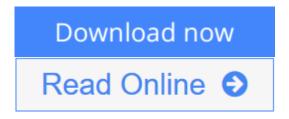


Joyce and Wagner: A Study of Influence

By Timothy Peter Martin



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In correspondence and conversation, James Joyce kept himself aloof from his age, and denigrated recent art and thought at almost every opportunity. 'In the last two hundred years,' he declared, 'we haven't had a great thinker.' This book reveals that in spite of his protestations Joyce was profoundly influenced by one of the major figures of nineteenth-century culture, the composer Richard Wagner. Timothy Martin documents Joyce's exposure to Wagner's operas, and defines a pervasive Wagnerian presence in his work, identifying scores of allusions. Wagner emerges as an important source in the development of literary modernism, and - alongside Flaubert and Ibsen - as one of Joyce's most important influences from the previous century. The revisionary impact of this empirical study in cultural history was to present Joyce as far more a child of the nineteenth century than he wished to acknowledge, much more than Joyce's students historically recognised.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

An associate professor of English at Rutgers University examines the artistic kinship between the 19thcentury composer Richard Wagner and the 20th-century writer James Joyce. Exploring such specific themes in Joyce's writings as the artist-hero, the problem of exile, and redemption through a woman's love, Martin demonstrates their origins in Wagner's work. Parallels are drawn between characters: for example, Siegfried in the Ring cycle and Stephen Dedalus in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man ; the wandering captain in The Flying Dutchman and Leopold Bloom in Ulysses . In a more general sense, Martin finds that Joyce's works are Wagnerian in their underlying mythic structure and that Joyce embraced the Wagnerian idea of "total art" in his synthesis of music and literature, especially through his use of the leitmotif. This detailed analysis enhances our understanding of both artists.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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