The dissertation's central argument has now come full circle, as it were, to the all-important figure of Stephen's dead mother. Let us for a moment return to the haunting image of her which Stephen recalls immediately prior to his running amok in the brothel:

Stephen's mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor in leper grey with a wreath of faded orange blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mould.[61]

Now let us compare this image with that of Erda, the eternal Earth-Mother, as she first appears in the *Ring*:

The stage has again become dark. From the rocky cleft at the side breaks forth a bluish light, in which Erda suddenly becomes visible, rising from below to half her height.[62]

and again as she appears for the second (and last) time:

The cavern begins to glow with a bluish light, in which Erda is seen rising very slowly from the depths. She appears to be covered in hoar-frost; her hair and garments emit a shimmering light.[63]

Although Joyce's version is repulsive where Wagner's is merely mysterious, a distinction which once again suggests a strong element of parody, the most striking feature these passages have in common is that the mother-figure in each case rises from below, as if from the realm of the unconscious.[64] It would seem, then, in the given context, that the description of Stephen's mother's ghost is intended to invite comparison with that given to Erda in the *Ring*. In each case, the mother-figure represents an original source of being from which the hero must break away in order to recreate himself. Interestingly, Stephen's corrupted version of the normally wholesome Earth-Mother recalls a similar image which occurs to the mind of Leopold Bloom during an earlier stage of the novel:

A barren land, bare waste. Vulcanic lake, the dead sea: no fish, weedless, sunk deep in the earth. No wind would lift those waves, grey metal, poisonous foggy waters. . . . A dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. . . . A bent hag crossed from Cassidy's clutching a noggin bottle by the neck. . . . It lay there now. Now it could bear no more. Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world.
Desolation.

> Grey horror seared his flesh. . . . Cold oils slid along his veins, chilling his blood: age crusting him with a salt cloak.[65]

As so often happens throughout the text, Stephen's and Bloom's inner worlds are here shown to overlap, illustrating once again the symbolic kinship between them. Here we see their shared horror of a dead mother-figure, though it is clear that its interpretation for Bloom is quite different, his role being that of consort. For him it is an image of infertility, drawing attention to his own failure as a father, his only son, Rudy, having died in infancy, and Molly, his wife, having refrained from marital relations between them ever since (even though she herself is portrayed as a radiant evocation of the feminine life-force). The links between this passage and Stephen's vision, though, imply further parallels with the *Ring*, since in each of the manifestations of Erda, quoted above, it is not to Siegfried that they appear, but to Wotan.

Once again the elaborate connection seems to have been drawn solely for the purpose of inverting the roles of the two main characters. Whereas Stephen's mother comes to warn him of everlasting damnation should he fail to repent, Erda comes to warn Wotan of the inevitable destruction of the gods. Stephen directly opposes his mother with "Nothung", but Wotan responds by conceiving his grand design for creating a mortal saviour who will deliver him from the curse (represented, significantly, by the first dramatic occurrence of the "Sword" motif). Furthermore, after Siegfried has won the Ring, Wotan summons Erda to inform her that he now accepts his impending downfall, having determined to bequeath the world to the rule of love symbolised by Siegfried and Brünnhilde. Although Joyce reverses the roles of father and son, the two are still closely related, and each succeeds in dispelling the mother-figure, sending her back to her "endless sleep",[66] by association a mystic unconsciousness from which all things derive their source.[67]

At this point we can return to our earlier comparison between Siegfried's defiance of destiny and Stephen's of his mother. To this we can now add a further point of similarity and this concerns Siegfried's own relationship with his mother. As we have seen, Sieglinde dies giving birth to the hero, who learns of her death for the first time when, after

much bullying, he persuades Mime to reveal the truth about his parentage. He listens engrossed to the story. Later, during the second act, he is left alone for the first time (this is the "Forest Murmurs" sequence, shortly before the birdcall is first heard). It is early morning, and the hero is resting in the shade and musing softly on what his mother would have looked like, but is unable to imagine it since he has never seen a woman. He speculates that her eyes would have been like those of a gentle doe, "only far fairer".[68] The music then takes on a more melancholy tone, as he wonders whether all mothers die in childbirth and comments on how sad that would be. "Oh, might my eyes by my mother be gladdened!" he sings,[69] and it is clear that there is no small measure of guilt in him as he considers the possibility that he may be responsible for her death.[70]

Once again, the parallel with Joyce is clear, but should we be in any doubt as to the deliberateness of the association, we need only turn again to the opening section of *Ulysses*, which deals with Stephen's activities during the morning which precedes his visit to the brothel that night. At this stage, he is already preoccupied with thoughts of his mother, partly because he has been unkindly reminded of her by Buck Mulligan, and partly because he has dreamt of her the previous night (in the same, nightmarish, guise which he is to recall later). Even at this early stage, the vision appears to his mind's eye in terms which forecast those which will follow later:

> In a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath bent over him with mute secret words, a faint odour of wetted ashes.
> Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul. On me alone. The ghostcandle to light her agony. Ghostly light on the tortured face. Her hoarse loud breath rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees. Her eyes on me to strike me down. *Liliata rutilantium te confessorum turma circumdet: iubilantium te virginum chorus excipat.*
> Ghoul! Chewer of corpses!
> No mother. Let me be and let me live.[71]

Mulligan having by this time left him alone on the ramparts of the martello tower which forms their unusual lodging, he contemplates the sea ("our great sweet mother")[72] and among the many consoling images that occur to his mind, is one which, given everything we have considered thus far, cannot fail to recall Act II of *Siegfried*: "Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace".[73] Once again, there is nothing about this quotation *in itself* that links it to Wagner, but in combination with all the other elaborate cross-references it cannot possibly be anything but a deliberate allusion to the *Ring*. It recalls the precise moment when Siegfried thinks about his own mother and realises guiltily that he is himself the unwitting cause of her death, and, as must by now be clear, this neatly fits into the pattern of interweaving Wagnerian motifs that Joyce has created.[74]

Finally, this argument has arrived at the point where it began, however sketchily, to trace the intimate relationship between the text of Joyce's *Ulysses* and the libretto (and, in some cases, the music) of Wagner's *Ring*. We have seen how the quotation of the single word "Nothung" has raised a seemingly endless profusion of direct and indirect parallels between these two revolutionary works.

"Tristanism"

Tristan und Isolde has given its name to a subdivision of Wagnerism, known simply as "Tristanism".[75] The purpose of this designation is to distinguish it from Wagnerism in the broad sense, which derives as much from the composer's prose works as from his music, and covers a broad range of topics – from politics to vegetarianism. Tristanism, on the other hand, refers specifically to the condition of extreme, even excessive devotion to Wagner's music that has been an observable phenomenon since as early as the Paris première of *Tannhäuser*. It is in relation to the composer's later works, however, that this phenomenon becomes most clearly discerned and, although it is not limited to *Tristan* itself, it is with this work, and especially the extended love-duet in Act II (known as the "liebesnacht"), that it is most closely associated.[76]

There are some significant references in the opera to the "Weltatem" (or "world breath") – a curious concept, suggesting some sort of vast spiritual ether in which the lovers' souls become dissolved. They "sink" into it, and it "sinks" upon them. There is a sustained sense of melting, merging and blending, of losing any definite sense of place, proportion or identity. This sense is directly analogous to the implied emotional sensation of "swooning," allowing a vague, sensual languor to steal over oneself. It is assumed that the lovers feel something of the kind but, through the agency of Wagner's seductive music, a similar sensation is imparted to the audience.[77] It is often implied that the music itself "seduces" the mind, producing a quasi-sexual reaction. While many people have found something deeply sinister or threatening in this, most Wagnerians seem happy and willing to "submit" or "surrender" to the music.[78]

In his chapter on "Wagner and Decadence", Raymond Furness refers to the opera's "oceanic ecstasy" and "stifling twilight"[79] and comments that

> with its fusion of eroticism and extinction, its yearning, swooning chromaticism, its link with legend and its ultimate modernity, [*Tristan*] even excelled *Tannhäuser* in its ability to provoke and inspire. The fusion of love and death, the juxtaposition of fecund night and arid day, is a Romantic notion to be found most forcibly in Novalis; it is entirely in keeping that the *fin de siècle* writers, in their rejection of utilitarianism, materialism and vulgar progress, should have turned to *Tristan und Isolde* as an escape into voluptuous morbidity. The orgasmic implications of a "love-death" would also provide the decadents with much material . . . . [Wagner] implies that a sexual climax accompanied by physical death would be the ultimate consummation. At the moment of highest ecstasy, and at the point of death itself, the Romantic imagination had glimpsed the infinite.[80]

Needless to say, such an extraordinary work was a source of great inspiration for writers hoping to imitate aspects of its supremely sensuous style in a different medium. One of the best known and remarkable features of the opera is its full and gorgeous depiction in music of the act of love, up to and including orgasm – as Furness suggests. This celebrated "love-death", as it is popularly known, is achieved by continually repeating a

short, alternately rising and falling phrase, which, with each new repetition, modulates to a slightly higher key. The resultant effect is like great waves of sound and feeling that seem to build inevitably towards the home key, which is reached in a great, shimmering chord, sustained and then twice repeated, before sinking down again in blissful, fading echoes of itself.

In his own attempt to describe a similar experience, Joyce appears to follow much the same general pattern. This is the scene (discussed above)[81] in which Leopold Bloom masturbates while Gerty MacDowell willingly exhibits her legs for him. It is early evening and there is a firework display going on. This becomes an appropriate metaphor for Bloom's orgasm, of course, and adds both poetry and humour to the description. The imagery is developed at some length, to give much the same sense of continual intensification as is found in the Wagner. At the same time, there is a carefully structured use of repetition, with words and phrases piled one on the other in the same way as the musical phrases of the "love-death", as well as long, fluid sentences that emphasise the uninterrupted flow of the experience. Also, the metaphorical language is combined with Gerty's real thoughts and feelings of the moment, revealing the true nature of the incident beneath the euphemistic imagery:

> [L]ook, there was another and she leaned back and the garters were blue to match on account of the transparent and they all saw it and shouted to look, look there it was and she leaned back ever so far to see the fireworks and something queer was flying about through the air, a soft thing to and fro, dark. And she saw a long Roman candle going up over the trees up, up, and, in the tense hush, they were all breathless with excitement as it went higher and higher and she had to lean back more and more to look up after it, high, high, almost out of sight, and her face was suffused with a divine, an entrancing blush from straining back and he could see her other things too, nainsook knickers, the fabric that caresses the skin, better than those other pettiwidth, the green, four and eleven, on account of being white and she let him and she saw that he saw and then it went so high it went out of sight a moment and she was trembling in every limb from being bent so far back he had a full view high up above her knee no-one ever not even on the swing or wading and she wasn't ashamed and he wasn't

> either to look in that immodest way like that because he couldn't resist the sight of the wondrous revealment half offered like those skirtdancers behaving so immodest before gentlemen looking and he kept on looking, looking.[82]

It is the continual extension and prolongation of this latter sentence in particular that seems to recreate the sense of sexual tension. The half-stated suggestion of seemingly incomplete phrases such as "there was another" [firework], "blue to match" [her dress], "the transparent" [stockings] and "no-one ever" [saw] that are then immediately interrupted by others gives an impression of breathlessness, of attempting to sustain an impossibly high pitch of energy. This is precisely the effect achieved by the pulsating, soaring, endlessly repeated phrases of the "love-death". Here too, as there, there is a momentary pause, a moment to take a breath as it were, before resuming and even intensifying the extraordinary degree of sustained tension, the sense of being on the verge of imminent release and yet unable to achieve it without first maintaining the molten heat of passion and then, by an almost superhuman act of will, pushing it still further:

> She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow the cry of a young girl's love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her, that cry that has wrung through the ages.[83]

Finally, with the tension wound up to this unbearable degree, Joyce delivers his *coup de grace*, a superbly evocative piece of writing, in which the sharp, surprising rhythms and prominent, almost aggressive sound of plosives and fricatives suggest with remarkable clarity the fierce and immediate sensation that is being described:

> And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind and O! then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O! O! in raptures and it gushed out of it a stream of rain gold hair threads and they shed and ah! they were all greeny dewy stars falling with golden, O so lively! O so soft, sweet, soft![84]

After the opening burst of violence (for which there is no equivalent in Wagner's "love-death"), there is an immediate dissipation of energy, beginning with the first "O!" and then

continued through the increasing frequency of long vowels and softer consonants. Indeed, this "O!" is almost directly equivalent to the extended chord that forms the pinnacle of the "love-death", in that it is deliberately intended to express the height of coital ecstasy. Thereafter, there is a similar falling off and rising up again to the second "O!" that is also found in the "love-death", as is the third "O!" (albeit doubled this time) and the gradual, slow, sensuous feeling of sinking down towards unconsciousness. Then, the "ah!" seems like a softer, gentler echo of the "O"s - just as the triumphal "love-death" chord continues to be repeated more quietly while the music dissolves into its peaceful resolution.

However, although this encounter with Gerty represents Bloom's only real sexual encounter during the course of the day, it is his relationship with his adored wife Molly, in the famous "Penelope" episode, that is to provide the ultimate – albeit metaphorical – consummation. In this, her so-called "soliloquy", Molly lies in bed next to the sleeping Leopold and recalls the events of the day and of her life in general and, among other things, weighs up the relative merits of her lover, Blazes Boylan, her husband and the young man (Stephen) he has been telling her about but whom she has not actually met. The idea is primarily to set up a kind of quasi-Homeric parallel in which the homecoming hero and his son and rightful heir (who represent the values of civility and creativity respectively) are set against the homebreaking usurper. Whereas Homer allowed his heroes to do away with the enemy by main force, such a solution is clearly not possible in the anti-heroic world of the novel. The victory Bloom and Stephen are to enjoy must be a purely symbolic one. This is necessarily complex and a great deal has already been written to elucidate it – but all that need occupy our attention here are its erotic (and – arguably – Tristanesque) aspects.

First of all, Boylan is clearly seen to have triumphed as far as satisfying Molly sexually is concerned:

> I wished he was here or somebody to let myself go with and come again like that I feel all fire inside me or if I could dream it when he made me spend the 2nd time tickling me behind with his finger I was coming for about 5 minutes with my legs round him I had to

> hug him after O Lord I wanted to shout out all sorts of things fuck or shit or anything at all.[85]

On the other hand, the pleasure she derives from him is purely physical and is counteracted by his savagery, selfishness and rather boorish character:

> [H]e must have come 3 or 4 times with that tremendous big red brute of a thing he has I thought the vein or whatever the dickens they call it was going to burst though his nose is not so big after I took off all my things with the blinds down after my hours dressing and perfuming and combing it like iron or some kind of a thick crowbar standing all the time he must have eaten oysters I think a few dozen he was in great singing voice no I never in all my life felt anyone who had one the size of that to make you feel full up he must have eaten a whole sheep after whats the idea making us like that with a big hole in the middle of us like a Stallion driving it up into you because thats all they want out of you with that determined vicious look in his eye.[86]

The frequent animal imagery clearly helps to reinforce this bestial aspect of Boylan and delineate him more clearly in opposition to the gentle, sensitive, occasionally effete but ultimately sympathetic Bloom. Though their sex life is evidently over for good, Molly's memories of what it used to be like have a transfiguring quality that suggests they have more meaning for her than the savage rutting with Boylan:

> I liked the way he made love then he knew the way to take a woman when he sent me the 8 big poppies because mine was the 8th then I wrote the night he kissed my heart at Dolphins barn I couldnt describe it simply makes you feel like nothing on earth.[87]

> [A]nd his mad crazy letters my Precious one everything connected with your glorious body everything underlined that comes from a thing of beauty and of joy for ever something he got out of some nonsensical book he had.[88]

She also gives some thought to the hyperboles of love one sees expressed in the theatre and the glaring difference between these and the more prosaic experiences of real life:

> [I]t must be real love if a man gives up his life for her that way for nothing[89] I suppose there are a few men like that left its hard to believe in it though unless it really happened to me the majority of them with not a particle of love in their natures to find two people like that nowadays full up of each other that would feel the same way as you do theyre usually a bit foolish in the head.[90]

Next she remembers her husband's suggestion that Stephen give her Italian lessons and starts dreaming of having a young poet in the house:

> Im sure hes very distinguished Id like to meet a man like that God not those other ruck besides hes young those fine young men I could see down in Margate strand bathing place from the side of the rock standing up naked in the sun like a God or something and then plunging into the sea with them why arent all men like that thered be some consolation for a woman like that lovely little statue he bought I could look at him all day long curly head and his shoulders his finger up for you to listen theres real beauty and poetry for you I often felt I wanted to kiss him all over also his lovely young cock there so simply I wouldnt mind taking him in my mouth if nobody was looking as if it was asking you to suck it so clean and white he looked with his boyish face I would too in ½ a minute even if some of it went down what its only like gruel or the dew theres no danger besides hed be so clean compared with those pigs of men I suppose never dream of washing it from 1 years end to the other.[91]

This leads directly to a comparison with Boylan (in which the latter comes off decidedly second best):

> [N]o thats no way for him he has no manners nor no refinement nor no nothing in his nature slapping us behind like that on my bottom because I didnt call him Hugh the ignoramus that doesnt know poetry from a cabbage.[92]

While the ways in which this is different from Wagner will be glaringly obvious, it remains significant that both are intended as erotic "glorifications of woman", in each case bringing their respective works to a transcendent climax, in the opera a romanticised, world-renouncing one, in the novel a realistic, life-affirming one (in which respect it is more

closely related to *Die Meistersinger*). This is most obvious, of course, in the famous, quasi-orgasmic flourish with which chapter and book come to their resounding end:

> [Y]es when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.[93]

And yet, in spite of the deliberate earthiness of this finale, it is notable that there is no physical coupling involved (Bloom, indeed, is already asleep); and this, though in all other respects they seem poles apart, suggests *Tristan*. In both cases, actual sex is foregone in favour of a more metaphysical union:

> For Wagner the proper idea of love-in-death excluded as inartistic the achievement of any earthly union. . . . Not even extramarital intercourse would be sufficient for lovers who are fatally driven toward a magnificent and desirable self-annihilating disaster.[94]

But, ultimately, disaster is the very opposite of what Joyce celebrates. Whether or not there is any final correspondence between the endings of novel and opera must remain a matter for conjecture (though Joyce can at least be said to have written in the full knowledge of what Wagner had achieved). My own belief is that the ending of *Ulysses* represents a criticism of *Tristan*'s, in other words, that Joyce suggests it precisely in order to overturn it.

Sex & Religion: the Grail and Molly Bloom

Raymond Furness describes *Parsifal* as the most decadent of all Wagner's operas, in which the bizarre blend of sex and religion that begins with *Tannhäuser* reaches a climax, and he goes on to cite the evidence of its "highly questionable fusion of Christian

mysticism and blatant sexuality, its holy grail and gaping wound, its imagery of spear and chalice, its incense, castration, flower-maidens and cult of blood".[95] What exactly is the "fusion of Christian mysticism and blatant sexuality" Furness refers to, though? Is it simply a matter of mysticism and sexuality being portrayed side by side in the same opera, set up in apparent conflict with one another? Or does it go deeper than this? Does the "imagery of spear and chalice" denote some antique pagan interpretation of these symbols as primal male and female regenerative energies? Does the suppression of natural sexuality portrayed in the opera lead to a kind of sublimated eroticism of the kind associated with the famous transverberation of Saint Teresa?

> In his hands I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God. It is not bodily pain, but spiritual, though the body has a share in it - indeed a great share. So sweet are the colloquies of love which pass between the soul and God that if anyone thinks I am lying I beseech God, in His goodness, to give him the same experience.[96]

Certainly, much of the music associated with the Grail, particularly in the final scene, has a quality that suggests a sanctified version of the "Love-death".[97]

In many ways, *Parsifal* is a logical extension of ideas first aired in *Tannhäuser*, which presents a much more clearly defined opposition between the sacred and profane, a distinction, however, which, as discussed earlier, conceals subtle links between the two, hinting that, at some level beyond the world of appearances, Venus and the Virgin are one. Then, in *Tristan*, the same essential idea is presented in a different light. Sexual and spiritual love, instead of being differentiated, are blended and raised to new levels of intensity.[98] At the same time, love itself is accorded the status of a new religion, certainly a gateway to Nirvana. Finally, in *Parsifal*, an attempt is made to reach the same enlightened plane, but by the opposite means, that of asceticism. Ironically, though, the music of *Parsifal*, otherworldly as it sounds, is at least as sumptuous and seductive as any of its predecessors: the Grail scenes in particular evoke a state of religious ecstasy in which sex would not only seem inappropriate but unnecessary. Once again, Wagner seems to blur the boundaries between two spheres of experience which, on the surface, might appear to be mutually exclusive.

> [Wagner] felt profoundly the symbolism of the Lord's Supper; it provoked in him a powerful mystical excitement, and the need arose in him of endowing the symbolical event with a dramatic form, and of sensuously experiencing in all its details and in its entirety that which in the sacrifice of the Mass is only indicated, condensed and spiritualised. He wished to see and feel in his own person how the elect enjoy, amid violent emotions, the body of Christ and His redeeming blood; and how super-terrestrial phenomena, the purple gleaming of the Grail and the downward hovering dove (in the final scene), etc., make palpable the real presence of Christ and the divine nature of the Eucharist.[99]

Joyce, while taking a more obvious stand against religion and in favour of sex, embodies much of the same essential paradox. The *Portrait* traces Stephen's growth from youthful debauchery, through God-fearing piety to a state of dull, apathetic confusion and thence to his part sensual, part spiritual moment of awakening. Although by the end of the book he

has become cynical and sarcastic in his view of the Church, he never actually claims to disbelieve its doctrines. In fact, even in *Ulysses*, he continues to ponder theology in a way which is half mocking, half serious and that sneers at but never openly denies the alleged truth of the Roman Catholic faith:

> The proud potent titles clanged over Stephen's memory the triumph of their brazen bells: *et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam*: the slow growth and change of rite and dogma like his own rare thoughts, a chemistry of stars. . . . Idle mockery. The void awaits surely all them that weave the wind: a menace, a disarming and a worsting from those embattled angels of the church, Michael's host, who defend her ever in the hour of conflict with their lances and their shields.[100]

Elsewhere, he draws explicit parallels between sex and religion, some mocking in tone and some serious. This has already been examined, for example, in the case of his "Villanelle of the Temptress".[101] Bloom, by contrast, is entirely materialistic in his outlook ("When you are dead you are dead")[102] and blissfully free of the kinds of superstitious doubts and terrors that seize Stephen from time to time. Nonetheless, he is celebrated, only half-mockingly, as Elijah, Moses and even "Bloom-Christ". Also, he seems to practise, somewhat unknowingly, a religion of the body. Such everyday activities as eating, walking, breathing and defecating he manages to practise with such whole-hearted involvement and unassuming pleasure as to make them seem almost sacred. As for sex, there can be no doubt that Bloom is, as Alexander J. Dowie calls him, a worshipper of the Scarlet Woman. Molly, on the other hand, seems to combine unthinking piety with a healthy disrespect for the priesthood and atheists alike. Her celebration of nature as proof of the existence of a just and beneficent God seems symbolically linked to her own identification as a fertility goddess. In all of these cases, there is a clear correspondence drawn between sex and religion, a correspondence that, both in its general shape and in several particulars, can be seen to mirror that which is found throughout Wagner's work.

There is a more specific resemblance to *Parsifal*, however, that can be seen in the portrayal of Stephen in *Ulysses*, particularly in relation to the mother-fixation theme that has already been discussed in relation to *Siegfried*. Actually, all the heroes of Wagner's

mature music-dramas (Tristan, Walther, Siegmund, Siegfried and Parsifal) are orphans.[103] All but Walther (who appears in a comedy) are shown to lament this fact at some point, and two in particular (Siegfried and Parsifal) suffer a deep sense of loss and yearning for their mothers that is startlingly anticipatory of Freud. In each case, this yearning is associated with the hero's own awakening sexuality: a direct connection is drawn between his loss of his mother and his need for a lover to compensate for that loss.

We have already considered this in the case of Siegfried (as well as its significance for Stephen Dedalus),[104] but with Parsifal it becomes still more pronounced. When we first meet the "pure fool" in Act I, he is presented as being ignorant of everything except the fact that he has a mother whose name is Herzeleide ("Heart's Sorrow"). It is in fact Kundry who explains that Herzeleide brought him up in seclusion from the world to prevent the danger of his dying in battle as his father had done, but that she is now dead, a fact which strikes the young hero with the force of a blow. This is greatly intensified during her remarkable temptation of him during Act II, when she explains to the young innocent with a great show of tenderness how his mother once suckled him at her breast and showered him with a mother's love and how he was the most precious thing in her life. As he grew older and began to wander further from home, she continues, so her fear for his safety grew ever more unbearable, until at last he departed for good, causing her to die of her grief. This extraordinary cruelty has the desired effect and Parsifal breaks down under an overpowering sense of guilt, whereupon Kundry explains that the only possible consolation is for his mother's dying greeting to be translated to him in the form of love's first kiss. She thus becomes a sort of surrogate mother for him and the scene as a whole cannot fail to impress one with a sense of profound psychological insight into the workings of the unconscious – one that is rendered all the more disturbing by the music that Wagner wrote to accompany it.

While the sexual aspect of this is largely absent from *Ulysses* (where, as we have seen, the mother-image is repellent rather than desirable), the intense guilt felt by the hero for his mother's death is common to both novel and opera. Kundry's description of Parsifal's upbringing also finds an echo in Stephen's tortured brooding:

> Ugly and futile: lean neck and tangled hair and a stain of ink, a snail's bed. Yet someone had loved him, borne him in her arms and in her heart. But for her the race of the world would have trampled him underfoot, a squashed boneless snail. She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own. Was that then real? The only true thing in life? His mother's prostrate body the fiery Columbanus in holy zeal bestrode. She was no more: the trembling skeleton of a twig burnt in the fire, an odour of rosewood and wetted ashes.[105]

In each case, the hero overcomes his guilt by means of an almost superhuman effort and goes on to achieve his mission, Parsifal healing Amfortas and restoring the sacred Spear to the brotherhood, Stephen bringing light into the life of sonless Bloom. The ashplant, already linked to "Nothung" and Wotan's Spear, also suggest Parsifal's in that it has to be borne through many trials without being sullied by combat, whereas Bloom's restoration of it to Stephen inversely parallels Parsifal's to the Grail-knights.

As has been continually asserted throughout this study, Wagner uses the Grail (as an archetypal female symbol) in the same way as his principal female characters: as a source of redemption and transfiguration. In *Tannhäuser* Virgin and Whore are paralleled and perhaps equated. In *Lohengrin* the Grail is implied to be a womb-like source of spiritual rebirth and inspiration. In the *Ring* the Mother-goddess is likened musically to the earliest beginnings of the cosmos. In *Tristan* sexual love is rarified to an absolute degree. In *Die Meistersinger* the artist-hero dreams of a dove-like woman who baptises him. And in *Parsifal* the Grail itself is revealed when the sexual instinct is controlled and turned inward. Since Joyce has been shown to draw on most of these patterns himself and since he uses the Gold Cup race both as a comic Grail Quest and a metaphor for male rivalry over Molly's affections, the resolution of *Ulysses* can also be seen to refer to *Parsifal*. Just as Parsifal enters the temple to heal the maimed king, Amfortas, reunite the Brotherhood and return the Spear to the Grail, so Stephen enters Bloom's home with his ashplant, shares the sacramental cocoa with him, symbolically blessing the house and enabling Bloom, his own manhood restored by the "rebirth" of his son, to find his own Grail in the earth-womb-fertility symbol of Molly. What both works finally achieve is a "radiant image"[106] of life eternally transfigured and renewed.

Distrusting Aquacities

The ubiquity of water throughout Wagner's oeuvre is inescapable. *Holländer* is the most obvious example, in which, even when not visible, the turbulent motion of the sea is continuously depicted by the orchestra. In *Tannhäuser*, there is the subterranean lake in the Venusberg and, on the metaphorical level, the unquenchable fountain that the minnesingers equate with "Woman". *Lohengrin* features the River Scheldt, down which the hero is drawn by his magical swan. The sea, while markedly calmer than in *Holländer*, is a no less pervasive presence in *Tristan*, where it is closely associated with death, love and the infinite. In *Die Meistersinger* there is the important recurring image of baptism and in *Parsifal* a ritual act of purification by water.[107] Most powerfully of all, though, the entire *Ring* cycle is essentially contained in the image of the mythical, world-encircling Rhine, the cosmic flood from which all life seems to arise in the mystic E-flat prelude and to which all things return in the end. Furthermore, the opening scene of the cycle, growing as it does out of that prelude and being set beneath the river's surface, so that the audience experiences the illusion of being immersed in the water (an impression richly enhanced by the ingenious suggestiveness of Wagner's music), suggests an analogy with the amniotic fluid in which our own lives make their beginning. (That the "Nature" and "Rhine" motifs are so closely related to that of the great mother-goddess is surely no coincidence!)

There is much more to Wagner's use of water, however, than the mere setting of scene or even the creation of individual metaphors. What unites all the water images of his various works is the way they are typically associated with women[108] or, more importantly, the way both water and women are associated with the unknown or metaphysical dimension in the works, as well as the eroticised "swooning" experience portrayed so vividly in the music, most strikingly of all in the case of *Tristan*:

> [Wagner's] water metaphors are *Tristan* metaphors. Nietzsche similarly associated the Dionysian music of *Tristan* with diving, swimming and drowning; and from *The Birth of*

Tragedy to D'Annunzio's *Triumph of Death*, in the songs of Swinburne and the stories of Thomas Mann, Wagner's chromaticism has connoted the ocean.[109]

Joyce, moreover, is equally prone to conflating images of this type, as indeed is implicit in many of the examples already singled out for attention. In many cases, it may be thought that no overt reference to Wagner is made, since the characterisation of water as a "feminine" element is largely traditional. However, this study would be incomplete if it did not attempt to examine whether at least some of Joyce's water imagery could be considered "Wagnerian".

Water is a crucial element in the *Portrait*, mainly because Stephen, as Icarus, is in danger of drowning in it. In seeking to fly from Ireland, it is something that threatens to drag him back down and suffocate him. At the same time, it is sometimes implied, drowning may be considered a necessary experience for the young artist in order for him to learn and grow, because it is connected to immersion in the realities of ordinary life. Much of this ambiguity is present in Wagner too. Drowning, in the sense of giving oneself up to life, death, passion or the infinite, is both a terrifying and a seductive experience, potentially both destructive and creative.

There are also specific references in the *Portrait* that suggest particular points of contact with Wagner. One is Stephen's fear that his fall into sin has resulted in "the fountains of sanctifying grace having ceased to refresh his soul".[110] This might seem no more than a fairly conventional metaphor, were it not that Stephen's fall has already been linked to Tannhäuser's and in the Contest of Song in Act II of *Tannhäuser*, Wolfram likens the source of noble courtly love to

> a wondrous fountain,
> Whose silver light my gazing spirit awes.
> From that pure source a stream of rapture welleth,
> Wherefrom my heart divine refreshment draws.
> Oh, ne'er may I profane that well's pure waters,
> Nor stain with impious hand that silver flood!

In lowly devotion I kneel before it,
Contented there to shed my heart's last blood.[111]

His theme is then taken up by Tannhäuser, who confesses

Yet ne'er can I behold those waters
But fervid longings fire my blood.
To slake my burning thirst I hasten,
My parch'd lips in that cooling flood
In fullest draughts to drink of rapture,
Where never doubt or dearth prevails,
For none can quench that fount immortal,
Which, like my longing, never fails.[112]

He is chided for this by Walther von der Vogelweide, who maintains the "holy fount is virtue's shrine" and that "[w]ith lowly fervour must thou worship/And kneel before its calm divine".[113] The "purity" of the fountain is thus clearly linked to the saintly virginity of Elisabeth and the sexless love extolled by Tannhäuser's rivals. Likewise, in the *Portrait*, where it is explicitly religious, the image is identified with the spiritual impulse that is opposed to Stephen's "sinful" lust. Elsewhere in the novel, as was clearly marked out in Chapter III,[114] Stephen's aesthetic visions, like those of Lohengrin and Walther von Stolzing, have a distinctly "watery" quality, such as when he imagines his beloved's nakedness to have "enfolded him like water with a liquid life" and that "like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech . . . flowed forth over his brain".[115]

In *Ulysses*, as one might expect, water imagery is featured in still greater abundance and complexity. It is of course natural that a novel set in a coastal city will feature the sea as part of its subject matter. However, given the existing Wagnerian allusions that are interspersed throughout the text, it is inevitable that this important presence will also raise significant parallels with Wagner's works.

The sea is firmly established as an essential part of the setting in the opening episode ("Telemachus"), which begins, famously, on top of the Sandymount martello tower, and in the third episode ("Proteus"), in which Stephen thoughtfully wanders along the seashore. It is Buck Mulligan who, albeit facetiously, calls attention to the link between the sea and the universal mother-figure:

> He mounted to the parapet again and stared out over Dublin bay, his fair oakpale hair stirring slightly.
> - God, he said quietly. Isn't the sea what Algy calls it: a grey sweet mother? The snotgreen sea. The scrotumtightening sea. . . . She is our great sweet mother. Come and look.
> Stephen stood up andwent over to the parapet. Leaning on it he looked down on the water and on the mailboat clearing the harbour mouth of Kingstown.
> - Our mighty mother, Buck Mulligan said.[116]

Already this provides an indirect (though not necessarily coincidental) parallel with the *Ring*, in which Erda and the Rhine are connected by their characteristic leitmotifs (as discussed earlier).[117] Also, in case it might be thought that Wagner's river provides only an approximate counterpart to the sea, it should be remembered that it transcends its literal geographical limitations, since the cosmic implications of the *Rhinegold* Prelude are that it encircles the whole world of the cycle, in the manner of the great river-titan Oceanus, and gives rise to all living things within it.

Left alone by Mulligan, Stephen continues to stare at the sea. After the oblique allusion to *Siegfried* Act II (noted previously),[118] there is a brief impressionistic passage in which Joyce blends his hero's inner musings with the natural description of the sea with magical effect:

> Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide.[119]

The general effect, like that of the corresponding scene in *Siegfried*, is of a meditation enhanced through communion with nature. Whereas Joyce uses the sea rather than the forest as his setting, "woodshadows" nonetheless evokes a sylvan quality. Also the solitude of the hero, immediately after having rid himself of an unwanted companion (Mulligan/Mime), is in each case enhanced by the tranquil atmosphere of early morning. Interestingly, there is also a connection between forest and river in the *Ring*. As Deryck Cooke explains in his *Introduction to Wagner's* Ring, the leitmotifs of "The Forest Murmurs" and "The Woodbird" are melodically and harmonically related to those of "The Rhine" and "The Rhine-daughters".[120] Thus, Wagner creates the sense of a relationship between the two most important nature pictures in the cycle, *Siegfried* Act II scene ii and *Das Rheingold* scene i. And this in turn provides a precursor for Joyce's introduction of "woodshadows" into his description of the sea.

By the end of the chapter, the association of sea and mother has been blended with the book's Homeric correspondences. Mulligan, who first drew attention to the association, is, together with Bloom's cuckolder, Boylan, one of the novel's chief counterparts to Penelope's unwanted suitors. Here, attention is drawn to this by Stephen-Telemachus, bitterly reflecting on his false friend's possessing himself of both the tower (representing his kingdom) and "our great sweet mother":

> A voice, sweettoned and sustained, called to him from the sea. Turning the curve he waved his hand. It called again. A sleek brown head, a seal's, far out on the water, round. Usurper.[121]

The fact that Mulligan's swim is thus in symbolic terms an act of rape is supported by his seemingly innocent remark, preparatory to diving in, "Make room in the bed".[122] Of course, it is genuinely innocent on Mulligan's part. The artifice lies with Joyce, who so manipulates matters as to make seemingly innocuous remarks carry a considerable load of associated meanings. A partial exception is Stephen, who seems gifted with some of his creator's special knowledge. For example, in his above-quoted reference to Mulligan as "usurper", it is not quite clear how many (if any) of the literary parallels Joyce evokes are consciously intended by his hero. It is also worth noting that Mulligan's embracing the sea is offset by Stephen's hydrophobic avoidance of it. He is, of course, afraid of drowning.

In the "Proteus" episode, Stephen's musings on the sea and its associations become immensely more detailed. He begins by alluding flippantly to *Hamlet*, while Joyce weaves round him words that evoke the fresh sea air with exuberant vitality (and with it an appropriate mood for morning and youth): "Airs romped around him, nipping and eager airs. They are coming, waves. The whitemaned seahorses, champing, brightwindbridled, the steeds of Mananaan."[123] Sandwiched between significant references to *Hamlet* and *Das Rheingold*[124] comes a passage which reveals Stephen's suspicious fear of the sea (and, by association, his mother), as well as reminding us, through mention of the ashplant, of his Siegfried dimension: "The flood is following me. I can watch it flow past from here. . . . He climbed over the sedge and eely oarweeds and sat on a stool of rock, resting his ashplant in a grike."[125]

A further important component of the water imagery consists of repeated references to a drowned man. This is a central symbolic figure in the novel and one who, among other things, recalls the fallen Icarus – who, as has been noted, is Stephen's alter ego after his return from flight (an association Stephen makes himself).[126] What has happened is that the hero's quest for freedom in exile (conceived as a Daedalean flight at the end of *A Portrait*) has been prematurely cut short by his father's telegram recalling him to his mother's deathbed. That the mother's death and the hero's subsequent guilt is the primary obstacle to his achieving self-fulfilment becomes increasingly clear as the novel progresses. Stephen recognises this early on and implies that it is his misguided efforts to save his mother (already connected with the sea) that are the cause of his own drowning, just as the temptation to succumb to his mother's calls for repentance that impede his success in flying clear of the water and escaping to freedom and artistic triumph: "A drowning man. His human eyes scream to me out of horror of his death. I . . . With him together down . . . I could not save her. Waters: bitter death: lost."[127] This reference, however, is essentially a redevelopment of ideas first expressed in the opening chapter, in which Stephen recalls a real drowning in the harbour nine days ago and the fact that the victim's corpse is still being sought: "The man that was drowned. A sail veering about the blank bay waiting for a swollen bundle to bob up, roll over to the sun a puffy face, salt white. Here I am."[128] It is not until later, though, (in "Proteus") that this actual incident becomes linked in Stephen's imagination with both his mother's death and his identification with Icarus.

Towards the end of the episode, a rich accumulation of motifs and allusions (Wagnerian and otherwise) gather around the central theme of the sea. Stephen thinks "My ashplant will float away":[129] the fluid, changing tide is here seen to pose a threat to the artist's "sword", the sign of his identity and function. Shortly after this, Stephen urinates into the tidal pools, translating his own impressions of the act into richly onomatopoeic language:

> Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseiss, ooos. Vehement breath of waters amid seasnakes, rearing horses, rocks. In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap: bounded in barrels. And, spent, its speech ceases. It flows purling, widely flowing, floating foampool, flower unfurling.[130]

In general terms, this typically imitative technique closely resembles that of Wagner's music. For example, the *Holländer* Overture is well known as one of music's most vivid sea-pictures, while the underwater effects in *Das Rheingold* scene i are especially noteworthy in this context. What immediately follows this passage, however, is much more overtly Wagnerian:

> Under the upswelling tide he saw the writhing weeds lift languidly and sway reluctant arms, hising up their petticoats, in whispering water swaying and upturning coy silver fronds. Day by day: night by night: lifted, flooded and let fall. Lord, they are weary: and, whispered to, they sigh. . . . Weary too in sight of lovers, lascivious men, a naked woman shining in her courts, she draws a toil of waters.[131]

The imaginative transformation here of "writhing weeds" into sea-nymphs or mermaids is suggestive. On the one hand it prefigures the "Sirens" episode later in the novel, while, on the other, like that episode, it suggests a parallel with Wagner's Rhine-daughters.[132] While there may seem but scant evidence for such a parallel in the text itself, it is once again the context that confirms it. For if Stephen is held to be a Siegfried-manqué throughout (and I take it that this at least has been firmly established, quite apart from the fact that his "ashplant" never deserts him), then any encounter with female water-spirits, whether real or imagined, naturally invites comparison with Siegfried's meeting with the Rhine-daughters in *Götterdämmerung* Act III scene i. In

both instances, the hero is alone, having been occupied in hunting (Siegfried literally, Stephen metaphorically – for the elusive secret of fatherhood known to "Proteus"). Both, armed with their swords, stand on dry ground looking down into the water, and at the seductive maidens who sport therein. In each case, too, the nymphs are weary of their long and unchanging existence (in the case of the Rhine-daughters, because of their long, sorrowful sundering from their beloved gold). The deeper and more general association between woman and water that Stephen hints at is also to be developed much more fully in the novel – and this too has more profound connections with Wagner.

At this point the related theme of the drowning man resurfaces, so to speak, accompanied by suitable references from *The Tempest* and Stephen's brief recollection that he has arranged to meet Mulligan at one at a pub appropriately called "The Ship":

> Five fathoms out there. Full fathom five thy father lies. At one he said. Found drowned. High water at Dublin bar. Driving before it a loose drift of rubble, fanshoals of fishes, silly shells. A corpse rising saltwhite from the undertow, bobbing landward, a pace a pace a porpoise. There he is. Hook it quick. Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor. We have him. Easy now.
>
> Bag of corpsegas sopping in foul brine. A quiver of minnows, fat of a spongy titbit, flash through the slits of his buttoned trouserfly. God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain. Dead breaths I living breathe, tread dead dust, devour a urinous offal from all dead. Hauled stark over the gunwale he breathes upwards the stench of his green grave, his leprous nosehole snoring to the sun.
>
> A seachange this, brown eyes saltblue. Seadeath, mildest of all deaths known to man. Old Father Ocean. . . .
>
> Come. I thirst. Clouding over. No black clouds anywhere, are there? Thunderstorm. Allbright he falls, proud lightning of the intellect, *Lucifer, dico, qui nescit occasum*. . . . He took the hilt of the ashplant, lunging with it softly, dallying still. . . . Toothless Kinch, the superman.[133]

The complexity of this passage does not require detailed analysis in this context, but there are several details worth noting for the role they play in term of what at this point we may term the Wagnerian substratum of the text. Stephen, clearly linked through

several intersecting details to both Siegfried and Wotan the Wanderer, has also, through his seashore environment and the "pale vampire" poem he composes there, attracted overtones of the Flying Dutchman.[134] As discussed in Chapter IV, the last named persona is particularly closely linked with Leopold Bloom and is thus one of the many details connecting the two heroes. Since Stephen has many subconscious premonitions of his meeting with Bloom, this affinity can perhaps be counted among them, while the "urinous offal" may also be a detail linking their personalities, Bloom being famously introduced to the reader immediately after section as a lover of "the inner organs of beasts and fowls . . . which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine".[135]

Also significant is the mention of "Old Father Ocean" (no longer, it would seem, "our great sweet mother") and the final paragraph with its detailed foreshadowing of the "Nothung" crisis (achieved through the allusions to Christ, Lucifer and a coming storm, in tandem with the repeated mention of the ashplant and the mention of the superman). Later in the novel, Stephen considers gloomily that his poverty-stricken sister Dilly is threatening to drag him under in the same way as his dead mother:

> She is drowning. Agenbite. Save her. Agenbite. All against us. She will drown me with her, eyes and hair. Lank coils of seaweed hair around me, my heart, my soul. Salt green death.[136]

Stephen seems to consider that exerting himself to help his doomed family, like appeasing his dying mother, is an act of kindness he cannot afford to make at the expense of his artist's destiny. When he makes his final choice, using "Nothung" to help him, he makes a movement away from the dangerous female waters and towards the free heroic sun that may yet prove his undoing.

Bloom, by deliberate contrast, fears neither water nor his own sexuality. He in fact embraces the very experiences Stephen shuns:

> Enjoy a bath now: clean trough of water, cool enamel, the gentle tepid stream. This is my body.
> He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth,[137] oiled

> by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower.[138]

This tendency is most closely linked to Wagner in the "Sirens" episode. Bloom is identified here with Alberich rather than Wotan or the Flying Dutchman.[139] The episode is referred to by Raymond Furness in his chapter on "Wagner and Myth", where he refers to the similarities between the two Siren barmaids and Wagner's Rhinedaughters (in *Rheingold* scene i) suggesting that Bloom's entry mirrors that of Alberich:

> The scene is the Ormond Bar, but the constant references to water and gold, and teasing and laughing, are surely not fortuitous. . . . The two barmaids, Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy (the latter has just returned from the sea with a large sea-shell), with bronze and golden hair respectively, delight in teasing the inmates of the bar, "in a giggling peal . . . freefly their laughter . . . high piercing notes. . .". Bloom is particularly at risk: "O greasy eyes! Imagine being married to a man like that . . . With his bit of a beard!" – words which are very similar to Flosshilde's mocking appraisal of Alberich's tousled beard and prickly hair.[140] The mockery of the other customers is also a reminder of the Rhinemaidens' later teasing of Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* whose wife, they claim, may beat him: Undine-like the two barmaids preside over the aquamarine gloom of the Ormond Bar, Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy; "they pined in depth of ocean shadow . . .", amongst the green bottles, golden whiskey and Bloom as the obvious outsider.[141]

Of course, the main purpose of the barmaids' characterisation as nereides is to provide a parallel with Homer's sirens, but this is no reason why they cannot suggest the Rhine-daughters as well. The idea that Bloom resembles Alberich at this point also carries weight and the style of this episode is also the most overtly musical in the novel[142] in keeping with its symbolism.

The most suggestive feature of all, though, is Furness's identification of the "aquamarine gloom", the quite magical way in which Joyce manipulates imagery so as to make the bar seem to be underwater. This in particular has a direct equivalent in the submarine ambience of Wagner's music for the Rhine sequence, in which the shifting

orchestral colours, strangely muffled, undulating sounds of lower strings and bubbling woodwind evoke both the motion of the currents and the rippling effects of the light, while even occasional high notes on the flutes seem the perfect counterpart to sudden glancing sunbeams dimly reflected through the water. Joyce, in turn, achieves a similar effect with such phrases as "[h]e blew through the flue two husky fifenotes", "her gliding head as it went down the bar by mirrors, gilded arch for ginger ale, hock and claret glasses shimmering, a spiky shell, where it concerted, mirrored, bronze with sunnier bronze" and "about her bronze over the bar where bald stood by sister gold, inexquisite contrast, contrast inexquisite nonexquisite, slow cool dim seagreen sliding depth of shadow, *eau de Nil*",[143] while even Bloom himself is made to undergo a sea change, becoming "seabloom",[144] "greaseabloom"[145] and even "greaseaseabloom".[146]

Unlike Stephen, then, who

> was hydrophobe, hating partial contact by immersion or total by submersion in cold water (his last bath having taken place in the month of October of the preceding year),[147] disliking the aqueous substances of glass and crystal, distrusting aquacities of thought and language[148]

Bloom is happy to immerse himself in the watery element, to risk drowning, to "surrender" himself to his wife, to the "womanly" side of his own personality and to the multifarious phenomena of life. In this, finally, he is closer to Siegfried than Stephen himself. When Brünnhilde likens herself to a calm pool in which Siegfried can only see himself reflected if he leaves it unsullied, he responds ardently:

> What though my face it mirrors no more,
> Madly I long in the flood to fling me,
> My fire would I boldly
> Quench in the brook:
> Oh would that its waters in bliss might engulf me,
> My longing be lost in the flood![149]

This, then, is what Stephen needs to learn from Bloom if he is truly to achieve (however ironically) the heroic status of a Wagnerian superman. Like Siegfried, his "fearless"

bravado, capable of steeling him against all the power and weight of tradition and popular opinion, comes to nothing when he finds himself confronted with his passive opposite in the figure of woman. To achieve the freedom he desires, he must ultimately free himself from himself by daring to "lose" himself, both sexually and, more importantly, by submitting to mortality and the taint of earthly life, the great rolling sunlit sea of Molly's apotheosis, foreshadowed yet again in Siegfried's crowning triumph:

> Laughing thou wakest in rapture to me!
> Brünnhilde lives, Brünnhilde laughs!
> Hail the day that brightens about us!
> Hail the sun that shineth in glee!
> Hail the light from the night newborn!
> Hail the world where Brünnhilde lives!
> She wakes, she lives,
> She laughs to her loved one:
> Proudly shineth Brünnhilde's star!
> She is for ever, is for aye
> My wealth and world, my one and all:
> Light of all loving, laughing death![150]

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[1] *Ulysses* (1992), p 449; (my emphasis).
[2] Ibid., p 460; (my emphasis).
[3] Ibid., p 466; (my emphasis).
[4] Ibid., p 473.
[5] *Joyce and Wagner* (1991), p 83.
[6] See pp 154-59.
[7] *Ulysses*, p 457; (my emphasis).
[8] Ibid., p 461; (my emphases).
[9] *Der fliegende Holländer* (1938) II, iii, ll 81-82 ("Du bist ein Engel, eines Engels Liebe/Verwolfe selbst zu trösten weiß!")
[10] A theme that recurs with a more pointedly satirical emphasis in *Das Rheingold* when the love-goddess Freia is literally measured against the Nibelung Hoard.
[11] *Ulysses*, p 462; (one might indeed consider that there are several stories behind it).
[12] Ibid., p 463.
[13] *Der fliegende Holländer* II, ii, ll 58-61 ("Oh, prahle nicht! Was kann dein Leiden sein?/Kennst jenes Unglucksel'gen Schicksal du?/Fühlst du den Schmerz, den tiefen Gram,/Mit dem herab auf mich er sieht?")
[14] *Moby Dick* (1943), p 132.
[15] *Ulysses*, pp 464-65.
[16] Ibid., p 465.
[17] *Der fliegende Holländer* II, ii (stage directions).
[18] *Ulysses*, p 465; (my emphasis).
[19] Ibid., pp 465-66.
[20] *Der fliegende Holländer* II, ii, ll 103-4 ("Ein heil'ger Balsam meinem Wunden,/Dem Schwur, dem hohen Wort entfließt").

[21] *Ulysses*, p 490.
[22] As so often, this allusion, seemingly casually thrown in, functions as a subtle signpost, alerting one to the deeper parallels it conceals.
[23] See pp 157-59.
[24] *Ulysses*, pp 493-94.
[25] Ibid., p 496.
[26] Ibid., pp 902-4.
[27] Ibid., p 932.
[28] *Der fliegende Holländer* III, iii (stage directions); cf. *Götterdämmerung* finale (where the spectacle is also witnessed by an onstage crowd, suggesting a projection of the audience into the stage and a subsequent blurring of the barriers between illusion and reality).
[29] *Wagner and Literature* (1982), pp 32-59.
[30] Ibid., p 32.
[31] Ibid., p 33.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., p 35.
[34] See note 26, p 43.
[35] In "Pornography and Obscenity", he claims that "Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* seems to me very near to pornography . . . . genuine pornography is almost always underworld (sic), it doesn't come into the open . . . you can recognise it by the insult it offers, invariably to sex, and to the human spirit . . . . Wagner and Charlotte Brontë were both in the same state where the strongest instincts have collapsed, and sex has become something slightly obscene, to be wallowed in, but despised" (in *A Selection from Phoenix* (1979), p 40).
[36] ("Wagner puzza di sesso") Ellman, *James Joyce* (1959), p 393.
[37] *Tannhäuser* (1900) I, ii, l 120 ("der Erde warmenden Schooß (sic); this last word, consistently spelt thus in the sources at my disposal, is presumably meant to be "Schoß" (womb), making the original more obviously symbolic of the female – as indeed is the "Venusberg" itself).
[38] Ibid., l 117 (a rather free translation of "kalten Menschen" (cold[-hearted] men).
[39] See pp 20-21.
[40] See p 51.
[41] Ellman, op. cit., p 632.
[42] *Ulysses*, p 452.
[43] Ibid., p 465.
[44] Ibid., p 466.
[45] Ibid., p 478.
[46] Ibid., p 476.
[47] See pp 207-11.
[48] *Ulysses*, p 478.
[49] Ibid., p 469; (my emphases).
[50] Ibid., p 478.
[51] Ibid.
[52] See p 160.
[53] *Tannhäuser* III, ii, ll 9-14 ("O du mein holder Abendstern,/Wohl grüßt' ich immer dich so gern;/Vom Herzen das sie nie verrieth/Grüße sie, wenn sie vorbei dir zieht,/Wenn sie entschwebt dem Thal der Erden,/Ein sel'ger Engel dort zu werden").
[54] *Ulysses*, p 490.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., p 641.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., p 77.
[59] There is, for example, a picture of a nymph (cut out of *Photo Bits*!) that hangs on Bloom's bedroom wall, while Bloom himself, at one point, makes a point of visiting the statues of naked goddesses in the National Library.
[60] See p 167.
[61] *Ulysses*, pp 680-81.
[62] *Das Rheingold* (1912) iv, (stage direction).
[63] *Siegfried* (1912) III, i (stage direction).
[64] It is also significant that, as Deryck Cooke points out, Wagner's main source for this scene, the *Poetic Edda*, depicts this figure as rising from the realm of the dead (*I saw the World end* (1979), p 111).

[65] *Ulysses*, p 73; (cf. the ageing of the gods in *Rheingold* ii).
[66] *Siegfried* III, i, l 181; ("ewigen Schlaf").
[67] Indeed, as argued in Chapter IV, Stephen may be considered to embody the roles of both Siegfried and Wotan (see p 169); in the "Circe" episode, then, he, Wotan-like, summons his mother from the realm of the dead, and, reverting to his Siegfried-persona, defies her.
[68] *Siegfried* II, ii, l 136; ("Nur noch viel schöner").
[69] Ibid. II, ii, ll 143-4; ("Ach! möcht' ich Sohn/Meine Mutter seh'n!").
[70] An issue that is to recur with far greater intensity in *Parsifal* – see pp 218-20.
[71] *Ulysses*, pp 10-11.
[72] Ibid., p 3.
[73] Ibid., p 9.
[74] The fact that Stephen is actually standing on top of a tower overlooking the sea and there are no "woodshadows" anywhere in sight or in his waking memory also narrows down the possible associations. Quite simply, it is impossible to account for the image without turning to Wagner.
[75] Zuckerman, *The First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan (1964), p 30.
[76] In his chapter on "Wagnerolatry", Magee attempts to account for this phenomenon as follows: "Wagner's music expresses, as does no other art, repressed and highly charged contents of the psyche, and . . . this is the reason for its uniquely disturbing effect. To make a Freudian pun, it gets past the Censor. Some people are made to feel by it that they are in touch with the depths of their own personalities for the first time. The feeling is of a wholeness yet unboundedness - hence, I suppose, its frequent comparison with mystical or religious experience. The passionate nature of it, its unwonted depth and its frequently erotic character also explain why it is like being in love. Most important of all, it is the abandoned utterance of what has been in some way forbidden, and thus presents us with the life of feeling which we all in our heart of hearts would like to live but which, in the real world, we can never live, a life in which our most passionate desires and their expression are unrestrained - life as it would be if the Id could have its way. . . . This is why it seems to transcend - and to expand the consciousness of its listeners beyond - the bounds of what is possible; why it is so commonly spoken of as a form of wizardry or hypnosis"; (*Aspects of Wagner* (1972), pp 59-60).
[77] In the "Liebesnacht" for example, there is a seemingly endless succession of long, languorous melodies, which unfolds itself with exquisite sweetness like the fragrant tendrils of some rare exotic flower, while the rapt and spellbound voices of the lovers seem to float in a timeless ecstasy.
[78] Zuckerman comments "The listener to the music of *Tristan* . . . must surrender to the experience at the expense of being uncomfortably involved in its excitement. *Tristan* is intentionally overeffective. The listener is supposed to be overwhelmed. Wagner's harmonic lushness is not merely productive of aesthetic delight: it is pathogenic, and the disease is hyperaesthesia." (*The First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan, p 21).
[79] *Wagner and Literature*, p 38.
[80] Ibid., pp 40-1; This idea is, of course, one that is frequently found elsewhere, for example in Keats: "Now more than ever seems it rich to die,/To cease upon the midnight with no pain,/While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad/In such an ecstasy!" (*Ode to a Nightingale*, ll 55-58).
[81] See pp 196-97.
[82] *Ulysses*, pp 476-77.
[83] Ibid., p 477.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., pp 893-94.
[86] Ibid., pp 876-77.
[87] Ibid., p 884.
[88] Ibid., p 916.
[89] According to Harry Blamires, Molly is here referring to a stage adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities* (*The Bloomsday Book* (1983), p 257).
[90] *Ulysses*, pp 911-12.
[91] Ibid., p 923.
[92] Ibid., pp 923-24.
[93] Ibid., p 933.
[94] Zuckerman, *he First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan, p 23.
[95] *Wagner and Literature*, p 32.
[96] *The Complete Works of St Teresa of Jesus* (1946) vol. I, pp 192-93.
[97] Cf. Zuckerman: "[T]he twin conception of *Tristan* and *Parsifal* is evident in the musical affinity between the works" (*The First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan, p 25).

[98] "[The lovers'] quest is not for transitory fulfillment but for the obstacles that prolong passion – ultimately for the final obstacle, death, which is paradoxically the only permanent fulfillment. . . . Hence *Tristan* apotheosizes the unhealthiest Eros – the boundless desire for a suicidal union with the Infinite, objectified in a human love impossible of fulfillment." (Op. cit., p 24).
[99] Nordau, *Degeneration* (1968), p 188.
[100] *Ulysses*, pp 24-25.
[101] See pp 124-136.
[102] *Ulysses*, p 133.
[103] Siegmund is technically an exception since his father is still alive but their estrangement is nonetheless complete and Siegmund clearly thinks him dead.
[104] See pp 205-7.
[105] *Ulysses*, p 33.
[106] See p 133.
[107] Cf. *Finnegans Wake* (1992), pp 605-6.
[108] This is, of course, another archetypal association and is found in numerous places besides Wagner's operas. Writing on Helène Cixous, for example, Toril Moi claims "water is the feminine element *par excellence*: the closure of the mythical world contains and reflects the comforting security of the mother's womb. It is within this space that Cixous's speaking subject is free to move from one subject position to another, or to merge oceanically with the world" (*Sexual/Textual Politics* (1987), p 117). One is also reminded of the central metaphor of *Antony and Cleopatra* with its distinct sexual overtones, the disillution of male Rome into female Egypt, the "serpent of old Nile".
[109] Zuckerman, *The First Hundred Years of Wagner's* Tristan, p 7; cf. "In *Nietzsche contra Wagner* the effect of Wagner's famous "infinite melody" is described in a simile: 'One walks into the sea, gradually loses one's secure footing, and finally surrenders oneself to the elements without reservation: one must *swim*.' Nietzsche had once praised such surrender to the elements as properly Dionysian, and in *The Birth of Tragedy* he had displayed a Swinburnian fondness for images of musical drowning." (op. cit., p 75) & footnote: "Someone in Hollywood, for a film called *Humoresque*, thought of accompanying the scene of a suicide-drowning with the *Liebestod* – the vocal line played on a solo violin!"
[110] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1992), p 111.
[111] *Tannhäuser* II, iv, ll 48-55 (". . . ein Wunderbronnen,/In dem mein Geist voll hohen Staunens blickt;/Aus ihm er schöpfet gnadenreiche Wonnen/Durch die mein Herz er namenlos erquickt./Und nimmer möcht' ich diesen Bronnen trüben,/Berühren nicht den Quell mit frevlen Muth/In Anbetung möcht' ich mich opfernd üben,/Vergießen froh mein letzes Herzensblut!")
[112] Ibid., ll 64-71 ("Doch ohne Sehnsucht heiß zu fühlen/Ich seinem Quell nicht nahen kann;/Des Durstes Brennen muß ich kühlen,/Getrost leg' ich die Lippen an:/In vollen Zügen trink' ich Wonnen,/In die kein Zagen je sich mischt,/Denn unversiegbar ist der Bronnen,/Wie mein Verlangen nie erlischt").
[113] Ibid., ll 81-83 ("Der Bronnen ist die Tugend wahr;/Du sollst in Inbrunst ihn verehren/Und opfern seinem holden Klar").
[114] See pp 124-36.
[115] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p 242.
[116] *Ulysses*, pp 3-4.
[117] See pp 202-3; (the "Nature" motif referred to there forming the essential musical material of the "River" prelude).
[118] See p 207.
[119] *Ulysses*, p 9.
[120] *An Introduction to* Der Ring des Nibelungen (1969), pp 9-10.
[121] *Ulysses*, p 28.
[122] Ibid., p 27.
[123] *Ulysses*, p 47.
[124] These are, respectively: "My soul walks with me, form of forms. So in the moon's midwatches I pace the path above the rocks, in sable silvered, hearing Elsinore's tempting flood" (Ibid., p 55); "And there, the stoneheaps of dead builders, a warren of weasel rats. Hide gold there. Try it. You have some. Sands and stones. Heavy of the past. Sir Lout's toys. Mind you don't get one bang on the ear. I'm the bloody well gigant rolls all them bloody well boulders, bones for my steppingstones. Feefawfum. I zmellz de bloodz odz an Iridzman" (Ibid., pp 55-56). The first of these refers to the important theme of Stephen being "the ghost of his own father" (Ibid., p 21), which clearly parallels his Wagnerian roles (cf. the discussion on Stephen as Wotan, pp 167-69). The second suggests, among other legends on similar subjects, the giants who, in *Das Rheingold*, build Valhalla in return for the Nibelung's stolen gold. Note, for example the similarity of tone and diction the excerpt shares with Fasolt's words to Wotan: "Soft sleep

sealed thine eyes,/While we with labour ceaseless built the fort./Endless toil tired us not,/Heavy stone on stone we heaped;/Lofty tower, gate and door,/Shield and screen thy splendid castle halls./There standeth the fortress,/Gleaming bright in daylight's beams;/Pass thou in, and pay our wage!"; (i, ll 92-100; "Sanft schloß Schlaf dein Aug':/Wir beide bauten Schlummers bar die Burg./Mächt'ger Müh' müde nie,/Stauten starke Stein' wir auf;/Steiler Turm, Tür und Tor/Deckt und schließt im schlanken Schloß den Saal./Dort steht's, was wir stemmten;/Schimmernd hell bescheint's der Tag:/Zieh nun ein, uns zahl' den Lohn!") It is also tempting to note how similar the crude force of the original, with its massive conglomerate of alliterative sounds, is to parts of *Finnegans Wake* (which similarly invite one to try them out aloud).

[125] *Ulysses*, p 55.

[126] See, for example: "Fabulous artificer, the hawklike man. You flew. Whereto? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. *Pater, ait.* Seabedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing he" (Ibid., p 270).

[127] Ibid., p 57.

[128] Ibid., p 25.

[129] Ibid., p 62.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., pp 62-63.

[132] In the filmed centenary production of the cycle at Bayreuth, directed by Patrice Chereau, the Rhine-daughters are in fact portrayed as prostitutes and can even be seen "hising up their petticoats".

[133] *Ulysses*, pp 63-64.

[134] See pp 58-61.

[135] *Ulysses*, p 65.

[136] Ibid., p 313.

[137] Cf. "the childman weary, the manchild in the womb", (Ibid., p 870).

[138] Ibid., p 107.

[139] As Alberich and Hagen are intended as a dark counterpart to Wotan and Siegfried, there may be considerable irony in this. Since Wagner's Nibelungs are often considered to be a by-product of his anti-Semitism, in that they are given all the offensive characteristics of the nineteenth century Jewish stereotype, any intentional similarity between them and Joyce's Jewish hero would suggest a characteristic attempt on his part to contest the implied racism.

[140] Actually, although Joyce interpolates this mocking dialogue with descriptions of Bloom approaching the hotel, he has not arrived yet, and the barmaids are ostensibly talking about "that old fogey in Boyd's [a chemist's]" (p 333), not necessarily Bloom at all, though the issue is confused by teasing narrative intrusions like "Married to Bloom, to greaseaseabloom" (p 335).

[141] *Wagner and Literature*, p 125.

[142] Since the chapter is largely about music (Bloom's ability to listen to it without "drowning" in it providing a Homeric parallel with Odysseus' resistance to the Sirens), it includes not only performances of songs but numerous references to music, musical puns and complex and ingenious musical analogies in Joyce's verbal technique.

[143] *Ulysses*, p 336.

[144] Ibid., p 343.

[145] Ibid., p 345.

[146] Ibid., p 335.

[147] This amusingly gives the lie to Molly's assumption that he would be clean in comparison to most of the men she meets (see p 205).

[148] *Ulysses*, p 785.

[149] *Siegfried* III, iii, ll 211-19; ("Ein herrlich Gewäßer wogt vor mir;/Mit allen Sinnen she' ich nur sie,/Die wonnig wogende Welle./Brach sie mein Bild, so brenn' ich nun selbst,/Sengende Glut in der Flut zu kühlen;/Ich selbst, wie ich bin,/Spring' in den Bach:/O, daß seine Wogen mich selig verschlängen,/Mein Sehnen schwänd in der Flut!")

[150] Ibid., ll 281-92; ("Lachend erwachst du Wonnige mir:/Brünnhilde lebt, Brünnhilde lacht!/Heil dem Tage, der uns umleuchtet!/Heil der Sonne, die uns bescheint!/Heil der Licht, von dem Nacht gebährt!/Heil der Welt, der Brünnhilde lebt!/Sie wacht, sie lebt,/Sie lacht mir entgegen./Prangend strahlt mir Brünnhildes Stern!/Swie ist mir ewig, ist mir immer,/Erb' und Eigen, ein und all:/Leuchtende Liebe, lachender Tod!")

Conclusion

This study cannot pretend to be the last word on the subject of Joyce and Wagner. Nor does it attempt to rival Martin's excellent book. The fact is he largely exhausts the absolutely rock solid allusions Joyce makes to the composer throughout his work. However, as was admitted at the outset, the aim here has been to risk exploring less concrete parallels and similarities, in the hope that they suggest Joyce *probably* intended them. Furthermore it is hoped the following at least have been demonstrated:

- The famous "Nothung!" reference is laden with more multiple meanings and correspondences than have yet been considered. Not only does it connect Stephen Dedalus to Siegfried, but also to Siegmund and Wotan, as well as characters from other Wagner operas.

- There are serious grounds for considering *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and possibly *Ulysses* as well, to allude directly to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, as well as indirectly to *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*.

- The chief Wagnerian correspondences in the two novels (categorised by Martin as "The Artist-hero", "The Wandering Jew" and "The Redemptive Woman") are not neatly distinct from one another, but interact to form parts of a broader, more inclusive pattern.

- Beyond the irony that is normally deduced in Joyce's deflation of Wagner's heroic models (which is not contested), there is a fundamental seriousness in his wholehearted acceptance of Wagner's mythic figures as ideally suited to depicting certain modern "types".

Moreover, it must be admitted that, in attempting to present as "complete" as possible a survey of the Wagnerian parallels in the novels, it has been a continual temptation to go further, to consider more and more possibilities (not to mention the frequent links with *Finnegans Wake*, which appears to extend the same patterns of allusion still further).[1]

However reluctantly, one must eventually accept that there is no comprehensive system one can apply to the problem, no method by which Joyce's use of Wagnerian material can be systematised and thereby rendered finite.[2]

Raymond Furness comments, referring to an incident in Burgess's *The Worm and the Ring* (a Wagnerian novel written by a Joycean), "*sub specie Wagneri* the world becomes a more wondrous place, and one listener at least[3] feels grateful that even the rain puddles of drab English suburbia are transfigured by its seductive suggestiveness".[4] This confession, it seems to me, conceals the secret of the most fundamental and unprovable of all the connections between the inventor of music-drama and the author of the twentieth century's greatest novel: the fact that it is no coincidence that *sub specie Joycei* exactly the same thing happens.

Of course, it is normal for exposure (especially repeated exposure) to great works of art to produce an uplifting or ecstatic effect. Surely everyone who is in any way a student of the arts knows this and considers it the reason why (s)he has chosen to pursue his subject. But, is there not something more than this at work in the case of these two particular artists? When Furness speaks of the effect of Burgess's novel (which, by the way, uses the dramatic framework of the whole *Ring* cycle as the determining principle of its plot – something that makes it not so much an original or profound statement as an intellectual exercise, pleasing but not in itself transfiguring), he is referring to the way in which, by using overt Wagnerian allusions in a drab suburban setting, Burgess is able to transplant some of the operas' inherent power, by association, onto the setting he describes, the effect of which is to suggest that the experience of modern life can indeed be illuminated by reference to a Wagnerian moment. The implication is that, the next time one is walking to the shops, the association of a rain puddle with the finale of *Das Rheingold* can make the experience an unexpectedly satisfying one.

Joyce, however, has obviously done something much more involved than Burgess. By means of his own unique powers of expression, he makes his richly allusive text as potentially transfiguring as a Wagner opera. The implication this time is that, the next time

one is walking to the shops, the association with Mr Bloom walking to the shops can make the experience a transfiguring one:

> [H]is eyelids sank quietly often as he walked in happy warmth. . . . Makes you feel young. . . . He prolonged his pleased smile. . . . Quick warm sunlight came running from Berkeley Road, swiftly, in slim sandals, along the brightening footpath. Runs, she runs to meet me, a girl with gold hair on the wind.[5]

But is the fact that the one experience can be likened to the other merely a coincidence? Perhaps it is simply a matter of Joyce's having been inspired to emulate Wagner's "seductive suggestiveness" in a different medium. However, the business of this study has been to show that Joyce *does* allude to Wagner frequently and that with such depth of association that one cannot limit the Wagnerian dimension of the text to those rare moments of direct reference as do occur but should rather consider that Wagner, as much as Homer or *Hamlet*, is a ghostly presence throughout the whole. The above quotation, for example, reminds one of how Freia restores undying youth to the gods, the underlying point in both cases being that the experience of beauty lends one's life a quality that transcends time.

This example, furthermore, suggests another point. Joyce's "interpretation" of Wagner is implicit in the source. Wagner's works are evidently allegorical in nature, since, however entertaining their surface, a world of magical and impossible happenings, their inner meaning always relates directly to our experience of the real world. His Siegfried, for example, is obviously meant to suggest the type of young man who, however unpromising his circumstances, can assert his independence against the conflicting expectations of the whole world. His Dutchman is meant to demonstrate the misery of modern life. His heroines, finally, are meant to show how one can "redeem" oneself through a wholehearted abandonment to the experience of life that is most abundantly figured in sexual ecstasy.

Joyce and Wagner have in common the ability to produce extremes of emotional enthusiasm on the part of those who encounter them. Wagner, writing music, is arguably

more successful, at least in terms of immediate intensity. Under ideal circumstances, the ecstasy produced by the *Liebestod*, or, less obviously, the central climax of the "Wahn" soliloquy or the woodland motif in the first act of *Parsifal*, seems to transfigure the nature of consciousness itself. However, after repeated exposure, the same could almost be said of several passages in *Ulysses*, where Joyce seems to wallow in the sensuousness of language just as much as Wagner does in that of music (both frequently attempting a technique imitative of life itself). As well as the above example (and numerous others quoted throughout this study), one could consider an endless profusion of instances, of which the following must serve as a merely personal selection:

> Mr Bloom ate his strips of sandwich, fresh clean bread, with relish of disgust, pungent mustard, the feety savour of green cheese. Sips of wine soothed his palate. . . . Wine soaked and softened rolled pith of bread mustard a moment mawkish cheese.[6]

> Flood of warm jimjam lickitup secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire, dark to lick flow, invading. Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her. Tup. Pores to dilate dilating. Tup. The joy the feel the warm the. Tup. To pour o'er sluices pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow, joygush, tupthrop. Now! Language of love. . . . It soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long long breath he breath long life, soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolistic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all about the all, the endlessnessnessness . . .[7]

> What special affinities appeared to him to exist between the moon and woman?
> Her antiquity in preceding and surviving successive tellurian generations: her nocturnal predominance: her satellitic dependence: her luminary reflection: her constancy under all her phases, rising, and setting by her appointed times, waxing and waning: the forced invariability of her aspect: her indeterminate response to inaffirmative interrogation: her potency over effluent and refluent waters: her power to enamour, to mortify, to invest with beauty, to render insane, to incite to and aid delinquency: the tranquil inscrutability of her visage: the terribility of her isolated dominant implacable resplendent propinquity: her omens of tempest and of calm: the stimulation of her light,

her motion and her presence: the admonition of her craters, her arid seas, her silence: her splendour, when visible: her attraction, when invisible.[8]

But, of course, none of this "proves" anything. *Ulysses*, as I have tried to show, *gives the impression* of a sustained Wagnerian subtext, but Joyce was too skilful an artist to leave any cracks showing in his handiwork. As deceptive a magus as Klingsor himself,[9] he may have more tricks up his sleeve than we can ever be aware of – or there may just turn out to be "Nothung" in it after all!

[1] See the appendix which follows on pp 234-244.
[2] Of course, though, it would really be a great pity if there was!
[3] Himself, I assume.
[4] *Wagner and Literature*, p 98.
[5] *Ulysses*, pp 68-74.
[6] Ibid., pp 220-22.
[7] Ibid., pp 354-55; (cf. in this case, Walther's "Trial Song" in *Die Meistersinger* I, iii).
[8] Ibid., pp 823-24.
[9] Nietzsche, as might be guessed, was the first to nickname Wagner after the villain of *Parsifal*. In the opera, it is he who creates the magic flower maidens who lure the Grail-knights from the path of perfection and Nietzsche (heretically, of course) saw this as the perfect image of that Wagner whose perfumed melodies sapped the manhood (as he saw it) of a whole generation of European youth. Joyce, perhaps intentionally, evokes this by making Bloom, sensualist though he is, resistant to the absolute demands of music (symbolised by the Sirens) and able to see that it can be reduced to "Musemathematics" and that if you "hear chords a bit off" you "feel lost a bit" (Ibid., p 359).

Appendix: Wagner in *Finnegans Wake*

Relatively little has been said in this study apropos of *Finnegans Wake*, largely because the issues raised by that supremely challenging text demand still more rigorous attention than those of *Ulysses* and ideally deserve to be the focus of a separate study. Its many and varied references to Wagner have been detailed most thoroughly to date by Timothy Martin, though he opines that a final catalogue would elude all efforts. All that concerns me here are those aspects of the *Wake* that further elaborate on Wagnerian themes already existing in the *Portrait* and/or *Ulysses*. And foremost among these are unquestionably those concerning the close association of woman and water (that were considered in the final section of Chapter V).

Before moving on to focus on these, however, it should at least be mentioned that the text of the *Wake* is particularly noteworthy for the frequent allusions it makes to *Tristan und Isolde*, from as early as the well-known opening of the second paragraph, "Sir Tristram, violer d'amores" through to the numerous references in Part II Chapter iv (which is primarily concerned with the lovers' sea-voyage – as in Wagner's Act I) and in several other places besides. Indeed, the (originally Irish) legend on which the opera is based is one of the most prominent of all the many stories to feature in the *Wake* and arguably second only to that of the Fall (of which indeed it presents another version). Lest it be thought that it is only the original legend and not Wagner's own idiosyncratic interpretation of it that features there, however, we have the plentiful comic variations on Isolde's "Mild und leise" (the opening words of her *Liebestod*), "mildew Lisa", "mild Aunt Lisa", "Meldundleize" and so on. This particular area of research, moreover, has attracted substantial critical attention since the *Wake* first appeared – a trend that is unlikely to decrease since it deals with an inexhaustibly rich facet of the text.

Less well-known is that references to all the other Wagner operas can also be found in the *Wake* (as well as to aspects of the composer's life and career); Martin provides the most substantial list to date. Prominent among them are the allusions to *Der fliegende Holländer*, which can be linked to those in *Ulysses* in that HCE, like Bloom, is a wanderer, albeit a somnolent one. He (and other characters) are not only compared to various legendary and historical personages but, such is the dreamlike mythic nature of the book, actually become them. In the case of the Flying Dutchman, there is a

concentration of distorted references to Senta, Erik and the Dutchman himself in the "Norwegian Captain" episode (Part II Chapter iii). The high tragic tone of Wagner is, typically of Joyce, deflated into crude sexual farce. However, exactly who is playing which role is difficult to say. As in the text as a whole, characters change and swap parts with bewildering rapidity and two or more personae regularly overlap or combine. So, for example, the Dutchman is present both in "the bugganeering wanderducken" (a direct metamorphosis of Mr Bloom's "buccaneering Vanderdeckens") and the "Norweeger's capstan" (who, in relation to the opera, would naturally suggest Daland). Furthermore, although the blustering character of Joyce's debased Dutchman seems closest to that of Earwicker-Finnegan, it is more likely to be associated with his son Shaun (who regularly gets the girl that his impotent father had lusted after – as in the Tristan-Mark-Isolde parallels), since it is in fact Erik – the unsuccessful lover in the opera – whose name, modulated to "Errick", suggests a variation of Earwicker. Among the numerous direct references to the opera in this section are "the flyend of a touchman" and "the phantom shape", and they are given further weight by the presence of allusions to Wagner's other operas, including *Tannhäuser*: "evenstarde and risingsoon"; "pilerimager's grace" and, most prominently, the *Ring*: "ringround as worldwise" and others, while Wagner himself appears in person as "Roguenor". The Dutchman motif is dominant though: "aweigh he yankered on the Norgean run so that seven sailend sonnenrounders was he breastbare to the brinabath" (here the seven-year period of sailing seems to be refered to, just as in *Ulysses*). That "he nought feared crimp or cramp of shore sharks" suggests the doomed sailor's immunity to all forms of danger. Then, the sentence

> It was whol niet godthaarb of errol Loritz off his Cape of Good Howthe and his trippertrice loretta lady, a maomette to his monetone . . . had he hows would he keep her as niece as a fiddie

evokes a whole medley of related Wagnerian ideas. Obviously "Cape of Good Howthe" draws immediate attention to the Dutchman legend (since this is already prominent throughout the episode) while, at the same time, giving it an oddly Irish connection. That "errol" may be a variant of Erik is made likely by the inclusion of Loritz (feasibly Lauritz Melchior – a prominent *heldentenor* of the pre-war period (regarded by many in fact as one of the greatest ever), who would certainly have begun with secondary roles

like that of Erik before going on to master the more demanding heroic ones such as Siegfried). In *Holländer*, though, the heroine falls for the baritone, and an appropriately gloomy-sounding one at that, a circumstance that may be signified by "a maomette to his monetone", while "had he hows would he keep her as niece as a fiddle" evokes the Dutchman's yearning for domesticity; ("fiddle" may be construed in a musical sense as well, one of several words that can in this passage, and that thereby lend further credence to the existence of a Wagnerian subtext therein). Not long afterwards, the drinkers at the bar who are audience to this story, which it appears is being told by "their dutchuncler mynhosts" or HCE himself, ask him "whad ababs his dopter?" and "their wetting" which would seem to very to the Dutchman's prospect of marriage to Senta. That "wedding" should become "wetting" is of course appropriate for a variety of reasons. Next, "diluv's own deluge" recalls the Satanic curse of endless wandering, there is a further reference to "eric" and then a mention of "seven oak ages", presumably the seven year period of sailing once again. Sometimes the *Holländer* references are coupled with those from the *Ring*, suggesting in particular Joyce's awareness of the similarity between the characters of Vanderdecken (who longs for his own destruction) and Wotan (who longs not only for his but that of the whole world over which he presides). For example, "he had gone dump in the doomering this tide where the peixies would pickle him down to . . . Divy and Jorum's locquor" sounds like the Dutchman again because of "tide" and "Divy and Jorum's", but doomering is clearly a variation of the many "gutterdoomering" puns throughout the *Wake*. More particularly, the "peixies" combine suggestions of both the Rhinedaughters (often referred to as nixies ("Nicker" in German)) who drag Hagen down to a watery grave, and the "spirits of the ocean" that Wagner said he had described in the overture as calling out for the Dutchman's soul. *Holländer* allusions then become more explicit. In "her youngfree yoke stilling his wandercursus" for instance "youngfree" is obviously Joycean for German "jungfrau" and the connection with the opera is obvious. A wedding (or "wetting") is clearly imminent, and is given a distinctly watery quality: "for ditcher for plower, till deltas twoport" (here, Joyce accentuates the sexual imagery, latent in Wagner, of the ship seeking harbour); "O wanderness be wondernest" plays on the same theme and, finally, a reference to "Mina" suggests Wagner's first wife, Minna, (after whom he had initially thought of naming his heroine). At the same time, there are still plentiful echoes of the *Ring* and Wotan in particular: "woolving nihilnulls . . . and woiving the ulvertones of the voice . . . Hiilyhollow, valleyiow!" (one of Wotan's

pseudonyms is Wolfe; his son Siegmund's is Wolfing; "nihilnulls" suggests the oblivion Wotan craves; "ulvertones" sounds like wolfish undertones – perhaps Wotan's potent bass-baritone; "Hillyhollow, valleylow" connect with the text's numerous other Valhalla puns). Elsewhere, Joyce seems simply to poke fun at the style of alliterative verse used in the *Ring*: "as you wrinkle wryghtly, bully bluedomer, it's a suirsite's stircus haunting hesteries . . . We gin to gnir" (while, in addition, this last phrase recalls Gungnir, the name given to Odin's spear in the eddas).

These multiple references to both operas now combine with others made to *Parsifal* and especially to the figure of Amfortas, yet another avatar of the Dutchman-Wotan type. For example, "Eh, chrystal holder? Save Ampsterdampster that had rheumaniscences in his netherlumbs" suggests the crystal cup that Wagner uses to signify the Grail in *Parsifal* (and which is held by Amfortas). "Ampsterdampster" is the Dutchman again, but also Amfortas (both of whom need to be saved), while "rheumaniscences in his netherlumbs" manages to convey both Vanderdecken's homesickness and the Grail-King's agonising wound (and symbolic castration). On the same theme, "By the drope in his groin . . . thinks the cappon . . . we were heretofore" (we were "heretofore" indeed since these mythic stories are all essentially retellings of one another). "And it marinned down his gargantast trombsathietic like the marousers of the gulpstroom. The kersse of Wolafs on him" suggests both the heavy Wagnerian orchestration used to depict the rough weather of *Holländer* and the ubiquitous curse that hangs over both the Dutchman and Wotan (Wolafs?) Wotan (as the Wanderer) and his yearning for "das Ende" are again present in "anded the enderer". Finally, both figures continue to emerge throughout the following selection of phrases (too numerous to comment on individually): "blastfumed the nowraging scamptail"; "the bloedaxe bloodooth baltxebec"; "voyaging after maidens"; "after Donnerbruch fire"; "alleyeoneysed"; "the wolf he's on the walk"; "ye have swallen blooders' oathes"; "the nowedding captain . . . who was praying god . . . by the seven bosses . . . he would save bucklesome when she wooed belove on him"; "and all the prim rossies are out dressparading and the tubas tout tout for the glowru of their god". The purpose of all these allusions, beyond the obvious one of parody, depends finally on an interpretation of the episode as a whole and its relation to the complete text. All that can be hoped for here is to create an impression of the immensely rich suggestiveness of the multiple Wagnerian references in this section.

Of all the Wagner allusions in the *Wake*, however, the most significant is the very subtle and elaborate one that begins with the very first word of the novel's opening sentence:

> riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.

This opening is well known to be a way of continuing the novel at the point where it ends, by leaving the final sentence incomplete in a way that seems to lead naturally (in terms of both content and rhythm) back to the opening sentence again:

> First. We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousends- thee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the

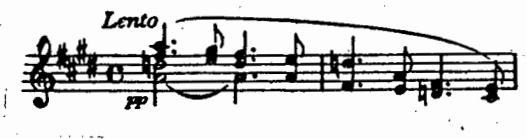
The phrase "brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back" also seems to hint that we are back where we started. Also, it is in the nature of rivers to lead back to their source of origin, so this seems a perfectly natural transition to take place.

To return to Wagner, however, there is a striking similarity here to the cyclical structure of the *Ring*. That work, too, begins in a river (and ends on the riverbank). Furthermore, Wagner's Rhine, like Joyce's Liffey, is not so much the real, geographical river as a mythical, universal one. In fact, it is the great world-encircling river that in the Norse sagas (as in the mythologies of so many other cultures) represents the outermost limits of the world. It is also a living being in its own right and in form is round, providing the perfect circle that represents infinity. In other words, it is itself the Ring, the very symbol of the cosmic drama for which it provides both natural setting and framing device, the stage on which all of history is to be played out, from the primordial events of *Das Rheingold* to the cataclysmic vision of *Götterdämmerung*. In terms of the drama itself, it will be remembered that the theft of the Rhinegold sets in motion the whole chain of events that ends only when the gold is finally returned to the river. Thus, even on a literal level, the Rhine plays a vital role in determining the cyclical structure of the tetralogy. The very first scene of *Das Rheingold* is actually set beneath the surface of

the river, in the depths of the stream itself. It is here that the theft of the gold takes place, and all the events of the first drama in the cycle spring directly from this primal rape and are dominated by forces it sets in motion. Although the river is not visible for the rest of the drama, it is nonetheless supposed to flow through a deep valley situated between the alpine meadow in the foreground and the towering height of Valhalla in the background. Furthermore, at the end of the opera, we actually hear the voices of the Rhinedaughters calling up from below, reminding us that the drama cannot be resolved until their stolen gold is returned to them. In other words, the importance of the river Rhine, both as a physical presence and as a dramatic and symbolic device, is heavily emphasised throughout the four linked scenes of *Das Rheingold*. In the two middle parts of the cycle, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, the Rhine ceases to play a role in the drama, which moves into a primeval wilderness of mountains and forests, but in *Götterdämmerung* we return to the river once more, beginning with the orchestral passage known as "Siegfried's Rhine Journey". This introduces Act I, the first part of which is set in the Gibichung hall on the bank of the Rhine. The presence of the river throughout this scene is much more than mere background detail, however. It provides a concrete reminder of the events with which the whole epic saga began, as well as a hint that they are about come full circle once more. This is clearest at the point where Hagen vows to achieve the Ring through Siegfried's death, thus avenging his father's loss of it in *Das Rheingold*. Act III actually begins on the river itself (with the shore forming the middleground) and also brings back the Rhinedaughters themselves. They even urge Siegfried (albeit unsuccessfully) to return the Ring to their keeping. The broader purpose of this scene is to demonstrate the inexorable progress of the drama towards the point of its beginning. In the last scene of all, the Rhine actually floods the whole stage and, when it recedes, the Rhine-daughters have triumphantly repossessed their gold. The primal age of innocence which existed before the rape of the Rhinegold returns after the gods and their power and the whole age of the world which they had come to represent pass away, leaving post-apocalyptic man free to begin the ever recurrent cycle of history anew.[1]

As usual with Wagner, though, there is much more at stake than is immediately apparent, and it is the music itself that provides the clue to the inner meaning. As was discussed in relation to *Ulysses*, the motif of Nature is directly allied to the motifs of the

Rhine and of Erda, while, still more significantly, Erda's motif[2] becomes, in inversion, the descending motif of "The Twilight of the Gods":



To be more explicit, the *Rheingold* prelude (with which the whole cycle commences) consists entirely of varied repetitions of the original Nature motif and its direct offshoot, the Rhine motif. This remarkable music contains the germ of the musical fabric of the entire tetralogy, since all subsequent motifs are developed from it. Beginning with a throbbing bass that sounds like the impersonal syllable "aum" mystically giving rise to the universe, the prelude unfolds with majestic slowness, each succeeding repetition of the Nature motif rising steadily up with the same unhurried sense of purpose, at the same time combining with other, overlapping strands of colour and so creating an ever denser sound-world, a pulsating aural soup out of which the clearer, brighter lines of the cosmic tide gradually shape themselves and emerge. Increasingly as it progresses, it moves from the general, a vague evocation of the entirety of creation being born amid an interstellar darkness, to the specific, a musical portrait of the river itself - in which the opening scene is to be set. Erda, it will be remembered, is to a large extent synonymous with this unconscious creative process, while the twilight of the gods is its natural converse, the self-annihilating impulse towards universal destruction. So it is that the musical motif of the twilight of the gods is simply Erda's motif stood on its head, and the listener's recognition of this leads to a deeper understanding of the concept, imagined as a blissful sinking into oblivion and a return to that timeless point where alpha and omega are one. When it is heard in its climactic version on full orchestral strings at the end of the cycle, moreover, this motif creates a distinct sense of dissolution, of freedom, like a great cleansing wind sweeping all before it.

Clearly then, aspects of the cyclical form of *Finnegans Wake* are modelled on that of the *Ring*, in that both works use the multi-layered symbol of a river to return to their

respective points of origin. Moreover, both works make use of an elaborate technical means to achieve this result (the open beginning and ending of the novel; the contrasting rising and falling motifs of the opera). In fact, the "recirculation" of the *Wake*'s final sentence back to the point where the novel began is directly analogous to the way the final statement of the "twilight of the gods" motif takes the listener plummeting back to where the "nature" motif began.

An illustration of the way this "recirculation" works in Wagner's case is given in the orchestral prelude to Act III of *Siegfried*, where, amid a considerable number of other motifs, those of "Erda" and "the Twilight of the Gods" are continually alternated in a massive rising and falling sequence. As motifs in Wagner rarely if ever serve a purely musical purpose, it is natural to question what underlying dramatic significance this sequence possesses. To begin with, it provides an introduction to the great scene in which one-eyed Wotan (in his mortal guise as the grey-clad Wanderer) rides through the gathering storm to awaken Erda, in order to learn from her "how to stop a wheel from rolling" - in other words, how to avert his destined downfall now that Siegfried has won the Ring. Wotan's question is purely rhetorical, though. He knows that it cannot be answered, and that his foreseen doom cannot be forestalled. His true purpose is to bid Erda sink into eternal sleep since he has learned to accept his fate joyfully. The purpose of the continually rising and sinking motifs, then, (which continue throughout much of this dialogue) is to provide a graphic illustration of that law of necessity to which even gods must be subject. The rising motif of creation and the falling motif of destruction together form two inseparable arcs of the mighty wheel of fortune - in which potent symbol we can again recognise the outline of the ubiquitous Ring. Interestingly, this pattern is highly apposite to *Finnegans Wake*, where the theme of rising and falling is of central importance.

Curiously, the endings of both works also embody the same paradox. That is, while returning to the point of origin, thereby to begin the unending cycle of history anew, they simultaneously contain visions of transcendence, of an escape from history. In the *Ring*, even after the "twilight of the gods" motif has sunk into silence for the last time, the work does not end until the seraphic final statement of the motif popularly known as "Redemption through Love" is heard, soaring higher and higher as if on mounting wings of ecstasy, thereby bringing the entire tetralogy to its serenely triumphant conclusion.

Similarly, the *Wake* ends with Anna Livia fully transformed into the river itself and going out to meet her father, the sea, as if eternally, and in euphoric mood, describing bright angelic wings and other signs of translation to some higher plane.

Then there is the reference to "Eve and Adam's" to be taken into consideration. This is, in fact, one of the primary leitmotifs of the text and one that has obvious links to the central theme of the Fall. In a novel that is directly concerned with the interpretation of history, moreover, its occurring right at the outset provides a key (substantiated by a number of other references in this introductory section) showing that at this stage we are primarily concerned with the beginnings of history. Again, this has its direct counterpart in the *Ring*, where Alberich's theft of the gold first introduces the twin concepts of sin and tragedy into the previously carefree, pure and Edenic world of the Rhinedaughters. Like Wagner, Joyce is using echoes of many different myths to create his own singular interpretation of world events.

For example, as early as the third sentence, we discover a compound allusion to both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* (as well as the book of Genesis):

> Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arclight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface.

Timothy Martin asserts that "'Regginbrow' may be an allusion to the rainbow bridge that appears at the end of *Rheingold* and 'ringsome' a reference to the entire *Ring*", but he does not elaborate further. Closer inspection, however, does indeed suggest deeper links between the texts and good thematic reasons for them. Firstly, "regginbrow" certainly does sound closer to German "Regenbogen" than English "rainbow". During the scene in question, the lament of the Rhinedaughters is heard from below so that, although not actually visible, the Rhine is obviously supposed to be situated directly beneath, so that "ringsome on the aquaface" could feasibly suggest the curved reflection of the bridge upon the river's surface, while "ringsome" is an obvious reminder of the stolen gold, which the Rhinedaughters are insisting should be returned to them. The "rory end to the regginbrow", moreover, more than the red band on its outer edge, recalls both the proverbial pot of gold (very appropriate in context) and, if the "end" can be interpreted in temporal as well as spatial terms, the corresponding

scene at the end of *Götterdämmerung* in which the rainbow is replaced by the flames that consume Valhalla. This last identification is all the more likely in that it lends greater meaning to "ringsome on the aquaface", since the Rhine is also visible onstage at this point, the flames being reflected in it, and the Rhinedaughters, having regained the Ring, are joyfully brandishing it aloft. "Rory" and "regginbrow" also sound like dim echoes of "Ragnarok" (together with "Götterdämmerung" a frequent reference in the *Wake*). The compact complex of references thus suggests the parallel final tableaux of the first and last *Ring* dramas, respectively showing the beginning and the end of the gods' power, and thus embracing the whole of history. The appropriateness of such references to the *Wake* is obvious. At this very early point in the novel, Joyce is concerned with establishing a setting which is both old and new (in order to bolster his central idea – that history continually repeats itself). He does this by announcing that a number of very ancient events have not yet happened *again*. The *Ring* is especially apposite to this idea, of course, since its pattern is also cyclical and since its ending could be interpreted as suggesting a return to a prehistoric condition. That the sentence containing these allusions also seems to draw on the biblical story of Noah and his sons is a further indicator of the primeval setting. That both sources involve the images of rainbow and water strengthens the sense of a connection between them, though it may be intentionally ironic that the rainbow seen by Noah is a sign of God's covenant with him, whereas the *Rheingold* episode accentuates the shameless breaking of the gods' promise to the Rhinedaughters.

A wealth of further allusions can be found in the first chapter alone. Bygmester Finnegan's role as mythic builder is described in terms that make him seem a drunken Wotan:

> [H]e would caligulate by multiplicables the alltitude and the malltitude until he seesaw by neatlight of the liquor wherein 'twas born, his roundhead staple of other days to rise in undress maisonry upstanded (joygrantit!), a waalworth of a skyerscape of most eyeful hoyth entowerly, erigenating from next to nothing and celescalating the himals and all, hierarchitectitiptitoploftical.

This, supported by numerous other suggestive passages, evokes a rich mock-Wagnerian presence in Joyce's final work, triumphantly confirming a lifetime's commitment to Jocoserious handling of the music-dramas' material.

[1] There is much debate about this, though. At best the ending of the cycle can be described as ambiguous. Although the human survivors of the holocaust are indeed left with the option to begin afresh, Wagner's ultimate moral, derived via Schopenhauer from Buddhism and expressed through Brünnhilde's final speech, is that liberation into unconsciousness is the only final redemption.
[2] See p 195.

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Preferred recordings

Der fliegende Holländer. DECCA 414 551-2. Norman Bailey (Der Holländer), Janis Martin (Senta), Martti Talvela (Daland), Rene Kollo (Erik), Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Sir George Solti.

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