



A Pagan Spoiled: Sex and Character in Wagner's Parsifal

Anthony Winterbourne

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This book is an original philosophical contextualisation of Wagner's final music-drama in which an analysis of both the sexual dynamics, and the religious and psychological symbolism of the action, provides the foundation for a fresh understanding of the most striking example of the composer's life-long preoccupation with the feminization of redemption. In addition to discussions of the opera's historical and legendary sources, the author presents an examination of Otto Weiminger's fin de siecle polemic against Judaism and female sexuality, insofar as it has been regarded as itself Wagnerian. It is argued throughout the text that 'Parsifal' has much in it that is Pagan as well as Christian, and indeed that it is the unresolved pre-Christian and non-Christian tensions within the drama that contribute uniquely to its unsettling and still challenging nature.

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