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HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AND THE CULTURAL RECEPTION OF RICHARD WAGNER IN DENMARK, 1857–1875

Vanja Ljubibratić

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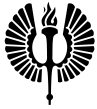

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Faculty of Humanities
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Musicology
Doctoral programme in History, Culture and Arts Studies (Juno)

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ABSTRACT

Denmark, in roughly the first seven decades of the nineteenth century, was a country of immense geographic, cultural, political, and moral change. The landscape of these powerful shifts informed, among other things, the representation and interpretation of art in Denmark, whether it was produced domestically or imported from abroad. Amidst rapidly shifting notions of national identity in a country that was becoming more insulated from foreign influences, the Danish poet Hans Christian Andersen sought to maintain what he believed was integral for Denmark's future: preserving his country's cultural solidarity with Germany, which he also viewed as the path to a better future for the arts in Denmark.

Andersen travelled widely across Europe, and in his journeys, he frequently associated with prominent musicians and formed long-standing relationships with them. Although Andersen was to gain exposure to the music of German composer Richard Wagner relatively early in both men's careers, it took the poet several more years to cultivate a deep admiration for the composer, which ultimately led to Andersen believing that Wagner was the artist of the future whom Andersen had hoped would bring about the improved social standing of the arts that he himself had always tried to nurture. The crowning achievement of Andersen's devotion to Wagner is expressed in his final novella, *Lykke Peer*, which is a literary testimony of his support for Wagner and forward-oriented thinking on music, culture, and a universal tolerance of new and progressive ideals that would result in an enhanced cosmopolitanism in Danish society. At the same time, though, the values that Andersen supported faced strong opposition in the form of a growing cultural nationalism that was propagated by the theologian and politician N.F.S. Grundtvig. This movement was in turn fueled by the damaging consequences of Danish-German relations as a result of the two Schleswigian Wars, yet Andersen never faltered in his conviction about an inclusive association between Denmark and Germany.

Within this rich fusion of socio-cultural developments, this study examines Wagner's cultural reception in Denmark from the years 1857–75, primarily through the lens of Andersen, and with overlapping perspectives that deal with art and culture, history, politics, philosophy, nation building, and national identity. My specific aim is to investigate how the cultural reception of Wagner was influenced by Andersen's promotion of the composer in *Lykke Peer*. The ultimate goal is to investigate Wagner's role in the complex setting of his contemporary Danish society

in order to see how Andersen positioned Wagner's music and theories to influence Danish reception and render his countrymen more receptive to Wagner and also to German art in general. The main research questions are: How were Wagner's ideas and music received in Denmark between 1857 and 1875, how were Wagner and Wagnerism connected to the question of Danish nationalism and identity, and how was Andersen involved in these phenomena? Primary research materials of this study, beyond *Lykke Peer*, include Andersen's diaries, autobiographies, and theoretical texts; Wagner and Grundtvig's theoretical texts; and public, critical reviews of Wagner, written by Danish journalists and commentators. The study's primary methodologies are reception theory and narrative analysis.

KEYWORDS: Richard Wagner; Hans Christian Andersen; Lykke Peer; Denmark; Musicology; Cultural Reception

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tanska oli 1800-luvun seitsemän ensimmäisen vuosikymmenen aikana valtavien maantieteellisten, kulttuuristen, poliittisten ja moraalisten muutosten maa. Nämä voimakkaat muutokset vaikuttivat muun muassa taiteen, niin kotimaisen kuin kansainvälisen, esittämiseen ja tulkintaan Tanskassa. Tilanteessa, jossa käsitykset kansallisesta identiteetistä muuttuivat nopeasti, ja maassa, joka eristyi yhä enemmän vierailta vaikutteilta, tanskalainen runoilija Hans Christian Andersen pyrki säilyttämään sen, minkä hän uskoi olevan olennainen osa Tanskan tulevaisuutta: hän halusi säilyttää maansa kulttuurisen yhteenkuuluvuuden Saksan kanssa. Tätä hän myös piti reittinä taiteen parempaan tulevaisuuteen Tanskassa.

Andersen matkusti laajasti eri puolilla Eurooppaa. Hän oli matkoillaan usein tekemisissä merkittävien muusikoiden kanssa ja loi pitkäaikaisia ystävyyssuhteita. Vaikka Andersen tutustui saksalaisen säveltäjän Richard Wagnerin musiikkiin suhteellisen varhain, häneltä kesti vielä useita vuosia oppia syvällisemmin tuntemaan säveltäjää, mutta lopulta Andersen uskoi, että Wagner olisi keskeinen tulevaisuuden taiteilija. Hän uskoi Wagnerin edistävän taiteen yhteiskunnallista asemaa, jota hän itse oli aina yrittänyt vaalia. Omistautuminen Wagnerille tiivistyi ennen kaikkea Andersenin viimeisessä romaanissa *Lykke Peer*, joka oli kirjallinen todistus tuesta Wagnerille sekä tämän eteenpäin suuntautuvalle ajattelulle musiikista, kulttuurista ja suvaitsevaisuudesta uusia, edistyksellisiä ajatuksia kohtaan. Nämä ajatukset edistäisivät myös tanskalaisen yhteiskunnan muutosta, erityisesti sen lisääntyvää kansainvälisyyttä. Samaan aikaan Andersenin tukemat arvot kohtasivat kuitenkin voimakasta vastustusta kasvavan kulttuurisen nationalismin muodossa, jonka puolestapuhujiin kuului erityisesti teologi ja poliitikko N.F.S. Grundtvig. Tätä liikettä puolestaan ruokkivat Tanskan ja Saksan vakavasti huonontuneet suhteet kahden Schleswigin sodan seurauksena, mutta Andersen ei koskaan horjunut näkemyksessään Tanskan ja Saksan yhteenkuuluvuudesta.

Näiden sosiokulttuuristen kehityskulujen valossa tämä tutkimus analysoi Richard Wagnerin kulttuurista vastaanottoa Tanskassa vuosina 1857–1875, ensisijaisesti Andersenin kautta. Aihetta tarkastellaan useista toisiaan täydentävistä näkökulmista, jotka koskevat taidetta ja kulttuuria, historiaa, politiikkaa, filosofiaa, kansakunnan rakentamista ja kansallista identiteettiä. Tarkoitukseni on tutkia, kuinka Wagnerin kulttuuriseen vastaanottoon vaikutti se, miten Andersen *Lykke*

Peerissä pyrki edistämään säveltäjän asemaa. Lopullisena tavoitteena on tutkia Wagnerin asemaa 1800-luvun tanskalaisen yhteiskunnan kontekstissa, erityisesti sitä, miten Andersen asemoi Wagnerin musiikin ja teorian, jotta ne vaikuttaisivat tanskalaisessa kulttuurissa ja jotta hänen maanmiehensä tulisivat alttiimmiksi vastaanottamaan sekä Wagneria että saksalaista taidetta ylipäänsä. Tärkeimmät tutkimuskysymykset ovat: Miten Wagnerin ajatukset ja musiikki otettiin vastaan Tanskassa vuosina 1857–1875, miten Wagner ja wagnerismi liittyivät tanskalaisen nationalismin ja identiteetin kysymyksiin ja miten Andersen osallistui näihin ilmiöihin? Ensisijaisia tutkimusaineistojani ovat *Lykke Peerin* lisäksi Andersenin päiväkirjat, omaelämäkerralliset ja teoreettiset tekstit; Wagnerin ja Grundtvigin teoreettiset tekstit sekä tanskalaisten toimittajien ja kommentaattoreiden kirjoittamat julkiset, kriittiset arviot Wagnerista. Metodologisesti tutkimus nojautuu reseptioteoriaan ja kerronnalliseen analyysiin.

ASIASANAT: Richard Wagner; Hans Christian Andersen; *Lykke Peer*; Tanska; musiikkitiede; kulttuurinen vastaanotto

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participation. Musicology is often a lonely form of research, especially of the historical variety, but both of my supervisors made it a shared venture that demonstrates how the most fulfilling and meaningful research must be collaborative, to an extent, if it is to reach an exalted level of scholarship. I would also like to thank my dissertation opponent, the esteemed scholar, Professor Emeritus Eero Tarasti, who has also supported and inspired me through the combined force of his boundless kindness and stature as one of Finland's greatest minds ever in the multitude of endeavors that he has pursued for many years. He is the definition of scholarly immortality and a figure whom we should all hope to emulate as far as we are able. It will be my great honor to maintain relationships with all of these remarkable people as a humble recipient of their great knowledge; as their colleague in Finland; and above all else, as their faithful and devoted friend.

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Turku, 19 October 2022
Vanja Ljubibratić

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Introduction

Background

Denmark in the nineteenth century was in many ways a country of shifting identities. The way that Danes came to view themselves by the middle of the century had ostensibly begun at the start of the century when Denmark became embroiled in a string of wars, first with Great Britain, which resulted in the territorial loss of Norway. This was followed by the rise of nationalism in both Denmark and Germany that developed into territorial disputes between the two neighbors, which ultimately ended up costing Denmark dearly. Discontent and shame were fostered for decades within Denmark, and powerful individuals emerged who tried to use these historical events as leverage to reshape the Danish national identity in ways that would serve them and their vision of a future Denmark. The poet and cultural luminary Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875) was one such individual, who attempted to enact progressive social change via an evolution of cultural values where the arts would be seen as establishing solidarity and aesthetic inclusivity with Germany. Other powerful individuals in Denmark, led by the influential theologian and politician N.F.S. Grundtvig, sought to discourage this unity between Denmark and Germany for the purpose of instigating near-total physical and ideological isolation in order to establish more easily a new national identity based on cultural nationalism. Generally speaking, this was the complex climate in Denmark onto which all art—both foreign and domestic—was superimposed and in which it was ultimately judged.

When the music of German composer Richard Wagner was first orchestrally performed to the Danish public in 1857 (the overture to his opera *Tannhäuser*)[1], the country was seven years past the first Schleswigian War with the German Confederation (1848–50), which the smaller neighbor viewed as a victory for them, and seven years from the disastrous second Schleswigian War of 1864 that would inflict upon Denmark arguably the most humiliating military defeat in the country's

[1] Andersen recorded the first performance of the *Tannhäuser* Overture in a letter dated 30 October 1857 to Grand Duke Carl Alexander. The letter is quoted and cited in a later chapter.

history. This instigated the primary catalyst for the shift in national identity, the main tenets of which have perpetuated to contemporary times.[2] In these early years of exposure to Wagner's orchestral and operatic music, Danish audiences and critics would be torn between the desire to import the most popular and modern stage works of the major European cultural centers, largely to quell stereotypical projections of their provinciality and lack of sophistication, and Wagner's explicit Germanness with nationalistic undertones, which was a painful reminder of Denmark's shame at the hands of the composer's nation. Nevertheless, Wagner was largely judged by his own merits, which were polarizing in their own right, but were also directly inspirational to Andersen, fostering the poet's perception that Wagner's idealistic views on art's place in society were symmetrical with his own. Indeed, from the moment that Andersen's novels and fairy tales gained widespread fame in Europe, his cultural status in Denmark also grew, and his popularity as well as his literary importance have continued to this day. Andersen studies are a major topic of research today[3], so his inclusion in almost any nineteenth century study of Danish cultural history is highly relevant. A significant correlation between Wagner and Andersen was that they both developed theories on the future of the arts at roughly the same time, and independently of one another. Andersen ultimately came to see in Wagner a kindred spirit who could lead the arts into a new epoch, which further unified them in cause (in Andersen's mind at least), as they both imagined a messianic-type figure leading the progressive charge. Idealizing art and society were lifelong pursuits for both artists, and the inspiration that Andersen derived in this regard from Wagner would bear explicit fruit towards the end of the poet's life in his own work, concurrently at a time when Wagner's music would be experiencing its first performances on the Danish opera stage.

Therefore, this study will seek to present Wagner's cultural reception in Denmark from the years 1857–75 from multiple perspectives that deal with art and culture, history, politics, philosophy, nation building, and national identity. Although it would have been possible to study Wagner in Denmark in the entirety of the nineteenth century, as the temporal starting point would have remained the same,[4] it

[2] This phenomenon is discussed in *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National Identity*, which is mentioned as a source in greater detail later in this introduction.

[3] Two examples of recent Andersen scholarship include: Paul Binding, *Hans Christian Andersen: European Witness* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016); André Roes, *Kierkegaard en Andersen: De filosoof en de sprookjesdichter Een ontmoeting in Kopenhagen* (Soesterberg, NL: Uitgeverij Aspekt B.V., 2017).

[4] By this, I mean that the first year of this study's timeframe, 1857, also happens to be the first year that Wagner's music was performed by an orchestra in Denmark, hence the

would have required that the final quarter century after 1875 also be included. Although the addition of these years would have enriched the concept of Danish Wagnerism, it would have evolved too acutely beyond the parameters that centralize Andersen and his aesthetic stylization of Wagner in the study as it appears now. Andersen's role is crucial not only for being the first Danish writer to fictionalize Wagnerian theory—as he did with the composer's theories on the artwork of the future—but also because he so markedly used his literature to metaphorically reflect his views on local history, culture, and politics, among other subjects of interest. Furthermore, Wagner's reception in the last quarter of the nineteenth century became more of a self-perpetuating entity that no longer required the abundance of justifications and background context that was so typical of the published texts that accompanied the earliest exposure to his music in Denmark. Put more simply, the first Bayreuth Festival took place in 1876, which made Wagner visible all over the world and altered the trajectory of his international reception. This phenomenon would have arguably changed the critical narrative in Denmark regarding Wagner, thereby also justifying a more contained study that does not address this palpable shift. Likewise, it can also be logically surmised that as the Danish consciousness moved further away from the Schleswigian Wars, its receptiveness to German art, especially the kind that was associated with German nationalism, would be more-easily digested and interpreted with less bias.

With this in mind, regarding the temporal span of this study, a complex tapestry of intrigue will develop to represent the abundantly-layered atmosphere in Denmark, as viewed through the prism of Andersen, in which Wagner was first publicly performed in larger formats. These tangible assessments will be juxtaposed most significantly by analyzing how Andersen came to be acutely involved with music, and how his exposure to Wagner evolved into a passion that ultimately blossomed into his final novella, *Lykke Peer* (first published in 1870), which can be interpreted as a Wagnerian treatise that bore profound reflection on the way that Wagner's art and theories were idealized by his devotees, and was ultimately used by Andersen to project his own hopes for the future of the arts and a cosmopolitan Danish society that embraced cultural associations with Germany. In addition, *Peer* reflected the public analyses of Wagner's theories that were circulating in Copenhagen's musical periodicals at the time, which Andersen was known to have generally read from testimonies in his diaries. As a result, the novella contained both idealized and actual literary reflections of Wagner's reception in Denmark, providing Danish readers with an abstract interpretation of how Wagnerism could be harnessed to artistic and aesthetic benefits. Intersecting narratives of the Schleswigian Wars and Grundtvig's

signifier that a Danish Wagnerian reception study of the nineteenth century for conductor-led music would not have been possible before 1857.

philosophies that were antithetical to Andersen's values will also be analyzed to depict the moral battle that ensued between these opposing ideological factions that would consequently inform how German art, including Wagner's, would be experienced in Denmark. 1857 will act as the starting point of the investigation for reasons that were mentioned earlier, until the year 1875, which was the year of Andersen's death, as well as marking five years (starting with the 1870 production of *Lohengrin*), and three fully-staged productions of different Wagner operas later, thereby establishing a firm footing for Wagner's art in Denmark via staged performances from 1870–75. Consequently, I will submit that this study's focus on Danish Wagnerism in the years 1857–75 is anchored in Andersen's literary endorsements of the composer, as well as his general position of promoting multicultural inclusivity in Denmark, which helped Wagner's reception survive some of the most turbulent and transitional years in Denmark's history.

I will contextualize the contribution of my study and describe how it fills a gap in Wagner reception studies and Wagner research in general in the later section on previous research. However, my study also delves into notions of theory, philosophy, and national identity. Precisely due to these interdisciplinary elements, my project offers a distinct glimpse of Northern European values (Danish and German), through unique cultural associations that bear the formations of national identities that prevail to this day. Modern Danish identity was formed in the years that are relevant to my study, therefore, my work has the benefit of providing both historical context as well as a mirror of contemporary society. This visibility of the past can benefit current, topical notions on identity. Moreover, as my research profoundly concerns these perceptions of modern Danish identity, my project can be seen as a representation too of Nordic and Baltic Sea region paradigms, not least due to symmetrical developments of Wagnerism in this greater region.[5] As such, my research can be valuable in a variety of interdisciplinary fields from musicology and the cultural history of music to anthropology/sociology, and ethnology when considering the construction of Danish and German identities and their relations. Wagner studies have long been malleable as interdisciplinary pathways[6], so my study can

[5] An example of one such research initiative can be found in: Bernd Henningsen, *Facets of Identity: The Baltic Sea Region and Beyond* (Copenhagen: Baltic Development Forum, 2013).

[6] Examples of such studies include: Raymond Furness, *Wagner and Literature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); Edward Hartman, *French Literary Wagnerism* (New York: Garland, 1988); Hilda Meldrum Brown, *Leitmotiv and Drama: Wagner, Brecht, and the Limits of "Epic" Theater* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Milton E. Brener, *Richard Wagner and the Jews* (London: McFarland & CO, 2006); Urs App, *Richard Wagner and Buddhism* (Switzerland: UniversityMedia, 2011); Gundula Kreuzer, *Curtain, Gong, Steam: Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Oakland: University of

simultaneously perpetuate those trends, while adding new dimensions of insight and intrigue to help enrich these avenues of focus even more.

Research Focus

To reiterate succinctly, my aim is to investigate how the cultural reception of Richard Wagner was influenced by Andersen's promotion of the composer in his final novella, *Lykke Peer*. As a study that is anchored in historical musicology, emphasizing an investigation of historical origins and patterns, the ultimate goal is to investigate Wagner's role in the complex setting of his contemporary Danish society in order to see how Andersen positioned Wagner's music and theories to influence Danish reception and render his countrymen more receptive to Wagner and also to German art in general. As such, the main research questions arise: How were Wagner's ideas and music received in Denmark between 1857 and 1875, how were Wagner and Wagnerism connected to the question of Danish nationalism and identity, and how was Andersen involved in these phenomena? These questions will be addressed through an understanding of the political and cultural climate of the time, and through Andersen's novella. The challenge lies in pinpointing how a colossal persona such as Wagner was able to permeate into Danish culture and be judged through the lens of Danish cultural identity as it existed at the time. Wagner's influence in nineteenth century Europe is unquestionable, but the controversies that surround his political agendas, general hatred of all people whom he viewed as threats to his idealized social order, and above all, his revolutionary ideas on music and its place in society, establish a case study of a highly complex individual in history.

Wagner's cultural reception will also be interpreted via the ideological shift in Denmark from the national unity that was exemplified by a firm loyalty to the Danish territories and their monarch, to the abstract unity as described by Grundtvig, where national identity existed conceptually through Danish language, history, and culture. These ideological traits will be contextualized via the repercussions of the Schleswigian Wars (1848–50; 1864), to set the stage for Wagner's reception in nineteenth century Denmark. To be clear, I employ the notion of cultural reception in relation to Wagner as an all-encompassing social phenomenon, where the associated culture is not solely restricted to responses to and interpretations of Wagner's music, but also includes the broader symbolic scope of his Germanness, and the institutionalized significance of Wagnerism as an entity derived from the composer's theoretical texts, which arrived to Denmark before his operas did. So

California Press, 2018); Jeongwon Joe and Sander Gilman, eds., *Wagner and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

cultural reception in this sense is a suggested umbrella term that my study embraces to signify all of the above components pertaining to Wagner in context of their emplacement within Danish society, via Andersen, in the years of inquiry. Furthermore, this spectrum approach to cultural reception is reflected in the amalgamation of my sources. The extent of these materials will be discussed later, though suffice it to say here, I will use a variety of texts that range from autobiographical and diary entries, to newspaper reviews and theoretical texts, to name a few contrasting source types that I will synthesize to depict Wagner's early cultural reception in Denmark.[7]

Andersen's cultural endeavors and literary efforts, especially with *Lykke Peer*, comprise the primary lens through which I interpret Wagner and Wagnerian reception in Denmark. Consequently, this is a study on both Wagner and Andersen, but Andersen informs the narrative direction of the sections, as well as the impetus for how Danish history and a few key Danish actors (with the exception of the Weimar Court and Charles Baudelaire), are laid out chronologically in terms of their ultimate relation to Andersen. Wagner's role in this presentation will then emerge as an emplaced depiction within Andersen's Denmark as the composer's own cultural formations come to be seen from the perspective of this established Danish evolution of thought.

The centrality of Andersen is also the qualifying reason why Grundtvig is not presented as a principal figure in this study alongside Andersen and Wagner. Andersen is the pivotal prism through which Danish cultural life, Wagner, and Grundtvig are filtered, with Grundtvig also acting as a subordinate filter to exemplify the Danish political and historical spectrum in conjunction with the formation of a new Danish identity that came to inform Wagner's cultural reception in a significant way. However, Grundtvig's function is primarily as a juxtaposing entity to Andersen, which places the former in a less representational role in the early sections

[7] My interpretation of cultural reception mirrors the approach that film and media studies scholar Yuri Tsivian takes in his assessments of the cultural reception of early Russian and Soviet cinema. In context of film media, Tsivian suggests that there is a symbiotic interplay at work, where films do not only express elements of the viewer, but where the viewer also influences the interpretation of the film. My study presents the same correlating function with Wagner's theories and music, where the composer's creations, in this case, are not solely considered for their general and objective symbolic representation, but in addition to this, are received and reinterpreted in Denmark by Andersen, critical reviewers, and other Danish cultural actors who construct Danish Wagnerism from the specific parameters of their culture's reception. See: Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and its Cultural Reception*, trans. Alan Bodger (London: Routledge, 1994), 1.

of this study, thereby excluding his position in the title of this dissertation and as a primary character within the Andersen-Wagner dynamic.

In a study such as this—particularly where there are specific scholarly paradigms associated with how historical musicology generally and Wagner research specifically is conducted—it must be clarified what my approach will not engage with, which may at first seem dubious to the kind of disciplinary models that generally exist in studies of historical musicology to which I profess association and continuity. To begin, I will refrain from presenting musical examples, charts, or graphs of any sort because I do not deem them to be applicable to my historiographical construct of socio-cultural, chronological storytelling. This is by no means unprecedented, as there have been several prominent studies on Wagner that have left out these very same characteristics.[8] Furthermore, the type of comments produced by Danish critics that dealt with Wagner in the nineteenth century, which are central to my work, exclusively cover symbolic and stylistic tenets and never go into musical analyses themselves. Wagner's music was new to the Danish public at this time, so it was more contingent upon helping the population comprehend what they will hear rather than educating them on specific harmonic or structural considerations in the music. Moreover, these critics were seldom musicians themselves, so they would not have even attempted more sophisticated musical analyses. These are some of the reasons why my own analyses of the music would be antithetical to the kind of understanding of Wagner that was being established in the time and place under investigation.

As an extension of the exclusion of musical examples, I will also not engage with Wagner's influence on or association with Danish composers or any pre-1857 Danish engagement with Wagner's music in small-scale expressions, such as salon settings or private home performances. As I mentioned earlier, the final quarter of the nineteenth century saw Wagnerism attain a far more secure mainstay in both Denmark and Europe with the inauguration of the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876.

In addition, I will refrain from elaborating on Andersen's relationship with Adam Oehlenschläger, the author of the famous *Aladdin* play, where the story of Aladdin played a central role in the narrative of *Lykke Peer*. Indeed, Andersen's association with other cultural actors that I discuss in my study is also largely left out, such as his long and rich dealings with ballet master August Bournonville. As interesting as these details would be in a greater contextualization of Danish cultural history,

8 Three such examples within the Wagner literature are: Dieter Borchmeyer, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Dieter Borchmeyer, *Drama and the World of Richard Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Kevin C. Karnes, *A Kingdom Not of This World: Wagner, the Arts, Utopian Visions in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

including them would create too great of a tangent away from Wagner and his cultural reception in Denmark. These are the most salient limitations of my text, and they (the limitations) should be seen as a strategy to retain the most essential continuity that already possesses a complexity of variation in delicate harmony with the main research questions and aims.

My goal is to set a specific path where the essence of that complexity can be juxtaposed with the complexities that shaped the post-Schleswigian War Danish identity in order to document how Wagner's beliefs and music were critically received in Denmark via Andersen. Once again, I will propose that the foundation of Danish Wagnerism was established in 1857–75 with the first orchestral concert performances of his music; public analyses of his prose works; the publication of *Lykke Peer*; and the Danish premiere of three fully-staged Wagnerian operas (*Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and *Tannhäuser* in 1870, 1872, and 1875, respectively).[9] The final five years, however, were the most formative, acting as an arrival point that signified a crossroads where Wagner would henceforth remain ever-present in Denmark.

Previous Research

The body of literature that pertains to Wagner reception studies is extensive and international. The historians David Large and William Weber contextualize this sentiment thusly: "The ideas and values that Wagner expressed—his attitudes about society, religion, romantic love and sexuality, politics, and art—proved to be a potent mixture that evoked a deep response from people with strikingly varied interests and from markedly different constituencies. Wagnerism influenced not only the world of music but other arts as well—painting, poetry, theater, dance, literature—and also left its mark on philosophy, religion, and social and political thought."[10] In other words, Wagner was harnessed by a diverse cadre of creative instigators who saw in him more than just his music. Indeed, as musicologist Richard Taruskin argues, "literary scholars and social historians have always been in the forefront of Wagner

9 The dates of these Danish premieres can be found in: Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera: 1597–1940* (London: John Calder Publishers, Ltd, 1978). For an upcoming study that undertakes a comprehensive analysis of opera in Denmark from 1634–2005, which also includes a registry of all of the approximate 1,200 first performances of operas in Denmark from 1634 to 2021, see: Henrik Engelbrecht, *Opera i Danmark: 1634–2005* (Copenhagen: Henrikengelbrecht.dk, 2022).

10 David C. Large and William Weber, eds., *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 7.

reception studies."[11] This phenomenon was most assuredly the result of his theoretical texts in conjunction with his controversial lifestyle, revolutionary background, and also his art. A comprehensive narrative emerges in virtually all Wagner reception studies that expresses the general notion that "Wagner exerted a greater long-term influence on wider European culture than any other composer of the nineteenth century, and his impact is far-reaching."[12] These notions become distinct in this study as well, as Danes took as much notice of Wagner's theories as of his music, both of which were reported and commented on by journalists and theorists who were, as stated earlier, not necessarily musicians. These critics felt compelled to share their views on a man and subject that was recognized as a cultural force even in Denmark, who had captured the European imagination and was therefore not immune from Danish scrutiny either.

Certainly, the survey studies and anthologies on Wagner reception are myriad, encompassing virtually all major European countries, as well as outliers not generally associated with Wagnerism, such as Sweden, Finland, the Baltic nations, the United States, Canada, and Brazil, among others.[13] Wagner was not just a reactionary, but was in many ways seen as a cultural martyr due to the various exiles he endured as a result of his idealistic practices. These events led to a mythologizing of the man, and it was this crusading attitude that inspired Andersen to view Wagner as a real revolutionary like Mikhail Bakunin rather than an inactive theorist on revolution like Karl Marx. More recently, Wagner reception studies have predominantly sought to investigate, as musicologists Stephen Muir and Anastasia Belina-Johnson suggest, his impact in a broad disciplinary scope that the scholars list as including: opera theory, compositional technique, literary and epistolary heritage, politics, and cultural histories of specific regions, which endeavor to emplace Wagner within parts of Europe that have experienced less focus on the composer than other studies have presented.[14] My examination of Wagner in Denmark falls within this analytical heritage, seeking to draw attention to

11 Richard Taruskin, "Forward: So Much More than a Composer," in *Wagner in Russia, Poland, and the Czech Lands: Musical, Literary, and Cultural Perspectives*, eds. Stephen Muir and Anastasia Belina-Johnson (New York: Routledge, 2013), xv.

12 Stephen Muir and Anastasia Belina-Johnson, "Preface: From the Editors," in *Wagner in Russia, Poland, and the Czech Lands*, xxxiv–xxxv.

13 For a selection, see: Joseph Horowitz, *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); Anne Dzamba Sessa, *Richard Wagner and the English* (Rutherford, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1979); Paul du Quenoy, *Wagner and the French Muse: Music, Society, and Nation in Mordern France* (Cambridge, MA: Academia Press, 2011); Josine Meurs, *Wagner in Nederland, 1843–1914* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002). Many more countries are represented in shorter articles.

14 Muir and Belina-Johnson, "Preface: From the Editors," xxxiii.

Wagnerism in one of the last remaining European countries that is yet to present as comprehensive an undertaking as this study presumes to produce within the specific years of inquiry. Cultural historian Hannu Salmi wrote a study on Wagner and Wagnerism in nineteenth century Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic region.[15] Salmi's book was the primary model for my own study, and he had himself told me that he excluded Denmark from his own work because he felt that Denmark was more integrated into the German music world at the time. He supported a study of Wagner in Denmark, noting how "Copenhagen shared the same musical infrastructure as the rest of the Baltic Sea region [including Denmark]." My study, therefore, complements and expands the geographic investigation of Wagner reception in the region of Northern Europe and the Nordics.

Andersen came to share the belief that, according to Large and Weber, "Wagner did not stimulate admirers alone—he stimulated a cause. To some extent he *was* the cause. But Wagnerism ultimately departed from Wagner the man and became a movement in its own right—with principles, goals, and possibly doctrine often only loosely related to the original source of inspiration."[16] Andersen was also a man with a cause, and in his quest to validate Danish-German cultural kinship while idealizing about a more progressive[17] and philosophically/psychologically-inclined manner of authentic expression, Wagnerian ideology emerged as the perfect crux to project upon, as many others across multi-disciplinary endeavors also found it to be the case. In regard to Denmark and Danish society, the curious element was that the country already had their own national messianic figure that crusaded to stir the public imagination in the way that Wagnerism did by sheer force of will.[18] Indeed, the character and scope of Danish luminary N.F.S. Grundtvig was in many ways Wagnerian in stature. Grundtvig was a cause and an institution unto himself, which exposed the Danish society to demagogue tendencies that arguably made them susceptible to recognizing the ideological significance of Wagnerism, even if said

15 Hannu Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism in Nineteenth-Century Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic Provinces: Reception, Enthusiasm, Cult (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005).

16 Large and Weber, "Introduction," in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, 15.

17 It will be expanded further how Andersen came to view Denmark and specifically Copenhagen as promoting musical and theatrical styles that were dated and not representational of the aesthetic tastes in Europe, where Denmark, for example, preferred the staging of vaudevilles over the more popular grand operas.

18 Other writers beside Andersen gave their expressive literary voice to commenting on the complex duality between Denmark and Germany regarding national identity and history. For a comprehensive study addressing this phenomenon, see: Heinrich Detering, Anne-Britt Gerecke, and Johan de Mylius, eds., *Dänisch-deutsche Doppelgänger: Transnationale und bikulturelle Literatur zwischen Barock und Moderne* (Göttingen, DE: Wallstein Verlag, 2001).

society was less inclined to embrace the composer's music early on. Danes sought to understand Wagner's theories first before his music, as circulating critical analyses of Wagner's prose in Denmark predated any staged public performances of his music there. Grundtvig's influential conditioning of the population along with the highly-damaging fallout of the two Schleswigian Wars—and particularly the second one of 1864—instilled a weariness of anything German, where Wagner's explicit nationalism contributed to the skepticism and sometime even hostile early reception of the composer.[19]

The essential point here is that largely under Grundtvig's influence, Denmark experienced an ideological shift from a type of national unity that revolved around an adamant loyalty to the Danish territories and their monarch, to the type of abstract unity that Grundtvig preached, where national identity existed conceptually through Danish language, history, and culture. This cultural and political climate, along with the opposing ideologies of Andersen and Grundtvig[20], as well as Andersen's overt promotion of Wagner's art and ideology in *Lykke Peer*, will set the stage for Wagner's reception beyond just the music, emphasizing the manner in which Wagnerism itself was interpreted in Denmark.

The discussion of nationalism is an integral element of this study, as the notion was relevant to Wagner, Andersen, and Grundtvig, all of whom wrote about its principles in some explicit or implicit form. Denmark is the key component of this study, though, as all conceptual roads led to what Danes came to believe morally and socio-culturally through experience and suggestion. The most useful and comprehensive study that I consulted for these purposes was the book of essays on Grundtvig and Danish national identity, co-edited by John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove Kaj Pedersen, a sociologist, pedagogue, and political scientist, respectively.[21] The book thoroughly examines how historical circumstances and theoretical thought coalesced in Denmark in the nineteenth century to form massive paradigm shifts in that country's sense of nationalism, cultural nationalism, state and

19 For literature on music and nationalism, see: Michael Murphy and Harry White, eds., *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945* (Cork, IE: Cork University Press, 2001); Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, eds., *Music & German National Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

20 It will be elaborated later, but Andersen's defense of German culture as bearing solidarity with that of Denmark brought him into ideological conflict with the Grundtvigians, where the poet's patriotism was questioned, which was a concern that he carefully navigated to quell any dubious insinuations, while also not disavowing his principle convictions.

21 John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove Kaj Pedersen, eds., *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National Identity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

nation building, national identity, modernization, and patriotism. All of this was presented under the guise of Grundtvigianism, and came to express the complex chain of events that established the foundational framework of Danishness, onto which I in this study superimpose Wagnerism to contrive my specific narrative of reception.

One central tenet of the Wagnerian appeal that Large and Weber attest to was its novelty: "For all the varieties of Wagnerism, its representatives had one important characteristic in common. They shared deep reservations about aspects of their society and culture and were looking for a vital new alternative. In some cases 'Wagnerism' was undoubtedly shallow and intellectually empty, but for many people it helped to meet vital cultural, social, and psychological needs."[22] This assertion acutely presents the movement as a near-religion, and indeed, the malleability of interpretation, along with the existence of sacred texts and a figurehead that was larger than life, contributed, again, to the mythologizing of Wagner that went well beyond his own ambitions. Yet, the important distinction is that Wagnerism fulfilled a need that existed due to discontent—a dissatisfaction that Wagner himself knew and publicized, which became infectious. Both Andersen and Grundtvig were also discontented with Danish society, albeit for different reasons, where Andersen looked to Wagner in fundamental ways for salvation, and Grundtvig attempted to instigate the changes that he desired through the power of his own persuasion and rhetoric of cultural nationalism. Andersen appropriated Wagner literarily to serve his purposes and to culturally unify Denmark and Germany—a move that Grundtvig worked to discourage with his own interests, machinations, and visions of a more insulated Denmark that would seek to contrive its own national identity without any exterior influences, all of which he viewed as a threat to this formation.

Furthermore, according to Large and Weber, Wagner "used his writings to dramatize the theatrical reforms he thought essential to a truly meaningful experience of the opera and the salvation of society through art."[23] This was precisely the same function that the Danish critics of Wagner wanted to instill in the Danish audience before Wagner was staged in Denmark. However, this desire was also implicitly motivated as a compensation for Denmark being among the last European countries to stage a Wagner opera, and wanting to emphasize how despite this possible shame (which was an explicit grievance to some), more Danes knew the symbolic and intellectual essence of Wagner's art and ideology before even hearing a single note of his music. This point—related to a critical desire to comprehend a theoretical base

[22] Large and Weber, "Introduction," in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, 16–17.

[23] Ibid., 19.

in order to compensate for the empirical shortcoming of actually staging Wagner's operas—is an essential component of Wagner studies in countries like Denmark that were a bit on the periphery regarding a timeliness of importing new operatic trends. For example, musicologist and music theorist Magdalena Dziadek wrote how Poland shared a near-identical exposure and reception to Wagner that will have implications for Wagner's reception in Denmark:

> The history of Wagner reception in the Polish lands, which began in the 1860s, has been of a quite particular character, typical of a geographical area that at the time played a peripheral role in relation to both the West and the East of Europe. It was deemed sufficient for Polish critics and musicians to become acquainted with Wagner's writings and with the characteristic aspects of European Wagnerism, setting Wagner's actual music to one side. This was determined by the poor condition of the operatic theatres in the Polish lands, their main orientation towards Italian and French repertoire, and the difficult economic situation of potential consumers of music (the educational social strata), which prevented them from visiting Bayreuth and attending Wagner premieres held in other European countries.[24]

These reflections on the general landscape of Wagnerism in Poland are symmetrical with the conditions in Denmark. Firstly, Wagner was introduced to both countries at about the same time, but secondly and more importantly, this event expressed a critical approach that both countries had to Wagner, which informed how seemingly-paradigmatic practices of Wagner reception are in disparate European countries, further validating an investigation of Denmark's conformity to these practices and outlooks. There are also cultural and historical implications and broad notions of Wagnerism in countries that were not directly associated with him, but still felt the stature of his influence. Poland's example also addresses the state of theatrical culture, which echoes a similar state of affairs as Andersen expressed in his diaries when he complained of the provinciality of Danish theater repertoire, and an aesthetic difficulty of embracing new and innovative trends. The historical and moral similarities between (early) Danish and Polish Wagnerism further standardize Wagner reception studies as effective reflections of cultural history in the mid-nineteenth century, and how an entire epoch evolved, rendering Wagnerism as a Pan-European movement. As a final word on Polish Wagnerism's relation to that in

[24] Magdalena Dziadek, "The Reception of Wagner's Music and Ideas in Poland during the Communist Years (1945–1989), in *Wagner in Russia, Poland, and the Czech Lands*, 159. Note that despite this article being about Communist Era Wagnerism, this quote engages with Polish Wagnerism in the 1860s.

Denmark, Dziadek writes that "it is no exaggeration to state that Polish Wagnerism developed firstly as a literary and only later as a musical phenomenon. At a considerable distance from the work on interpreting Wagner's ideas in Poland stood the assimilation of his music, his poetry and the artistic conceptions that accompanied them."[25] This three-pronged approach of comprehension was also explicit in the Danish example, where the critics there sought to explicate those circumstances of literary awareness before operatic exposure as well, which reinforces the multi-faceted dimensionality of Wagnerism, and how an entire nation's cultural, historical, and even political values are on display in the manner in which they embrace and grapple with Wagnerism within their own borders.

In addition to the institutionalized critical approaches to Wagnerism (in relation to the dissimilar distribution of the composer's theoretical texts and music across Europe) that express varying gradations from European country-to-country, some general views of the composer himself were associated with his person that informed many critical models: "Wagner was first and foremost a theatrical entrepreneur, not a thinker," William Weber argues, "but his writings had considerably more to do with the initial spread of his reputation than did his music. He was a quick study; endowed with an extraordinary ability to write provocatively, he exploited the topics and ideas of the day in order to dramatize his musical goals."[26] Some may call this shrewdness, but from an analysis of his prose and diaries, it is clear that Wagner expressed himself with complete conviction, and even if he later changed his thinking, it was always done with a firm belief and personal validation.[27]

Moreover, when Wagner appealed for opera to serve as a profound form of art rather than as mere amusement, he assembled visionaries from all the other arts. It was more through the essays he published between 1849 and 1852 that his fame spread across Europe in literary and musical circles than through his actual music.[28] This sentiment was evident in Denmark when the famed ballet master August Bournonville travelled to Germany to experience Wagner on the operatic stage; gain

25 Ibid., 162–63. This sentiment on Wagner's literary authorship experiencing greater geographic distribution than his music early on has also been brought up by Large and Weber, and Salmi in his book on Wagner and Wagnerism in the Nordics/Baltics.

26 William Weber, "Wagner, Wagnerism, and Musical Idealism," in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, 40.

27 The most significant example of Wagner's ability to adjust to polar opposite shifts of conviction was from the frame of mind of the left-wing revolutionary who wrote the various treatises in exile that Andersen embraced so thoroughly, to the composer that became completely disillusioned with society, and as a result, supplanted his entire outlook with Schopenhauer's mystical form of metaphysics that translated to a focus on inner spiritualism for Wagner.

28 Large and Weber, "Introduction," 20; 26.

practical knowledge of execution; then produce the first staged Wagner opera in Denmark (sung in Danish) himself. All of this was done even though Bournonville abhorred Wagner's nationalism and more polemical theories that were associated with the composer's anti-Semitism. Yet, Andersen too rebelled against the institutionalization of opera as a form of vapid entertainment, which he saw as a significant obstacle that Danish institutions needed to overcome to gain profundity. According to William Weber, Wagner's aim was clear: "Through reform of the opera, and indeed all areas of musical institutions, he sought to bring about a regeneration of German society and a rebirth of the *Volk*."[29] This realization was a central motivator for Andersen to idealize Wagnerism literarily in *Lykke Peer*, as Andersen himself sought to see those very changes that Wagner so vehemently advocated for. This idea—yes—but within a Danish context of social rebirth, where the audience at the end of *Peer* would represent an enlightened society that came to understand the cultural significance of the new artistic path that they had just been exposed to.

Although Wagner presented a variety of theories that were directed at social and artistic change, "the breadth of Wagner's support arose partly from his idea of the union of the arts, or the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art). The spirit of the idea carried enormous weight and was probably the leading aesthetic concept around which the Wagnerian movement formed."[30] Wagner himself conceptually disavowed the tenets of this theory after the diametrical shift he made as a result of his engagement with Schopenhauerian philosophy. Nevertheless, the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* was so pervasive, that it was associated with the composer for many years after it stopped having any meaning to him. Crucially, Andersen, Bournonville, and the Danish critics of the period examined in this study all wrote of this theory, and presented it analytically and literarily to the Danish society. Andersen was clearly predisposed to any semblance of unity, as advocated by the dubious German "enemy" (Wagner), and used it as a product of progressive tolerance and inclusivity to depict Wagner in that light—as an artist and theorist who proposed an honorable, accepting, and revolutionary tactic to combat the stylistic stasis that Andersen viewed as limiting and no longer representational of the moral and psychological advancements that society in general had manufactured. Art now needed to catch up to render these new values (that included heightened psychological and philosophical depictions in artistic works that highlighted emotional conflict), in an abstract manner that would complement, validate, and manifest the empirical theories that inspired audiences.

[29] Weber, "Wagner, Wagnerism, and Musical Idealism," 45.
[30] Large and Weber, "Introduction," 22.

Wagner's overall public reception was intrinsically tied to the approach and style that critics took with reviewing his music and theories. As such, "music critics led the way. In the eighteenth century, critical commentary had operated under the guise of simple reporting and thus made no claims to authority; writers often introduced their opinions by saying that they were merely repeating what the connoisseurs had said. After the turn of the century, music reviews became a conventional genre of formal criticism."[31] This was also the atmosphere in Denmark, where there were specific music journals that kept the population informed about performances, trends, and novelties that were happening all over the continent. Danish commentators were aware of the country's geographic isolation, and aimed to maintain relevancy with the continent via diligent reporting. However, as the critics in Denmark also conformed to the generalized critical approach and pedigree of the above quote, they too were largely amateurs and dilettantes who essentially parroted the most general bits of information, albeit with their distinct biases and knowledge of local perceptions. Some Danish critics of Wagner made concerted efforts to remain as objective as possible and to only disclose information that was deemed as essential. Others, though, could not resist expressing their personal views, and often displayed congruence with the standard rhetoric of disapproval of Wagner that was publicly known to be the view of certain influential cultural personas like Bournonville. Yet, these distinctions of journalistic styles that were exhibited at roughly the same time and in the same city (Copenhagen), demonstrated how critics were independent and loyal to their convictions, to an extent, without fear of social or career reprisals if any view was interpreted as antithetical to prescribed opinions. However, the benefit of being the very first critics to analyze Wagner in Denmark allowed certain freedoms that stem from there being no precedence to such discussions, or of possibilities to be criticized by a public that was intimately acquainted with the subject matter. Therefore, the type of criticism that emerged was honest, transparent, and indicative of deeply-rooted social trends that went beyond music and theory.

This section emphasizes the scope of research concerning Wagnerian reception at large, but a final word on previous research on the composer in Denmark is important to mention. Firstly, the connection between Wagner and Andersen has been made in this study due to the explicit symbolisms associated with the composer in *Lykke Peer*, as well as Andersen's extensive preoccupations with music. However, an extensive literary analysis of the Wagnerian traits in Andersen's final novella has never been made to the extent that my study has sought to expound.

[31] Weber, "Wagner, Wagnerism, and Musical Idealism," 36.

Musicologist Anna Celenza's book on Andersen's broad associations with music[32] was my initial inspiration for investigating *Lykke Peer* in relation to Wagner. Four years after this book, Celenza published an article on music history reflected through two of Andersen's literary works, the second of which was *Lykke Peer*.[33] The article only slightly expands on Celenza's analysis of *Lykke Peer* in her book, repeating the following: A contextualization of Wagner's nineteenth century reputation in terms of its difference from his post-WWII reputation; the nineteenth century social reaction to Wagner's text *Judaism in Music*; Andersen's awareness and refutation of anti-Semitism in *Lykke Peer*; and symbolic representations of past and present composers and musical aesthetics. There are two primary differences between Celenza's book and her article: The first difference is that in the article, Celenza adds more direct quotes from the text of *Lykke Peer*, and more emphatically presents her analysis as an example of music historiography, which she briefly mentioned but did not present as a central methodology in her book. The second difference is that unlike her book, Celenza's article is a reflection on juxtaposing musical aesthetic projections of the future with perceptions of musical tastes of the past. Beyond that, there are no new interpretations of Wagner, Andersen, or *Lykke Peer* in her article that were not evident in her book. The present study isolates the points made in Celenza's book that were listed above as repetitions in her article, but then significantly expands on them, first and foremost, via a comprehensive narrative analysis of *Lykke Peer* rather than just a few contained excerpts from the novella. Furthermore, Celenza does not address the interaction between Danish Wagnerism and *Lykke Peer* from the perspective of the novella's formative influence on Wagner's early cultural reception in Denmark. In essence, Celenza draws attention to the existence of some of these elements, whereas my study expands the breadth of analysis and socio-cultural history that is involved when addressing the main research questions. Apart from Celenza, only brief records exist elsewhere that associate the two artists in any meaningful way. I will now discuss the extant texts on Andersen and Wagner, and Wagner in Denmark.

The Danish literary and music historian Erik Dal (1922–2006) wrote extensively on Andersen and produced a text on Andersen and Wagner for the 2005 Bayreuth Festival program. This would be the final text he wrote on Andersen before his

32 Anna Harwell Celenza, *Hans Christian Andersen and Music: The Nightingale Revealed* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005).

33 Anna Harwell Celenza, "Music History as Reflected in the Works of Hans Christian Andersen," in *Music's Intellectual History: Founders, Followers & Fads*, eds. Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (New York: Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, 2009), 183–193.

death.[34] Dal's short article follows a similar (and coincidental but unintended) trajectory to the present study by beginning with Andersen's earliest exposures to music and his impulsive flight to Copenhagen at the age of 14. Dal then pivots to the 1850s by citing Andersen's sole meeting with Wagner in Zürich.[35] The rest of the article covers all of the familiar contexts of Andersen's associations with Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Weimar; a few excerpts from Andersen's letters regarding his views of Wagner's music; Bournonville's reactionary view of Wagner that Dal felt was precipitated by the bias instilled in the aftermath of the Second Schleswigian War of 1864; the translations of Wagner's prose into Danish by Adolf Hertz; a brief mention of *Lykke Peer* with its biographical elements; associations to Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin*; and an incorporation of theories related to the future of the arts. In his article, Dal presents a historiographical account of Andersen and Wagner in under 4,000 words that again bears symmetry with my study, as I elaborate and expand on all points that he described in his article. These similarities between Dal's and my work are less significant than our shared conception of what is valuable scholarly narrative when seeking to explicate Andersen's association with Wagner. In other words, I believe that the layout of Dal's article further justifies my inclusion of all of the above mentioned facets at length, and the need to accept that when looking at Wagner through the lens of Andersen, a comprehensive picture of relevant Danish history is essential.

In a collected edition of essays that were dedicated to Erik Dal, his son, Ea Dal, wrote an essay entitled: "Danske Wagner-tilløb" (Danish Approach to Wagner). The purpose of this essay was for the author to reflect on the influence that Erik Dal's love of Wagner had on his son, and to create a testament of Wagner's early reception in Denmark, which Ea Dal felt was suitable to his musicological interests at the time, more so than a survey of Wagner's later presence in Danish culture.[36] His investigation covered the years 1857–1880 for the identical (and coincidental) reasons as my own: 1857 marked the first concert performance of Wagner's music with the *Tannhäuser* Overture, and Ea Dal stopped at 1880 because he felt that that decade was the first where Wagnerism in Denmark would make a sharp increase in literature analyzing the composer's prose and music.[37] This was among my own reasons for not expanding the years of my study, because I felt that this type of increased publicity in Denmark that mirrored international trends would risk diluting

[34] Erik Dal, "H.C. Andersen og Richard Wagner," *Magasin Fra Det Kongelige Bibliotek* 21, no. 1 (2008), 52.

[35] Ibid., 53.

[36] Ea Dal, "Danske Wagner-tilløb" in *Hvad Fatter gjør…Boghistoriske, litterære og musikalske essays tilegnet Erik Dal* (Herning, Denmark: Poul Kristensen, 1982), 130.

[37] Idib.

the unique Danish perspective, where the earliest reception would prove to be the most sincere representation that was derived from first impressions. I believe that this was also what Ea Dal must have thought when citing the dates of his examination into Danish Wagnerism. He next speaks of the concept of the "future of music," which had originated in Germany, but was as yet relatively unknown to Danish audiences.[38] Dal then goes on to describe various Wagner performances with their accompanying newspaper reviews, and only mentions by name the articles and authors who wrote about Wagner, whom I analyze in depth in my study, but whom Dal only describes in the most general way. Dal also briefly mentions Bournonville's trip to Germany to attend a performance of *Lohengrin* in order to ascertain its feasibility of production in Copenhagen, and Bournonville's reflections on this trip and his views on Wagner in his autobiography.[39] These are also important events in the history of Danish Wagnerism that I analyze in far greater detail.

Importantly, Dal does mention Andersen, but only cites him briefly as a passionate admirer of Wagner who had been familiar with the composer's music since the 1850s, where at first he was opposed to it, but gradually became far more supportive.[40] Curiously, Dal makes no mention of *Lykke Peer*, nor does he quote any of Andersen's extensive diary entries that chronicled his experiences of attending the first three Wagner opera productions in the early 1870s. Although, he does cite Andersen's diaries in his literature list. In short, Ea Dal covers important milestones and names the most salient actors who bore influence on Wagner's early reception in Denmark, but his insights lack the kind of historiographic nuance and attention to motivation that my study seeks to exemplify with its careful attention to historical and cultural subtexts that relate to the causes (i.e. wars, Grundtvig, nationalism, etc.) that led to the effects (i.e. Wagner's critical reception in Denmark).

In a Danish monograph of collected essays (written in German), that was published to commemorate two hundred years of musical interaction between Denmark and Germany, Claus Røllum-Larsen, senior researcher at the Royal Danish Library, wrote an article titled "Richard Wagner und Dänemark" (Richard Wagner and Denmark). The text opens with naming Andersen as one of the earliest Danish cultural icons who already heard Wagner's music in the 1840s, and who at first expressed a dislike for the German composer's music. Røllum-Larsen uses this as an example of depicting how Danish sensibilities were initially opposed to Wagner when he first came to their attention.[41] The author next presents what is now the

[38] Ibid., 131.
[39] Ibid., 135.
[40] Ibid., 138.
[41] Claus Røllum-Larsen, "Richard Wagner und Dänemark," in *Wahlverwandtschaften: Zwei Jahrhunderte musikalischer Wechselwirkungen zwischen Dänemark und*

standard reportage of early Wagner reception in Denmark: The first orchestral performances in the mid-1850s; Bournonville's scathing attack of Wagner; the first opera production in 1870; and the various critical assessments at the time in public periodicals.[42] Uniquely, though, the author also adds some reflections of contemporary Danish composers on Wagner, which has never been addressed (albeit very briefly included here by Røllum-Larsen) in these general overviews of Danish Wagnerism. The next half of Røllum-Larsen's short article discusses some performances and milestones (like the founding in 1912 of the Danish Richard Wagner Association), in the first 15 years of the twentieth century.[43] The article makes no further mentions of Andersen (or *Lykke Peer* at all), nor does it go into early Wagnerism beyond presenting the names and dates of Wagner opera premieres in the 1870s and a few accompanying Bournonville quotes from his autobiography. The article essentially serves to prove that there is indeed a Wagnerian presence in Denmark, but there is no greater depth of analysis beyond these brief expressions.

We next have the article by Czech musicologist Jarmila Gabrielová titled: "Germanischer Mythos bei Richard Wagner und in der dänischen Nationalromantik" (Germanic Myth in Richard Wagner and in Danish National Romanticism). This article presumes to describe how Germanic myth does not solely belong to the German people, but to northern Europeans more broadly, and especially the Scandinavian peoples.[44] The author qualifies Germanic myths as denoting the pagan tradition of texts and narratives, which she then equates to Medieval Nordic epics, ultimately drawing parallels between Wagner's mythologized (and Germanized) characters and their Nordic counterparts.[45] When Denmark is brought into the picture, Gabrielová lists some of the composers, playwrights, and poets who were influenced in the last decades of the eighteenth century by these mythological idioms. The point is ultimately to express that by the time Wagner began appropriating these myths into his operas, these narratives were already culturally inherent and established in variation in Denmark.[46]

Gabrielová does not discuss what influence Wagner may have personally had on the Danish cultural landscape through this shared interest in Germanic mythology, but she does write how the symbolism took on nationalistic and patriotic elements for Wagner, particularly after 1870, and how these narratives were also politicized

Deutschland, eds. Anne Ørbæk Jensen, Claus Røllum-Larsen, and Inger Sørensen (København: Det Kongelige Bibliotek København, 2004), 92.

42 Ibid., 95–96.

43 Ibid., 98–99.

44 Jarmila Gabrielová, "Germanischer Mythos bei Richard Wagner und in der dänischen Nationalromantik," *Colloquium Brno 1995* (1996): 63.

45 Ibid., 64.

46 Ibid., 67.

in Denmark through, for example, Grundtvig's writings.[47] The central example of these parallel (but independent) interests is, for Gabrielová, Bournonville's ballet *The Valkyrie*, set to music by J.P.E. Hartmann, which was composed five years after Wagner's *Die Walküre*.[48] Although Gabrielová's article in no way addresses Wagner's reception in Denmark, she outlines many important characteristics of aesthetic and cultural similarities, and how both Wagner and cultural actors in Denmark looked to use mythology as a vehicle for their social interests. My study certainly develops these trends, and although Gabrielová's inclusion of these details is only a brief survey that simply draws attention to the existence of these connections, it is a justifying factor for my research that other scholars have also detected the important associations between Wagner and Denmark that exist in terms of how they both (Andersen included) used mythology to steer perceptions of culture and national identity. I will expand on this notion greatly when I isolate these practices in the endeavors of Wagner, Andersen, and Grundtvig.

In terms of newer studies—which I mention here as a brief tangent to the discussion of Danish sources that deal with Wagner and Denmark—an edited book titled *Wagner and the North* was published in Finland in 2021, which presents essays on Wagner in context of all the Nordic and northern European countries that had previous publications on Wagnerian reception.[49] Danish Wagnerism is notably missing from this sizeable study without a clear explanation as to why an important center of Nordic Wagnerism was left out. For this reason, the title of the book is partly misleading, since most of the articles are concerned with Finnish and Swedish Wagnerism. Despite this limitation, the book does make a useful contribution to the list of literature that emplaces Wagner in the Nordics, and justifies my efforts even more for filling a critical gap by expounding upon a component of Wagner's reception in Denmark. Apart from this, the book offers various studies of Wagner and reception, myth, culture, and symbolism, as they relate to Nordic themes associated with the composer. A particularly compelling chapter is musicologist Eero Tarasti's study that applies his theory of existential semiotics to contrive an approach for conducting research on Wagner that aims to conflate elements of the composer's life and work in such a way that brings together all the different facets that are the usual staples of Wagnerian research in a systematic theory of inclusivity that does not leave out any essential factor of Wagner's humanity or oeuvre.[50]

[47] Ibid., 69.
[48] Ibid., 71.
[49] See: Anne Kauppala and Martin Knust, eds., *Wagner and the North* (Helsinki: University of the Arts Helsinki, 2021).
[50] See: Eero Tarasti, "Wagner Belongs to All: Reflections on His Body, Person, Profession and Values," in *Wagner and the North*. In addition to this chapter, Tarasti also wrote an

The last extant text of particular value that exists on Wagner in Denmark is a Danish lexicon that traces the performance history of all Wagner operas staged in Denmark from the *Lohengrin* premiere of 1870 until the 1980s. This guide, titled *Wagners operaer i Danmark: Et dansk Wagner-Lexicon* (*Wagner's Operas in Denmark: A Danish Wagner-Lexicon*), was written by the Danish conductor and music journalist Gerhard Schepelern (1915–2004). As the author writes, the book is divided into three sections: First, an overview of the ten canonical Wagner operas' press reception from the 1870 *Lohengrin* premiere to the 1915 *Parsifal* premiere. Second, an overview of production personnel from all the Wagner operas performed in Denmark, and lastly, a list of performance personnel (singers, conductors, directors, and scenographers) for all Danish Wagner performance between 1870 and 1987.[51] The first section of the book about reception history is the most interesting part, generally speaking, where Schepelern includes the standard recounting of Wagner's biographical details, but adds a quote from Wagner's autobiography, *Mein Leben*, where the composer briefly described his experience of being at port in Copenhagen (without disembarking), while he and his first wife were traveling to London after their escape from Riga.[52] Schepelern next recounts Andersen's initial and extended encounters with Wagner's music, which he bolsters with quotes from one of Andersen's autobiographies.[53] The rest of this section covers familiar contexts of press publications and Bournonville's involvement with the first Danish productions of Wagner operas, as well as the ballet master's reactionary views of the composer. Schepelern then briefly discusses the meaning of some of Wagner's theoretical texts, as well as their Danish translations. An important detail, though, is his mention of *Lykke Peer* and its Wagnerian imagery.[54] The rest of the reception section is important for emplacing every subsequent Wagner premiere in context of its press reviews.

When reviewing the secondary source literature that exists on Andersen and Wagner, as well as Wagner in Denmark, we see a discernible pattern of overlapping information that touches upon the most direct interactions and associations between

important monograph study that, among other things, deals with elements of myth in key works by Wagner, and also discusses how through motivic structures, musical narration, and other techniques, Wagner (and Liszt) exerted influence on Jean Sibelius's and other composers' music. See: Eero Tarasti, *Myth and Music: A Semiotic Approach to the Aesthetics of Myth in Music, especially that of Wagner, Sibelius and Stravinsky* (The Hague, NL: Mouton Publishers, 1979).

51 Gerhard Schepelern, *Wagners operaer i Danmark: Et dansk Wagner-Lexicon* (Valby, DK: Amadeus Forlag, 1988), 7.

52 Ibid., 8.

53 Ibid., 9–10.

54 Ibid., 17.

Wagner and his contemporary Danish cultural society when his music was first performed in Denmark in either concert or operatic performance. To a lesser extent, authors mention Andersen, *Lykke Peer*, and Grundtvig in an effort to expand the cultural scope of Wagner's relevance. Yet, all of these sources only really display how much more there is to uncover and the potential that lies ahead for those who look to investigate deeper and to establish even older and more profound connections of socio-cultural and political associations between Wagner and the actors that these other writers broached. However, I must emphasize that these secondary texts are not directly applicable to my research needs because they are not particularly analytical. They present all the salient pieces on the chess board, but then leave it as a testament of what it was without asking more critically how and why. My more engaged use of the same critical reviews notwithstanding—and while I do acknowledge the formative connection that the earlier texts establish between Wagner and Danish cultural life—these texts only bore marginal influence on the path of my own study, as I came to them quite late in the process of my own research, and did not find any material that was directly suitable for inclusion in the main body of the present text. Therefore, the Danish academic landscape is ripe for having my study fill a significant gap in Danish cultural history with the most comprehensive research endeavor to date that emplaces Wagner in the Danish cultural spectrum of his time through Andersen's various endorsements of the composer in his published and private texts. Further contextualizations in my study place the composer in a sea of shifting ideological perceptions, juxtaposed with perspectives from critical commentators in Denmark, which establishes a wide-ranging narrative of empirical and visceral reactions that uncover why early Wagnerian reception developed as it did in Denmark as much as how.

Following this discussion on previous research, we will now shift focus to concepts that address the nature of reception studies, which will hopefully establish a central methodological foundation that will contribute to the understanding of how the present study will unfold. Indeed, as the next chapter attests, reception study is acutely predisposed to studies of cultural history, and can yield practical and salient approaches that can, in turn, be seamlessly applied to Wagner studies in general, and to my project in particular, due to the multi-faceted nature of Danish political history and national identity playing a crucial role in Wagner's Danish reception.

Theory of Reception

In his discussion on literary hermeneutics, Hans Robert Jauss mentions the concept of horizon as the amalgamation of human behavior, encompassing our grasp of

"historical limitation" and the "condition of possibility of any experience."[55] The observer's opinion is restricted in the dialectical dissonance that ensues when scrutinizing any past within the present. Jauss believes that this discord can only be avoided if the observer's perceptions and prejudices are eliminated. Likewise, he states, "a work of art cannot be separated from its effects."[56] The struggle to achieve this type of differentiation has been at the core of Wagnerian interpretation from Wagner's lifetime to the present. Main themes relating to this struggle include Wagner's controversial notions of anti-Semitism, nationalism, and at times even demagoguery.[57] The reception of the composer's life and works has continuously sought to reconcile the past with the present via unbiased contextualizations that inform objective interpretations across time, while always recognizing from where biases may stem.[58] This interplay of explicit and implicit viewpoints, colored by a multi-dimensionality of mitigating circumstances, permeates Wagner studies, rendering them perpetually fascinating, renewable, and applicable, as these interpretations reflect considerably more the time and place of inquiry than just perspectives on Wagner himself. For example, Andersen viewed Wagner as a freedom-fighting, left-wing revolutionary and cosmopolitan, whose exile from Germany[59] was seen as a martyr-adjacent personal sacrifice for the struggle to revolutionize the position of the arts in European society. Conversely, in the context of World War II, people like Theodor Adorno characterized Wagner as a proto-fascist, whose music represented vulgarity and nationalist fundamentalism.[60] Commentators of various sorts, therefore, invariably project circumstantial or personal moralities that allow Wagner to be seen in contexts with which he himself never would have associated his art and ideology. The sheer international scope of Wagner reception studies attests to this phenomenon, and validates the importance of sustaining and continuing such studies that often result in new perspectives on the interpreters themselves and the societies they inhabit, as much as on Wagner-related content.

[55] Hans Robert Jauss, "The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding," in *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies*, eds. James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (New York: Routledge, 2001), 7.

[56] Ibid.

[57] A study that addresses this is: Jacob Katz, *The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Anti-Semitism* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 1986).

[58] One source that looks to engage more with Wagner's personal relationships with Jews and also attempts to contextualize the composer's support and friendship with many Jewish individuals for a different outlook is: Milton E. Brener, *Richard Wagner and the Jews* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005).

[59] Wagner fled to Zürich, Switzerland in 1849.

[60] For a comprehensive overview of Adorno's polemical views on Wagner, see: Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 2005).

Reception studies are generally useful for cultural analyses, precisely because dialectical oppositions polarize interpretations, which, again, in regard to Wagner, is an occupational hazard that obfuscates as much as it edifies. As a point of departure, James Machor and Philip Goldstein note that "because it recognizes that the traditional canon embodies the 'changing interests and beliefs' of authoritative readers or critics, reception study examines the socio-historical contexts of interpretive practice. [It also] undertakes the historical analysis of the changing conditions and reading practices through which texts are constructed in the process of being received."[61] The essential concept here is the manner in which interpretation is applied, and how it changes depending on the context of history and society. Such perspectives are crucial to remember when considering large-scale implications, such as the entire Wagnerism movement in Europe and broad variations of the Danish nation state, as the latter evolved in the nineteenth century from a firm absolute monarchy to the Grundtvigian model of national identity perpetuated via cultural nationalism. Any notion of reception, therefore, must present an extremely thorough appraisal that traces the lineage of ideals and values to comprehend why people and things developed as they did. In addition, "reception study has become an important mode of historical inquiry because to rehabilitate the historical method discredited by formalist criticism, reception study limits or rejects the transformative force of theoretical ideals and examines the changing 'reading formations' or 'interpretive communities' governing readers' practices."[62] Once again, this statement recognizes the distinction between critical bias and historical objectivism that seeks to contextualize perceptions in time and place, and excise them of comments that may hinder the quest for the truth, where "readers' practices" may erroneously reflect biases that are not derived from a historical method. Nevertheless, in the parameters of the present study, there is no real illusion of truth, as all critical opinions are of the time of inquiry, therefore the desire is not to separate fact from fiction, but rather to analyze the presented view as being the inherent truth of the individual who said it, and to understand how and why they may have come to those convictions. However, in context of the above quotation, a study of reception underlies that the "evolution of the audience, not the historical period of the author, explains the history of a literary text."[63] Likewise, when a commentator writes about the life of an author, they should not presume to have special use of a text, or to disregard their reflexive projection upon it, but to retain what Jauss described as the distinction between the author and their subject.[64] This concept testifies to the

[61] Machor and Goldstein, *Reception Study*, xii–xiii.
[62] Ibid., xiv.
[63] Ibid., 1.
[64] Ibid.

common reactionary views of Wagner that have followed the composer indefinitely through history, and are no less applicable within a Danish context. It became clear to me that this "hermeneutic difference of self and other" was greatly compromised in the critical accounts of Wagner made by Danes, which further necessitates a knowledge of the evolution of their biases.

Tony Bennett writes how the actual text, as opposed to assessments of it, inspire romanticized interpretations of it. The actual text, he claims, is an amalgamation of "intertextual, ideological, and cultural" suggestions that take precedence when establishing reading customs.[65] For this study, Bennett's assertion is only half right. What will be seen as the "texts themselves" in my study relate to the theoretical prose works of Wagner, Andersen, and the Danish theorists of the time who wrote about Wagner: Immanuel Rée, H.H. Nyegaard, Adolph Hertz, Carl Thrane, and Erik Bøgh. It is essential to present these texts in their original forms in order to make the pertinent textual analyses and to investigate how they were appropriated to represent a variety of purposes. The original theoretical texts by Wagner and Andersen are indispensable to the extensive literary analyses that I make in order to trace the various symbolic allusions to these various texts. In that way, there is a semblance of the "hermeneutic difference of self and other," but it is not in regard to me, the author (despite possessing a set of reading customs myself), but, in this case, to Wagner as the author of the original texts (excluding Andersen's texts, which were not subject to critical scrutiny by the Danish critics in this study), and the critics who unrepentantly projected themselves upon them in their criticisms. Certainly, as Janet Staiger writes, "reception studies does [sic] not presume a meaning as an essence to be extracted by an insightful critic. Reception studies asks [sic] what kind of meanings does a text have? For whom? In what circumstances? With what changes over time? And do these meanings have any effects? Cognitive? Emotional? Social? Political?"[66] These questions and more will be addressed and answered as Wagner's theories and music are emplaced in Denmark and among the Danes, based on insights gained from Andersen's diaries, Bournonville's autobiography, and periodical texts analyzing the composer's music and theories. Ika Willis echoes these notions by mentioning the empirical qualification of reception studies, noting how it also investigates historical research in terms of recognizing how previous groups or single readers understand and assess specific texts or collections of work.[67]

65 Tony Bennett, "Texts in History: The Determinations of Readings," in *Reception Study*, 70.

66 Janet Staiger, *Media Reception Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 2.

67 Ika Willis, *Reception* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2018), 3.

Sources and Methods

In order to answer the questions on Wagner's early cultural reception in Denmark and Andersen's role in this process—as well as the contributions of other Danish cultural actors who influenced formations of nationalism and identity—an essential group of primary sources are used, which consist of their own subdivision of sources. The first group is comprised of Andersen's documents, including his correspondences, diaries, travel journals, prose works, fictional works, and various collections of autobiographies that he published at different stages of his life, the primary selections of which are: The twelve volumes of Andersen's diaries, *H.C. Andersens Dagbøger 1825–1875* (*H.C. Andersen's Diaries 1825–1875*); his autobiographies, *Mit Livs Eventyr II* (*My Life's Adventure*, the second of two volumes) and *The Story of My Life* (originally published in English); theoretical texts including "Det nye Aarhundredes Musa" ("The Muse of the New Century") and "Om Aartusinder" ("Thousands of Years from now"); books including *At være eller ikke være* (*To Be, or Not To Be?*); and most importantly, his novella *Lykke Peer* (*Lucky Peer*). Indeed, Andersen was a keen reflexive recorder, but documented his reflections generally as aphoristic musings that he himself believed would not be conducive to meaningful analysis following his death. Despite this conviction, these texts hold value for their opinions and reflections of their time, painting Andersen simultaneously as a visionary, but also a man emplaced in his time.

Wagner was just as keen of a reflexive writer, and his extensive primary literature will be used as well. My second group is made up of the composer's documents, a selection of which are: Books that include *Oper und Drama* (*Opera and Drama*) and *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (*The Art-Work of the Future*); the libretto to the opera *Lohengrin*; and his diary collection that is known as *The Brown Book*. The third key group of primary sources is a collection of texts written by Grundtvig that contextualize Andersen's and Wagner's nationalism, and serve to represent the ethos of Denmark's dramatic shifts in politics and national identity, which impacted Wagner's cultural reception and Andersen's tactics of textually defending the composer. The texts by Grundtvig that promote the formation of the new Danish national identity isolate theoretical positions that were contrived within Denmark and for the Danes themselves. This includes the following texts by the theologian: "Om Tyskland og den tyske ånd" ("On Germany and the German Spirit"); "Skolen for livet" ("The School for Life"); and "Det danske Firkløver eller en Partialitet for danskheden" ("The Danish Four-leaf Clover or a Partiality for Danishness").

The fourth and final group of primary sources is an assortment of Danish reviews of Wagner's theories and music. This focus on broad yet culturally-applicable national texts will be narrowed down to all of the original analyses published during the timespan of this study, as well as reviews that constituted the public critical assessments of Wagner directly by the journalists and commentators that wrote about

Wagner while also possessing an awareness of all the published and widely-disseminated texts within Denmark by Andersen, Grundtvig, and Bournonville. These sources include: Excerpts from Bournonville's autobiography *My Theatre Life*; Erik Bøgh's feuilletons "Lohengrin" and "Det kongelige Theater: 'Mestersangerne i Nürnberg,' Opera i 3 Acter af Richard Wagner;'" H.H. Nyegaard's series of articles titled "Om det Wagnerske Musikdrama;" Immanuel Rée's article "Digter-Komponisten Richard Wagner og hans Arbejder;" Carl Thrane's article "Richard Wagner og hans Opera;" and Adolf Hertz's Danish translation and introduction to Wagner's *Opera and Drama* that was titled *Musik og Opera efter Richard Wagner*.[68] The important autobiography of the reactionary Bournonville will also be cited for his terse response to Wagner's perceived nationalism. As will be seen, Bournonville was familiar with Wagner's theoretical texts, including *Judaism in Music*, which he used to fuel his personal antipathy for Wagner, and viewed the composer's nationalism disfavorably, especially in the heated years following the second Schleswigian War. All of these primary sources depict an interpersonal familiarity between all the Danish individuals under scrutiny, which informs the manner in which Wagner's cultural reception bore nuance amidst overlapping yet varied themes of perception, including how the composer's own theories were interpreted in context of these powerful foundational notions of national identity and culture.

I will briefly mention here my practice, at times, to present quotes by Wagner, Andersen, or others from secondary sources rather than from the original primary sources. I did this because these were translations made by the scholar-authors of these texts, which helped me to avoid any unnecessary mistakes in translation myself. These instances are, however, infrequent. I condone this practice in the interests of maintaining a high level of literary accuracy with difficult texts that were rendered even more so due to archaic expressions in nineteenth century Danish structure and syntax, which are not easily discernible in context of today's form of the language, even by native speakers.[69] Therefore, I found consistency to be more important than fidelity in these few cases.

[68] I purchased the majority of these Danish texts myself from private antique book sellers in Denmark and Sweden. A smaller selection of digital sources was found at the Royal Danish Library and were sent to me by their special collections librarians. An even smaller selection of Danish sources, in particular, the feuilletons of Erik Bøgh, were found in the special collections holding of the Lund University Library, which I accessed on site.

[69] I did employ the aid of a native Danish speaker and linguistics scholar who frequently helped me with many translations to make them comprehensible in contemporary English.

There are a few central methodologies that I use to analyze the primary sources and reach my conclusions, but there are also a few subsidiary methods to mention that are still pertinent to my working process. The brief mention later of the subsidiary methods serves to demonstrate a deeper theoretical engagement with how I formulate my interpretations in the current study. To reiterate, this study seeks to establish a narrative account of music historiography that falls under the category of historical musicology. To begin, musicologists David Beard and Kenneth Gloag define historiography as "the discipline of writing history, so the historiography of music (music historiography) is the writing of music history. The development of a music historiography, like other forms of history, is influenced by changing historical and cultural conditions, and it therefore has its own history, which reflects different attitudes and approaches to music during different historical moments."[70] My study of the changing landscape of Danish history and culture promotes a central tenet of the above definition, which certainly does form its own history, especially when analyzed through specific spectrums, such as Andersen, Grundtvigian cultural nationalism, and a critical reception of Wagner.

In her introduction to an edited volume on historical musicology, musicologist Roberta Montemorra Marvin argues that the manner of interaction with source materials is at the heart of historical musicology, "with many significant achievements of the discipline having been established on documentary foundations."[71] Indeed, the interplay between critical reception and the historiographic writing of histories is central to historical musicology, as well as to my methodology in the context of this discipline with its reliance on historical primary sources. The key is to understand that these categories work with developments of change within cultural paradigms in history, which study how isolated historical events have come to pass. The inception of a documentary foundation, as Marvin described it, is essential for the writing of this type of history. I will reiterate that my objective is to analyze Wagner's Danish reception through Andersen, which establishes the endeavor as a cultural investigation that does not rely on musical analyses. It is still musicological in scope due to the symbolic and cultural significance that is extracted from Wagner's operas and the composer's thoughts on music and aesthetics more generally by Andersen and other critical actors in Denmark.

[70] David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005), 82.

[71] Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Introduction: Scholarly Inquiries in Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods, Interpretations," in *Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods, Interpretations*, eds. Stephen A. Crist and Roberta Montemorra Marvin (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 1.

An example of the way that I interact with my source materials can be given with my use of this study's most important single source: Andersen's novella *Lykke Peer*. My analysis of this novella stems from a synthesis of multiple investigations that begin with the text's many symbolic meanings and allusions, and those particularly associated with Wagner's theories and music. The element of opposing aesthetics is a constant narrative device, as Andersen constructs continuous debates between central characters who advocate for opposing stylistic treatments of music. This can be seen as a reflection of Andersen's own preoccupation with the social function of the arts, and, as it will become clear in his own theoretical texts and diary entries, the poet's firm and lasting desire to see a single artist, or muse, rise to capture the social consciousness in such a way as to redeem, unify, and enlighten a new path of artistic inclusion that will also bridge national divides, such as those that existed between Denmark and Germany at the time. *Lykke Peer* is ultimately Andersen's commentary on his own life's path, and his idealized vision of the future, where he clearly saw Wagner's theories and music as the path to this most desirable of futures. The synthesis that I make continues with direct comparisons between *Peer* and Wagner's *Lohengrin*, which was, again, the first fully staged Wagner opera in Denmark, and which Andersen consistently attended while writing *Lykke Peer*, resulting in many direct and indirect associations with that work in his text. What emerges from my analysis is a depiction of *Lykke Peer* as a microcosm of the conflict that was engulfing both Andersen and Denmark at the time, that will later be woven in this study's subsequent sections on nationalism, identity, and ultimately Wagner's printed critical reception, which discussed many of the polarizing tenets of Wagnerism that Andersen wrote about in his novella. Therefore, Wagner's cultural reception in Denmark can find many direct and metaphorical references in *Lykke Peer*, illustrating the validity of what I previously described as an amalgamation of sources that work in harmony to demonstrate that cultural reception.

My own examination of *Lykke Peer* is reinforced and contrasted with relevant secondary sources, where the views of the other cited scholars are incorporated in order to support my interpretations, but where they also stand, at times, in opposition to the conclusions that I am drawing. The practice of including contrary viewpoints is often helpful in establishing a well-rounded historical consensus that is not solely used to justify my own perceptions. In that regard, I am in dialectical conversation and argument with these scholars, which exhibits how I integrate one type of a historiography into my own historiographic endeavor within the greater discipline of historical musicology. My engagement with these scholars correlates to historical musicology because its function is to ultimately direct these perceptions of Andersen towards Wagner within the scope of *Lykke Peer*, as well as in the presentations of nationalism where Andersen's writings were used as subtle vehicles for his political agendas. Therefore, what I have done with these secondary sources is to show how

one historiographic course can logically blend into and complement another (namely mine), and how this forms a documentary foundation in historical musicology, as Roberta Marvin stated above.

As previously elaborated, reception theory is a central method for what I aim to do, as it follows the lineage of ideas and values to understand why people and cultures developed in the way that they did. Beard and Gloag add that a key component of investigating reception history is the function of narrative, which is particularly relevant in the study of musical works in the nineteenth century.[72] We now reach the methodology of narrative analysis, which is also central to my study, complementing the framework provided by reception theory. An adequate working definition for this methodology, to quote organizational communication scholar Sarah Tracy, is that it is "a type of analysis in which researchers identify stories that have a plot and audience (both told and untold), and analyze them in terms of their content, type, characters, motivation, and consequences."[73] In this sense, the vague concept of an untold story can relate to elements of a story that are left out by the author, as not everything can always be stated (or known), where that which is untold invites or inspires the reader to make logical connections for themselves that are missing empirical facts to support those beliefs. In other words, the reader comes to intuitive conclusions that make sense to them from the context of the story even if those conclusions are little more than informed opinions due to the story's lack of supporting evidence. In the case of this study, the prime example is the unsubstantiated connection between Andersen and Wagner via Baudelaire, which is described in further detail a few pages later. The point is that these untold narratives can still be analyzed and convincingly absorbed into the underlying investigation. Moreover, Tracy's concept of narrativity can also act as a harmonizing agent between the larger divisions of Andersen/*Lykke Peer*; Grundtvig; and Wagner, and how they each create their own audience and plot through their works that speaks to the formation of interconnected cultural receptions.

I generally rely on discursive narratives and classify an event in a way that is often thorough and morally-emplaced in its time, in the sense that the historical investigation is not diluted or potentially misinterpreted through retroactive analyses made at a future time. For my dissertation, the story would be the essence of Wagner's reception in Denmark that is seen through a wide lens of cultural paradigms like identity, society, culture, and history. But that's not enough. The cognitive narratology that delves into experientiality is the next level of my investigation when I investigate the diaries, reviews, and correspondences of

[72] Beard and Gloag, Musicology: The Key Concepts, 153.

[73] Sarah J. Tracy, Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 263.

individual people.[74] This is the backbone of my research, because it is an abstraction: I am interpreting the narrative of the recounted reflection in context of the structural narratology, which may or may not be what the originator of the idea had in mind, but what I presume nevertheless in context of other research and my own research questions. In that sense, recorded rhetorical narrativity, which can be seen in the exchange of letters (such as those between Andersen and Grand Duke Carl Alexander), has a fundamental connection to the cognitive variety, because they are both essentially experiential. In other words, experiential meaning is what someone experiences in a specific event, where the cognitive parameters of narratology reflect a conversation, or a storyteller, like Andersen, relating a past experience by conveying an embodied and emotionally-charged account of temporally unfolding actions in his diaries. Put even more simply, I am analyzing sources that look at the narratives that their authors created from their personal experiences based on their interpretation of the event(s) in question, which does not necessarily result in objective truth, but can be seen as that person's truth, which is important to me because the interpretation of an experience can be hypothesized as culturally-derived. I can use this phenomenon of constructing personal narratives to draw parallels with socio-historical events and posit how an interpretation of an experience can stem from established social constructs, which, in my case, informs how and why Danes view Wagner as they do.

Expanding further, the interactional narrative practice considers implications of big and small proportions, such as social implications, or personal ones. For me, both are relevant: the outcome that Wagnerism had in Danish society was profound, and it created specific meaning for someone like Andersen, who had personally embraced the ethos that he projected within his literary narrative of *Lykke Peer*. So I am thusly presented with a narrative within a narrative: the story of Wagner in Denmark, and the Andersen novella that brought meaning to that specific Danish society in that specific sector of time.

Overall, I incorporate a variety of qualitative methods, where I in turn arrive at conclusions through a system of qualitative deductions. Broadly speaking, my study deals with fundamental questions of cause and effect that compel me to think critically at every turn of my investigation. The simplest example of this is how the Schleswigian Wars caused Danes to be hyper-sensitive to expressions of national

74 Relevant sources on cognitive narratology include: Ryan Friesen, *The Nightly Act of Dreaming: Cognitive Narratology and the Shared Identity of Myth* (East Sussex, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2019); Isabel Jaén and Julien Jacques Simon, eds., *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Lars Bernaerts, Dirk de Geest, et al. eds., *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

fervor, with the effect that August Bournonville misinterpreted an expression that Wagner made to him in a letter as a declaration of the composer's German nationalism, which resulted in Bournonville's hatred of Wagner that also resulted in music critics who were supportive of Bournonville expressing similar disdain for Wagner in print. Furthermore, I attempt to maintain a skeptical qualitative perspective when seeking to uncover as much of the historical truth as possible. An example of this is the way in which Andersen was specifically influenced to write *Lykke Peer*, his literary Wagnerian treatise. Andersen had known of Wagner for decades prior, and had even met the composer once, yet it is surmised that a trip to Paris in 1867 led Andersen to allegedly discover Baudelaire, who wrote passionately about Wagner's influence on the future of art. This was believed by Anna Celenza to be the igniting factor for Andersen, yet in all his extensive written recollections, there is no mention of such a singular convergence happening, or even any discussion of Baudelaire. So how could Celenza come to this conclusion? She used qualitative deduction to qualify a string of actualities that ultimately made their premise seem plausible. Whether the reader believes this or not is up to them. I feel that a logical, critical path of deduction was clearly delineated, and that the conclusion is therefore believable, even if there is not irrefutable evidence to support it. The pattern was therefore instrumental in developing the causal puzzle.

In summary, the type of qualitative investigation that I am undertaking is highly deductive and based on a notion of tracing patters of cause and effect that inform all facets of Wagnerian reception through Andersen in Denmark from 1857–75. In order to comprehend how and more importantly why that reception resulted in the way that it did, carrying out a comprehensive narrative analysis of various texts is crucial, which required my historical investigation to begin decades earlier at the start of the century with an overview of a few critical points in Danish history that would bear significance for the way in which Wagner would be judged in the middle of the century. These methods work together to establish a historiography of cultural change that, when viewed through Andersen's own cultural developments and those of critical commentators, gives rise to and results in a Wagnerian reception history in Denmark where the roots of that reception are also historically understood. With all of these theories and methodological starting points in mind, I will now discuss the structural and thematic layout of my study.

Thematic and Structural Composition of the Study

This monograph will be presented in several sections with chapters that will address the various themes discussed thus far. The sections are constructed to address different aspects of Wagner's cultural reception, starting with Andersen's itinerary towards Wagner, and expanding to include facets of narrative, theory, and socio-

cultural considerations that inform my argument of Wagner's emplacement in Denmark via Andersen, and key aspects of Danish history and society that also played an important role in the composer's reception. The opening section will consist of four chapters, which will investigate some of Andersen's formative moral viewpoints on art and culture that would remain with him for the rest of his life. The background section traces Andersen's early association with theater and his receptiveness to music—in particular, opera. It also discusses the stylistic tastes of the Royal Theater in Copenhagen at the time that Andersen was developing the interests and pursuits that would follow him throughout his life, and ultimately orient him towards Wagnerian innovation. The description of Danish musical and theatrical values will be applicable when Wagner enters the fold, as it demonstrates the provinciality of Danish aesthetics as Andersen saw them, and what implications this held for Wagner's reception in that country. Moreover, when investigating Andersen's *Lykke Peer*, the same perceived provincial aesthetics will find their way into the narrative as oppositional views to that of the Wagnerian protagonist, thereby signifying the close symmetry between Andersen's upbringing and his crowning treatise to Wagnerism.

Subsequently, the study will shift to Andersen's arrival in Weimar. This part of the section discusses Andersen's edifying wanderings around Europe that instilled within him a cosmopolitan multiculturalism and lifelong devotion to Germany in particular. These years of wandering put him in proximity of Felix Mendelssohn, who first introduced Andersen to Wagner's music. Shortly after, Andersen became a favorite mainstay for many years at the Weimar court of the hereditary and then Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Carl Alexander. It was here that Andersen became intimately acquainted with Franz Liszt, through whom Andersen developed a deeper, albeit still slightly ambivalent awareness of Wagner's music. However, it was in these critical years that Andersen came to believe in an inherent cultural kinship between Denmark and Germany after experiencing his first great literary successes in Germany. This conviction would be severely tested in the following decades amidst bitter warfare, but would ultimately endure and yield the final great flowering of this lifelong position: The Wagnerian novella *Lykke Peer*.

Following these initial contextualizations, there will be an extensive analysis of Andersen's diaries and autobiographical texts, recounting his experiences and musings regarding Wagner, which depicts his evolution over many years from skeptic to devotee. Andersen's sole meeting with Wagner was to have powerful repercussions as well, as the poet afterwards idealistically elevated Wagner as his perfect artist of the future who would revolutionize and ultimately redeem the social functions of art. After this, a comprehensive literary analysis of the Wagnerian symbols in *Lykke Peer* will be made to investigate all the explicit and implicit allusions to Wagner and what these symbolisms represented to Andersen personally

as well as ideologically. It will depict the way that Andersen sought to comment on the state of the arts in his contemporary Denmark while offering an idealized solution for the future. The next few chapters will explicate the various symmetries between *Lykke Peer* and the one opera by Wagner that was central to the *Peer* narrative: *Lohengrin*.

The next string of chapters will investigate Wagner and Andersen's theories on the future of the arts. The previous chapters that analyzed the symmetrical complexities of *Lykke Peer*'s narrative with analogous themes in Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, depicted how acutely Andersen had absorbed and appropriated Wagnerian ideologies to serve his own aesthetic and moral endeavors. The literary analysis is subsequently bolstered by explicitly tracing the theoretical texts on the future of the arts that both Wagner and Andersen produced, signifying their shared preoccupation with posterity by elevating an individual who would lead the moral revolution of progressive change.

The next group of chapters cover elements of Denmark's history and the formation of a new Danish national identity. The section on the Schleswigian Wars focuses on the complexities of Danish nation building as a result of war and other historical conflicts. The aim here is to establish the delicate and diverse cultural and political atmosphere in which Wagner was presented in Denmark, as a pivotal backdrop in understanding the specific nature of his early Danish reception, and the biases that informed that reception. This can only be facilitated via the historical, political, and ideological shifts that were prevalent in Northern Europe, especially Denmark, in the nineteenth century, and the central individuals that harnessed these destabilizing tenets to enable their own influence in order to enact the specific changes that they wanted to see.

The presentation of the wars between Denmark and Germany sets up the introduction of Grundtvig, and the cultural nationalism that he preached to bring about the formation of a new Danish national identity. Grundtvig used his immense influence in the guise of theologian, philosopher, and politician to enable his widespread employments of cultural nationalism. In their own way, Grundtvig and Andersen were ideologically antithetical, and both desired to steer the Danish nation into the future that they envisioned. At the center was a great polarity: Grundtvig wanted Denmark to disavow all cultural associations with Germany, whom he viewed as a threat to the new Danish identity, while Andersen sought to endorse and propagate cultural homogeneity between Denmark and Germany. Amidst this chaotic struggle between these cultural and national Titans, a devastating war with Bismarck's Germany engulfed the small Danish nation. It was in this hypercharged atmosphere that Wagner began to emerge in the Danish concert halls and public periodicals. These various circumstances of preoccupation all informed the manner

in which Wagner's art and ideology were to be received in Denmark, and are analyzed accordingly.

The concept of nationalism unfolds as an integral element in the fabric of these converging events and perspectives. Andersen's own position in his country was threatened when his devotion to Denmark was brought into question. The necessity to prove his loyalty resulted in some altered views in the poet that are important dimensions to consider, especially when Wagner's nationalistic opinions are taken into consideration, and the hostile sentiments that they instilled at times, as the example of Bournonville in the final section attests. Andersen and Grundtvig's mutual association is also presented in depth, as their clash of wills is paramount when isolating tenets of Danishness and the repercussions that all of it would have upon Wagner, and in turn that Wagner would have upon Danish cultural society. Lastly, then, in the final chapter of the penultimate section, there will be an investigation of Wagner's own extensive, problematic, and inflammatory nationalistic views, which will be discussed in order to address important conceptual dimensions with which the composer was associated in general and internationally at the time, but particularly so in Denmark. This will be distinctly relevant in the sensitive aftermath of the last war with Germany. The latter part of the chapter will juxtapose Wagner's brand of nationalism with that of Andersen's and Grundtvig's to demonstrate, once more, a profound context for Wagner's Danish reception. This group of chapters that culminates with Wagner's nationalistic outlook will reveal the complex interplay that unifies Wagner, Andersen, and Grundtvig as thinkers who engaged with socio-political theories, as much as it also depicts fundamental differences between them. These connections will exhibit an awareness of influence where all parties are cognizant of the social impact that their written words can have, which will be a distinct feature of this study as well.

The final section of chapters in this study will analyze the early public reviews of Wagner's music and his theories, as presented by Danish critics and commentators. The various national and political contexts that were illustrated earlier will provide an essential understanding for deconstructing the subtlety of insight that these writers projected. Their often complimentary, yet at times diverging views, portray the most transparent opinions of common Danes regarding Wagner, as these views were written by local Copenhageners who often expressed solidarity with the older (and still popular) performance styles that Andersen sought to transcend by endorsing more socially-progressive artistic trends. There will also be a crucial analysis of Wagner's association with ballet master August Bournonville, which exemplifies a common view of Wagnerian reception with those Danes who were hostile to the composer. Much of this critical text is echoed in the aesthetic abstractions that were promoted by Andersen and Grundtvig, and shows which details of Wagner's art and ideology most appealed to the Danish readership,

as many themes were reiterated verbatim or in slight variation over the years of inquiry.

Much of the analytical content of the critical reviews was distinctly reminiscent of the Wagnerian themes found in *Lykke Peer*, which signified a broader national awareness of the composer's most fundamental theories. These public reviews also represent the span of time from when Wagner was just appearing on the Danish concert stages to the first few fully staged operatic performances in front of a knowledgeable and experienced audience.

How to Read this Study

To be even more clear on the disposition ordering of this study, I must first reiterate that I am writing a historiographic narrative of Danish national culture as it impacted Wagner's early reception through the central lens of Andersen. The reader may come to wonder why so much focus is placed on themes of Andersen's background, the Schleswigian Wars, and Grundtvig's cultural nationalism. I must insist that all of these component parts are crucial in their specific order, as the presentation of the various sections of this study represents a certain flow of information that is essential in the order that it is provided. The beginnings of Wagner's cultural reception in Denmark cannot be properly understood without first comprehending the nature of the national mentality that judged him, and why these factors came to pass as they did. As such, the history of the Danish political climate and its intersection with nationalism and anti-German sentiments cannot be divorced from my study, because these matters instilled strong and even hostile perceptions that influenced how Wagner would originally be received in Denmark. The contextualization of this cultural history first emerges with the opening sections on Andersen's background, the *Lykke Peer* analyses, and the idealized theories on the future of the arts that Andersen and Wagner shared in their individual ways. Details of Andersen's early life will also be applicable later when the reader notices how autobiographically-reflective the *Lykke Peer* narrative is, where Andersen's childhood and adolescence are unmistakably mirrored in his novella. The chapter grouping of histories and national identities builds upon the context of Andersen, *Lykke Peer*, and the Wagnerian symbolisms in that text. This knowledge conceptually and philosophically informs the values that are then rendered more empirically tangible in the history of the Schleswigian Wars, Grundtvig, and the discussion of Danish and German nationalism. These focal points would be less effective without the foundation of symbolic meaning, and necessarily precede the final section on Wagner's critical reviews in Denmark, where the reader can apply historical knowledge to detect the biases that inform the critical reception of Wagner's music and theories. Furthermore, Andersen's personal history and cultural gravitation to

Germany establishes the crucial dichotomy between the two countries that informs the historical discussions of the middle section.

These early chapters on Andersen's musical background and Wagner establish distinct values in socio-cultural terms that are ultimately pro-German. The sections on the Schleswigian Wars, Grundtvig, and nationalism, subsequently, present the antithesis to the first arc by depicting a pro-Danish persuasion that is also explicitly anti-German in many ways. The extended sections on Grundtvig and nationalism are required to present as comprehensive a layout as possible of the complexities of Danish national identity in the studied period, which require many angles of approach to sufficiently comprehend the subtle nuances of a nation's conditioning of self, thought, and morality. At its core, the formation of the Danish national identity entailed the acceptance of a very specific propaganda, and for that propaganda to be understood, it must be rhetorically displayed and culturally contextualized and synthesized to the extent that I present it. So by the time we reach the final section on Wagner's actual reception in Danish society beyond Andersen's involvement, we have come to understand the oppositional nature of these two large-scale arcs that separate German and Danish interests. Without this trajectory, it is impossible to fully deduce Wagner's critical reception and why Danes like Bournonville came to hold their views against Wagner while still performing his music in their country. This was simultaneous with their efforts to inform their countrymen of what Wagner stands for, while further harboring the perceptions that were historically engrained in them. The complex evolution of the Danish attitude towards Germany is important in emplacing Wagner in an environment that judges his nationality and personal convictions as much, or in some ways even more, than his music alone.

For these reasons, the final chapters on critical reception must be seen as the culmination of the entire study. This is also rendered more feasible by the inherent large-scale chronological development of the sections, where Andersen's musical origins and associations take place roughly from the 1820s to the 1850s; the Schleswigian Wars in the 1850s and 60s; Grundtvigian cultural nationalism at around the same time; Wagnerian nationalism at also roughly the same time; and lastly, *Lykke Peer* and the main body of Danish Wagnerian criticisms in the first half of the 1870s.

This study is about shifts in cultural ideologies that bear significant influence on the reception of art. It is simply not enough to judge Wagner through Andersen and to be content that this forms a comprehensive picture of Danish Wagnerism at the time. No, there is a complex and elaborate evolution of socio-cultural history that must first be absorbed and understood if one is to not just determine how Wagner came to be viewed by the Danes, but more importantly, why he was viewed in the way that he was. For that to become clear, dichotomies and their systematic

relationships need to be addressed: Germany vs. Denmark; Andersen vs. Grundtvig; Danish cultural identities vs. Wagner. This is the course of logic that informs the disposition of this study as a historiographical narrative of cultural reception that can only properly unfold in the thematic order in which it is presented.

In context of the expansive narrative that the sections and chapters of this study convey, my central purpose transpires, whereby I seek to investigate how the conceptual abstraction of Wagnerism in Denmark in the early years of the composer's exposure in that country was exemplified in Andersen's *Lykke Peer*, as well as Andersen's other texts and activities, and also other critics' and cultural figures' views. *Lykke Peer* can be seen as the aesthetic validation of Wagner's art and ideology in the socially redemptive guise that the composer himself attached to his own literary and musical creations. In summary, the foundation of Danish Wagnerism was established in 1857–75 with the first orchestral concert performances of Wagner's music; public analyses of his prose works; the publication of *Lykke Peer*; and the Danish premiere of three fully-staged operas composed by Wagner. The final five years—temporally punctuated on either end by the publication of *Lykke Peer* and Andersen's death—were the most determining, whereby Wagner's presence in Denmark was firmly established, subsequently allowing it to evolve in that country as palpably as it did across the rest of Europe.

Section I: Andersen's Musical Journey Towards Wagner

Andersen's Musical Background

The trajectory of Hans Christian Andersen's development regarding his conception of music was in many ways a reflection of how small-town obscurity can expand to become cosmopolitan and enlightened with the right presentation. Andersen's eventual conviction that Wagner's art was the cultural and perceptual wave of the future came to pass after a lengthy and thorough exposure to music. This path must be traced in order to convey Andersen's aesthetic evolution and how his faith in Wagner came to pass. As a child growing up in provincial Odense, Andersen would vocally mimic the folk tunes that he heard, which developed into an aptitude for singing that brought him modest renown at home. In his 1832 autobiography, Andersen recounts from his childhood in 1816 when, at the age of 11, he was creating awareness with his singing voice while working at a tobacco factory: "Now I found myself amidst the tobacco plants, watching them making chewing tobacco and snuff, and received quite fine treatment myself; here too my voice was appreciated, people even coming up to the factory to hear me sing, and the oddest thing was I could not recall a single song, but I improvised both lyrics and melody, both were very intricate and difficult."[75] Elsewhere in the same autobiography, he added: "My love of reading and my wonderful voice drew people's attention to me. When the bells tolled in the evening I would sit there, carried away in strange dreams, watching the mill wheel and singing my improvisations. I often sensed my audience behind the fence and I was flattered. – Thus I became known, and people would send for me in order to hear, as I was called, 'The little nightingale from Funen.'"[76] In another autobiography, he described his vocal gifts in childhood in this way: "I was possessed at that time of a remarkably beautiful and high soprano voice, and I knew

[75] Quoted in: Johan de Mylius, "Hans Christian Andersen and the Music World," in *Hans Christian Andersen: Danish Writer and Citizen of the World*, Sven Hakon Rossel, ed. (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1996), 177.

[76] Ibid.

it; because when I sang in my parents' little garden, the people in the street stood and listened, and the fine folks in the garden of the states-councilor, which adjoined ours, listened at the fence."[77] All these remarks by Andersen depict a young boy who was seemingly groomed for a life in the theater, or at the very least, that he was imbued with a necessity for self-expression, and the need to have that expression validated by an audience.

His singing prowess cultivated an interest in theater, and the young Andersen allied himself with the local theater manager who allowed Andersen to disperse programs in exchange for attending the performances. It was during these initial exposures that he would start composing poetry. Andersen quickly progressed, and was allowed bit parts in the productions. He soon came to believe that a career in theater was his destiny, with Copenhagen's Royal Theater as the apex of his ambitions.[78] He described these experiences in his autobiography:

> During the summer before my Confirmation, a part of the singers and performers of the Theatre Royal had been in Odense, and had given a series of operas and tragedies there. The whole city was taken with them. I, who was on good terms with the man who delivered the play-bills, saw the performances behind the scenes, and had even acted a part as page, shepherd, etc., and had spoken a few words. My zeal was so great on such occasions, that I stood there fully appareled when the actors arrived to dress. By these means their attention was turned to me; my childlike manners and my enthusiasm amused them; they talked kindly with me, and I looked up to them as to earthly divinities. Everything which I had formerly heard about my musical voice, and my recitation of poetry, became intelligible to me. It was the theatre for which I was born; it was there that I should become a famous man, and for that reason Copenhagen was the goal of my endeavors.[79]

This idealistic view proved to be both premature and delusional, based on his abilities at the time. Once he arrived in Copenhagen, he was rebuffed by the theater, and decided to try to use his soprano singing voice to win over support in the operatic realm. This avenue proved more successful, and the coupling of his determination and peculiar exuberance yielded support and patronage from such figures as Giuseppe Siboni—newly appointed director of the Royal Theater's Opera Academy—and renowned composers, such as C.E.F. Weyse and Friedrich Kuhlau. All these individuals provided the young Andersen with lessons in their respective

[77] Hans Christian Andersen, *The Story of My Life* (London: Forgotten Books, 2018), 16.
[78] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 13.
[79] Andersen, The Story of My Life, 23.

crafts, small financial compensations to survive, and introductions to people who comprised Copenhagen's cultural elite.[80] Johan Mylius, a leading historian on Andersen, describes the initial meeting with Siboni thusly: "Surprisingly, Andersen had a unique ability in his childhood and youth to make an impression on people, to convince them not only of his talent but that they ought to support him all the way. At the dinner party, Siboni promised to give him singing lessons and free board in his house."[81] Andersen also described his initial meeting with Siboni and the others at the former's house:

> I then bethought myself of having read in a newspaper in Odense the name of an Italian, Siboni, who was the director of the Academy of Music in Copenhagen. Everybody had praised my voice; perhaps he would assist me for its sake; if not, then that very evening I must seek out the master of some vessel who would take me home again. At the thoughts of the journey home I became still more violently excited, and in this state of suffering I hastened to Siboni's house. They would have me to sing, and Siboni heard me attentively. I gave some scenes out of Holberg, and repeated a few poems; and then, all at once, the sense of my unhappy condition so overcame me that I burst into tears; the whole company applauded. Siboni promised to cultivate my voice, and that I therefore should succeed as singer at the Theatre Royal.[82]

Andersen pursued his voice lessons diligently with Siboni, but about half a year later, his voice broke, and with it, his prospects of becoming a singer. He reflects: "There was no longer any prospect that I should become a fine singer. Siboni told me that candidly, and counseled me to go to Odense, and there learn a trade."[83] This was to be the start of Andersen's exposure to the other performing arts in his attempt to secure a place at the Royal Theater and not suffer the humiliation of having to return home as a failure. In the autumn of 1820, Andersen was accepted into the Royal Theater's Ballet School, and would take the stage as an extra in ballets and operas. As Mylius notes, "The singing lessons he took towards the end of his three-year stay in Copenhagen 1819–22 were not aimed at training him for the opera, but were one of the elements in his attempt to make a career in the theater."[84] He kept a diary of all the performances he both performed in and attended. This was the inception of what would become a lifelong endeavor of recording his musical impressions and

80 Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 18–19.
81 Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 178.
82 Andersen, *The Story of My Life*, 28–29.
83 Ibid., 31.
84 Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 179.

recollections.[85] Mylius provides necessary context about the theatrical milieu of Copenhagen in which Andersen found himself at the time of his arrival, which will help to crystalize Andersen's initial endeavors, as well as the aesthetic climate of the Danish capital in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The status of opera in particular at the time further demonstrates what Danish audiences were exposed to, with the explicit mention of Wagnerian opera as a consequence of the evolution of style and repertoire, not to mention the acceptance of serious opera, rather than conflations of musical theater:

> Here it is vital to bear in mind that the Royal Theater, then as now, housed three art forms under the same roof: drama, ballet, and opera. But in Andersen's youth, drama and opera tended to overlap in the sense that there was rather little distinction between singers and actors. This was due to the fact that opera was not yet developed professionally at the Royal Theater, and that its most popular repertoire consisted of works in which various genres were blended: the ballad opera and the singspiel, which required actors to have good singing voices. Moreover, since at that time opera as a genre still made extensive use of recitatives (e.g. Mozart) or spoken dialogue (e.g. Beethoven and Weber), singers were needed who were fully skilled actors as well. It was not until later that opera developed into a 'pure' genre through the influence of Italian and Wagnerian opera.[86]

However, Andersen's ambition to become an actor was dashed for a second time, but his vocal abilities once again proved to be his salvation, as he was fortuitously invited to join the Royal Theater's Opera Academy, and started in the chorus.[87] He reflected on this, noting:

> My voice had, in the meantime, in part regained its richness. The singing-master of the choir-school heard it, offered me a place in the school, thinking that, by singing with the choir, I should acquire greater freedom in the exercise of my powers on the stage. I thought that I could see by this means a new way opened for me. I went from the dancing-school into the singing-school, and entered the choir, now as a shepherd, and now as a warrior. The theatre was my world.[88]

[85] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 20.
[86] Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 179–80.
[87] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 22.
[88] Andersen, *The Story of My Life*, 36–37.

Despite being shuffled around the various factions of the Royal Theater, the experience had instilled both a knowledge and appreciation of various performing arts. His pride in his small theatrical roles had motivated the following diary entry on 12 April 1821: "It was a great moment in my life that my name now appeared in print; it seemed to me there was a halo of immortality about it. At home I had to look at the printed letters all day, I took the ballet program with me to bed in the evening, lying by the candlelight staring at my name, putting it away only to take it up again—this was sheer bliss."[89] This passage clearly demonstrates Andersen's lifelong pursuit of a lasting legacy that would yield cultural immortality. The same lofty ideals would be expressed 50 years later in *Lykke Peer*, Andersen's final novella, when the elderly writer would imbue his youthful protagonist with his own ideals regarding legacy and immortality.

This versatile exposure could also have been the catalyst that prompted Andersen to try his hand at writing his own opera libretto about a year and a half after joining the opera academy.[90] His manuscript was summarily rejected after submitting it for review by the theater's censors, and his position in the academy was also terminated—both due to his lack of a formal education.[91] Despite these failures, Andersen was now determined to become a librettist. Based on a few perceived merits in his second failed libretto, the Royal Theater offered to financially support Andersen's acquisition of an education, which he pursued for the next five years in a provincial town far from Copenhagen. Literary historian Sven Rossel describes the position of the Royal Theater, noting that an uplifting letter of support was sent with the declined libretto manuscript, which stated that Andersen might one day write something desirable if he first acquired an education. The board of director at the Royal Theater said they would support Andersen, and tasked Jonas Collin, the managing director of the theater from 1821–29 and 1842– 49, who was also a powerful governmental administrator, with making the requisite arrangements. Collin acquired royal funds and sent Andersen to a prestigious school in Slagelse.[92] Andersen reiterated these details, reflecting:

> In a few days I was sent for by the directors of the theatre, when Rahbek gave me back my play as useless for the stage; they hoped that perhaps, by earnest study, after going to school and the previous knowledge of all that is requisite, I might, sometime, be able to write a work which should be worthy of being acted

89 Quoted in: Sven Hakon Rossel, "Hans Christian Andersen: The Great European Writer," in *Hans Christian Andersen: Danish Writer and Citizen of the World*, 9.

90 Celenza, Andersen and Music, 22.

91 Ibid., 23.

92 Rossel, "Andersen: The Great European Writer," 10–11.

> on the Danish stage. In order therefore to obtain means for my support and the necessary instruction, Collin recommended me to King Frederick VI., who granted me a certain sum annually for some years; and, by means of Collin also, the directors of the high schools allowed me to receive free instruction in the grammar school at Slagelse, where just then a new, and, as was said, an active rector was appointed.[93]

The years were torturous for him, but he read copiously, and ultimately returned to Copenhagen to enroll at the university.[94]

Upon his return to the capital, Andersen tapped into his inspiration to produce a string of literary successes. A popular fantasy travelogue was the first such production, followed by a vaudeville that was immediately accepted and produced by the Royal Theater. This success prompted Andersen to effectively end his education and focus his full attention on becoming a poet.[95] The success was short lived, however. The Royal Theater's censors heavily criticized and ultimately rejected a number of operatic and vaudeville texts, which led Andersen to perceive a conspiracy against him in Copenhagen. As Rossel notes: "The fact, that success would trigger envy and criticism—that his artistic intention would deliberately be misrepresented—was something Andersen now experienced for the first time, and his lifelong confrontation with his critics, reflected in some of his finest and wittiest tales and stories, begins already at this early point in his career."[96] Andersen reflected on these criticisms in his autobiography from 1832, stating: "[Because of the applause] some thus became more hostile toward me, taking offense at my light-heartedness and at the words from Oehlenschläger's plays innocently, God knows, worked in."[97] These were painful experiences for Andersen that would once again find autobiographical expression decades later in *Lykke Peer* for its protagonist. He next decided to seek his fortunes elsewhere in Europe, and, at the age of 28, did precisely that upon securing a travel grant subsidized by the king.[98] As Mylius describes: "Andersen's numerous and frequently long journeys abroad served many purposes. He badly needed to get away from the acrimonious Danish cultural climate which made his life a misery with its petty criticism. He needed to cultivate contacts with publishers and translators, and finally he had to *be there*. In other words,

93 Andersen, *The Story of My Life*, 42–43.
94 Celenza, Andersen and Music, 24.
95 Ibid., 29.
96 Rossel, "Andersen: The Great European Writer," 13.
97 Quoted in Rossel, "Andersen: The Great European Writer," 13–14.
98 Celenza, Andersen and Music, 34.

Andersen needed to cultivate his relations with writers, painters, sculptors, musicians and composers."[99]

Musical Exposure and Weimar

Andersen's first extensive tour of Europe took place from 1833–34. His intent was to travel down through Europe, ultimately to reach Italy—the country where opera originated. He sought to meet as many relevant people as possible who could assist him in his desire to be a career librettist. His first contact in Germany was with the composer Ludwig Spohr. They discussed Danish and German opera, as well as literary sources that could act as effective libretti. They parted amicably, and Spohr even conveyed a desire to work with Andersen in the future. After making more musical contacts in Germany, Andersen next proceeded to Paris, where he made the acquaintance of Cherubini, Heine, and Hugo, to name a few, and frequently attended the opera to see all of the most recent productions. His experiences in the French capital imbued him with some valuable perspective: For the first time, he felt just how small and unrefined the world of theater had been in Denmark compared to this new metropolis. These and future experiences would influence his ultimate identity as a cosmopolitan world traveler, who was not bound by the provinces, but one who rather embraced diversity and everything it taught him.[100] Mylius effectively captures the sentiment of what Andersen must have felt by astutely describing the provincial and limited capacities of Denmark's theaters, and why Andersen's aesthetic sensibilities were fundamentally (but not wholly) at odds with institutionalized trends in Denmark. It also provides context that can later be applied to the atmosphere that would largely remain the same by the time that Wagner's operas would begin being staged in Denmark, starting in 1870:

> Through his many journeys abroad in the following years, Andersen gained first-hand knowledge of the way in which the opera developed as a genre up to and including Richard Wagner and Charles Gounod. Thus he must have realized that collaborating with Danish composers would not generate results that could match developments within the international opera genre, and yet he continued to be involved in projects for the national stage. As far as repertoire went, Denmark had not gone much beyond lyrical, romantic operas and popular ballad operas.
>
> This generic limitation of the Danish stage, provincial in a European context, gives splendid indication of the opportunities and restrictions for Andersen's

[99] Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 191.
[100] Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 39–43.

> work for the national musical theater. In his musical drama, Andersen was more of a lyricist than a dramatist, and as this also applied to Danish composers at the time, it meant that on the whole he could work with them without any friction. But this lyrical tone in Danish romanticism and post-romanticism also clearly limited these musical dramas and, with few exceptions, explains why they did not survive the era that, with its fruitful fullness and emotional restraint, came to be known as 'Denmark's Golden Age.'[101]

Andersen eventually made his way down to Italy, where he would spend several months in a near-constant whirlwind of musical exposure. Unlike in Paris, where he was exposed to a variety of performance mediums, in Italy, music, and particularly opera, were his constant companions. The experiences triggered his creative voice, and he worked on what would become his first full-length novel: *The Improvisatore*.[102] Inspiration for the work had partially come from bad reviews that he had received in Denmark while he was in Italy. He was invectively deemed an improviser, but instead of becoming demoralized by this, he believed that his ability to improvise was his greatest artistic attribute. Indeed, the primary theme of the resulting novel was to portray the protagonist with those very same distinctions.

The Improvisatore included elements of musical aesthetics that contextualized an artist's place within society. The work centered on presenting improvisation as a catalyst for imagination and innovation in any art form. Andersen began to see how literature in Germany and music in Italy were bringing about new trends of thought that were not developing in Denmark.[103] This is the first foreshadowing of Andersen's ultimate appeal towards Wagner, because it emphasized his faith in a universal aesthetic that was intrinsically tied to the arts, and especially to artists of revolutionary vision. Andersen believed in the value of change, and sought to nurture it any way he could. *The Improvisatore* represented this ideal, but also depicted Andersen's belief that he himself belonged to this revolution of sorts, as one of its most ardent supporters. Following the success of this novel and the travels that yielded it, Rossel notes: "Managing so well abroad while being far away from his mentors in Copenhagen gave Andersen a boost of confidence and a new sense of independence from the critics at home."[104]

The publication of *The Improvisatore* occurred a few months after his return to Denmark, and garnered tremendous success for Andersen. The novel's colorful descriptions of Italian opera vocalizations had gripped Danish audiences, resulting

[101] Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 183.
[102] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 47.
[103] Ibid., 51.
[104] Rossel, "Andersen: The Great European Writer," 22.

in a new, widespread interest in Italian opera that was previously unknown in the region. Andersen capitalized on this trend further by quickly publishing an article of music criticism that profoundly illustrated the various tenants of Italian opera, as well as the leading Bel Canto composers of the day—namely, Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. This publication also received mass public appeal, resulting in Andersen finally acquiring the respect of Copenhagen's musical elite. He was deemed as a "music connoisseur and critic."[105] Andersen was now firmly in the center of the changes of appeal that took place in Copenhagen's musical society. By the late 1830s, singspiel and vaudeville had become passé, while Italian, French, and German opera had begun to make massive inroads at the Royal Theater. Andersen credited himself as a major influence on artistic tastes in his country.[106]

By the early 1840s, Andersen's preoccupation with the theater began to wane. The capricious tastes of the Copenhagen audience had once again hurt his artistic pride when one of his dramatic works was again met with failure. Although he adored all the elements of musical theater—music, song, text, dance, and act—he still felt that the essence of improvisation was closest to his artistic sensibilities. Virtuosity was a cornerstone of his poetic imagination, and his attention now gravitated to the area of instrumental music, and the greatest performing stars of the day: Franz Liszt and Sigismond Thalberg.[107] As a cosmopolitan aesthete, Andersen was acutely aware of the constantly shifting trends in culture. His shift towards instrumental music was less of an intentional decision as it was an awareness of changing times. Further tours of Europe in 1840 and 1844 had exposed him to these occurrences. These travels also brought him into the performing spheres of Mendelssohn and Schumann. Just like his epiphany with Italian opera while in Italy, so too did these purely instrumental experiences shape his perceptions of these new personal discoveries. Andersen was also keen on noticing public reactions to these musicians, which influenced his own recollections and assessments.[108]

The art of improvisation was once again central to Andersen's perceptions of Liszt and Thalberg. At the time, Andersen was aware of the unique approach to journalism that Heinrich Heine had developed in Paris the previous decade. Heine was able to implement a journalistic technique that mirrored the essence of musical improvisation.[109] Indeed, audiences were enthralled by the rational, yet unpredictable music that seemed to be connected thematically, but with no distinguishable

[105] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 54.
[106] Ibid., 59.
[107] Ibid., 79.
[108] Ibid., 80.
[109] Ibid., 95. For more on Heine, see: Anthony Phelan, *Reading Heinrich Heine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

structure (as was the common criticism of Liszt's music at the time).[110] There was both an element of inventiveness and danger in this approach where decisions were made impulsively.[111] This was a musical hallmark that also appealed to writers, as noted with Heine. Andersen keenly picked up on this association, and infused his own musical criticisms with similar applications of textual improvisation. For example, he described Liszt's playing as an "avalanche [that] rolled down from the Alpine mountains, and Italy danced in her carnival dress waving her wand while in her heart she thought of Caesar, Horace, and Raphael! Vesuvius and Aetna were on fire, and the last trumpet sounded from the mountains of Greece where the old gods are dead."[112]

Andersen first met Liszt in 1841,[113] when the latter had stopped to perform in Copenhagen during a tour of Europe. Within the persona of Liszt, Andersen personified all of his (Andersen's), travels and experiences with the arts to essentially hold Liszt as the embodiment of the new and progressive romantic ideal. Andersen would eventually appoint Wagner as a similar idealistic savior of sorts, who would lead the arts to a place where society needed them to be. Mylius describes this precise phenomenon thusly: "Liszt was also important in the life of Andersen as being the one who drew his attention to Wagner. Although Liszt was excellent at promoting himself, he was tireless in promoting Wagner as the new musical genius of the age. As is evident in the text 'The Muse of the New Century,' Andersen was himself on the lookout for a new Messiah in the arts, and reluctantly joined the admirers of 'the Music of the Future.'"[114] This issue of Andersen discussing the future of the arts (as well as its symmetry with Wagner's ideas on the same matter), and what kind of individual could best bring that about, will be discussed in a later chapter. But in the 1840s, the aesthetic revolution that rode Liszt's virtuosic coat tails, was the beginning of a perspective that Andersen would utilize and exploit for his poetic articulation. By 1844, he came to view Germany as the epicenter of his aesthetic revolution. Apart from his association with Liszt, Andersen had forged strong bonds with Mendelssohn, and with both Clara and Robert Schumann. He would ultimately choose to settle in Weimar—the city of Goethe and Liszt—simultaneously a place of historic virtue, and modern potential.

110 For a study on Liszt in Denmark that discusses these and other criticisms, see: Peter E. Nissen, "Franz Liszt and the Birth of Modern Musical Institutions: The Reception of Franz Liszt in Danish Musical Life, 1839– 1928," *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 34 (2006), 47–63.

111 Ibid., 96.

112 Ibid., 98.

113 For more on Liszt in the period in question, see: Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848–1861 (Volume 2)*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

114 Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 199.

In 1844, Andersen accompanied his friend, Baron Carl Olivier von Beaulieu-Marconnay to Weimar, where he was introduced to the hereditary Grand Duke of Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach, Carl Alexander. The Grand Duke was interested in reestablishing the past artistic splendors of his court that once provided patronage to such luminaries as Goethe and Schiller. In 1842, Carl Alexander had shocked the music world by appointing Liszt as Weimar's Kapellmeister. Equally shocking was Liszt's acceptance of the post, which he took up on a permanent basis in 1848 when he essentially retired from full time concertizing. Andersen's reputation had preceded him in Weimar, and the Grand Duke was taken with him very strongly. The two spent much time together during Andersen's initial visit to Weimar, and it became clear that Carl Alexander wanted to recruit Andersen to his court as well. The poet was even deemed as a new Schiller by local devotees.[115] Andersen reflected on the Grand Duke's earnestness towards him in a diary entry from 10 January 1846: "He said that we must always remain friends, and that someday I should come and stay with him forever in Weimar. I said that I loved my native land. 'But we Germans appreciate you more than the Danes do. – All right, then alternate between us. Give me your hand!' He held it so firmly in his, told me that he loved me and pressed his cheek to mine."[116] Andersen was certainly aware of the sentiment the Grand Duke expressed to him, noting in his autobiography: "It was from Germany that there came the first decided acknowledgment of the merits of my work, or rather, perhaps, its over-estimation. I bow myself in joyful gratitude, like a sick man toward the sunshine, when my heart is grateful."[117] Indeed, over the following years, Andersen would make frequent visits to Weimar, and in his absence, would send the Grand Duke steady streams of new poetry and stage works in efforts to secure his approval—which he always did. Weimar meant a great deal to Andersen, and it was there, for a time, that he truly felt appreciated. He expressed as much upon leaving the city after one of his many visits:

> I remained above eight days in Weimar; it seemed to me as if I had formerly lived in this city; as if it were a beloved home which I must now leave. As I drove out of the city, over the bridge and past the mill, and for the last time looked back to the city and the castle, a deep melancholy took hold on my soul, and it was to me as if a beautiful portion of my life here had its close; I thought that the journey, after I had left Weimar, could afford me no more pleasure. How often since that time has the carrier-pigeon, and still more frequently, the mind,

115 Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 111–13.
116 Rossel, "Andersen: The Great European Writer," 41.
117 Andersen, The Story of My Life, 134.

> flown over to this place! Sunshine has streamed forth from Weimar upon my poet-life.[118]

By 1848, however, matters quickly changed. The first Schleswig-Holstein war erupted, where the German-speaking, Danish-controlled duchies wanted to fully secede from Denmark in order to be part of a rising, united Germany. Andersen could not travel between Copenhagen and Weimar as easily, which strained his relationship with the city's elites. He feared the repercussions would be dire for him, but Carl Alexander was quick to reassure him that the current political situation would never taint their friendship, or his admiration for Andersen. This mentality that Carl Alexander held would ultimately be the driving force behind Liszt's success at having Wagner's operas performed in Weimar at a time when Wagner was a political rebel in exile. Andersen was repeatedly urged to come to Weimar during the war, but he could not bring himself to abandon Denmark. Once the conflict ended in 1850 with a victory for Denmark, Andersen was eager to reestablish himself in Weimar. It was also at this time that he sought to promote other Danish artists to his German patron, whom he felt would be valuable assets to the Weimar artistic circle. Andersen's first return to Weimar following the war occurred in 1852, where he would spend a month in constant company of Carl Alexander, Liszt, and for the first time, Liszt's famous mistress, Princess Caroline Sayn-Wittgenstein.[119]

In the same year, Andersen was to gain a great deal of knowledge on Wagner, (through Liszt), which he had not known before. Indeed, prior to 1852, Andersen had only once heard the overture to Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser* in 1846. Liszt furnished the poet with his own published study of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, and then gave Andersen tickets to see both operas the following week. Although Andersen admired the texts of the pieces, he did not particularly enjoy the music, noting that he found it to be "without melody." His diary record concluded with a hypothetical thought of what those two operas could have achieved in the hands of Carl Maria von Weber or Mozart.[120] This is not a very surprising appraisal, for although Liszt was an ardent admirer of Wagner and championed his music as a conductor, the Weimar circle, including the Grand Duke, found Wagner's music difficult to appreciate. They secretly held the same belief of Liszt's music. Therein lay the seeds of discontent. Liszt and Wagner were already on the path of instigating the artwork of the future, while the rest of the inner circle seemed content to preserve the status quo. Even for all of Andersen's gifts for sensing and embracing the airs of

[118] Ibid., 215.
[119] Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 122–24.
[120] Ibid., 127.

change, musically speaking, it would take him some time longer before he reevaluated his aesthetic position on Wagner, at least.

There was a brief moment of upheaval when Liszt threatened to leave his post due to frustrations over his belief that music was a secondary focus of the court after poetry and spoken drama. This friction coincided with Carl Alexander's father's death, now placing Carl Alexander as the kingdom's patriarch. His response to Liszt's threat was to fully indulge his ideals. Liszt subsequently established a musical Mecca that brought students and loyal disciples into the fold. Wagner's music was a central component of this new hierarchy. When Andersen returned to Weimar in 1854, he immediately recognized what had taken place, and had unanimously acknowledged his support of Wagner as well.[121] Unfortunately for Andersen, Liszt held the poet as a relic of the past. Although Andersen still held the full support of Carl Alexander, it was now Liszt who had seized the reins of power by bringing so many faithful followers to the court. He intended to remove all vestiges of what he considered to be the conservative past.

Andersen's reception at the court quickly diminished after this. Upon a short visit in 1856, he noticed that the division between Liszt's followers and the devotees of Weimar's literary "golden age," had grown profoundly. He became aware that he was no longer an honored guest, and did not even see Liszt during his stay. He was quite relieved to depart back to Copenhagen. The following year, 1857, would be his last visit to Weimar.

The Pepperman's Nightcap

It is helpful now to briefly analyze Andersen's short story of *The Pepperman's Nightcap* as a stylistic and subtle precursor of *Lykke Peer*. The story was written as a symbolic reaction to the direction he perceived the court in Weimar to be taking, and to his deteriorating position within the aesthetic hierarchy of the court. The resulting story is highly autobiographical and reflective of the emotional sting that Andersen felt to being marginalized. As Anna Celenza surmised, *The Pepperman's Nightcap* could have acted as Andersen's expression through literary abstraction of his demoralized convictions to the Grand Duke.[122] However, what is most striking about the story is that it represents Andersen's first foray into expressing Wagnerian imagery literarily. Although Andersen incorporated this imagery as one of multiple allusions to the Weimar court, it nevertheless demonstrated Andersen's acknowledgment of the position that Wagner's music had at the court, and could

[121] Ibid., 129.
[122] Ibid., 136.

have set a precedence for the poet to be comfortable with depicting Wagnerism literarily in the future.

Andersen’s story does not use Wagnerian allusions with any profound depth, however. Literal imagery is borrowed exclusively from *Tannhäuser*, which, along with *Lohengrin*, were the two Wagner operas most heavily promoted in Weimar in the years that Andersen was a frequent guest. Celenza posits that the protagonist of *Nightcap*, Anthony, is the autobiographical projection of Andersen himself. Anthony is associated with Tannhäuser, his youthful love interest Molly depicts the Grand Duke, and Saint Elizabeth represents Liszt, as the composer was writing the oratorio *The Legend of St. Elizabeth* during Andersen’s final visit in Weimar. Furthermore, the corrupting temptress of the story is Lady Venus.[123] The plot of the story also uses locations from the opera, such as Eisenach, Wartburg, and also mentions Weimar on several occasions, as the place where Molly is taken, thereby becoming the idealistic destroyer for both Anthony and Andersen, albeit more gradually for Andersen.

Andersen’s implied meaning in his story was often subtle, and the poet’s personal projections can be seen in the text that, for example, reflects his feeling of being a Dane in Germany: “It was certainly not a happy life. To be a foreigner in a foreign land is a bitter lot.”[124] Interestingly, Andersen had mentioned the story of *Tristan and Isolde* and how Anthony had identified with that narrative. It is unknown to what extent Andersen was cognizant of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*—although he might have caught wind of it in Liszt’s circle as Wagner was composing it at that very moment in time—but the coincidence is palpable.

Similarly, to Tannhäuser, who had embarked on a pilgrimage of moral redemption in the aftermath of his hedonistic transgressions, so too did Anthony experience a moral shift following his own amorous delusions. And like his Wagnerian counterpart who was redeemed through Elizabeth’s faith, Anthony found his salvation in his own spiritual awakening: “How different the world and the people in it appeared to him now. The minstrel’s songs no longer mattered. They were nothing but an echo of the past, sounds long vanished. At times he would think like this. But again and again the songs continued to sound in his soul, and his heart eventually grew gentle and pious. ‘God’s will is the best,’ he would say.”[125] At the end of the story, as Anthony lay weak and close to death, his character was dichotomized by the diametrically opposed melancholy of Andersen’s projection, and the liberating humility and compassion of Saint Elizabeth’s invocation. Certainly, one can hear Andersen himself uttering through Anthony: “He felt as though the world now meant nothing to him, as if he were lying beyond it with no

[123] Ibid., 138–39.
[124] Ibid., 142.
[125] Ibid., 146.

one to think of him."[126] But these thoughts were banished by those of Elizabeth, whom he remembered as "that highly esteemed lady who visited the poorest villages, bringing hope and relief to the sick. Her pious deeds filled his mind with light."[127] And it was the incorruptible love of Elizabeth that redeemed Tannhäuser and comforted Anthony in his final moments, for "in this way, the saint resided in the thoughts of poor Anthony. She was a living figure who stood before him at the foot of his bed."[128]

After the story's publication, Andersen sent the Grand Duke a translated review that he felt had ascertained the story's meaning: "'The Pepperman's Nightcap' is filled with a deep melancholy, in which the poet cautions us about the insecurity of all earthly hopes and points to renunciation as a balsam. For [renunciation] alone is what makes it possible for us to tolerate life and never to give up the idealism of youth."[129] The fact that this quote was meaningful to Andersen underlies his future faith and reliance upon Wagner's art by acknowledging the need for empirical transcendence as the story's fundamental crux. *The Pepperman's Nightcap* is not, therefore, solely a discourse on Andersen's disappointments in Weimar, but also a guide to instilling the necessary morality required to overcome the disappointments; a guide that would find its full Wagnerian conviction in Andersen's final novella, *Lykke Peer*.

Andersen's Experiences with Wagner and his Music

Andersen was aware of Wagner's music, (and had even met the composer once in 1855), for decades prior to writing *Lykke Peer*. His diaries, correspondence, and other personalized documents trace how Andersen's appeal for Wagner developed linearly over time. Andersen's views of Wagner can be seen as a mirror to how Danish society came to accept Wagner over time, as neither one had a particularly positive reception of Wagner's music upon their first exposure to it. Therefore, it becomes paramount to investigate Andersen's views of Wagner chronologically in order to evaluate this dual evolution in reception.

Andersen's earliest diary entry that mentions Wagner in any way comes from 12 February 1846, when at the invitation of Mendelssohn, Andersen had attended a concert in Leipzig that the latter conducted, which featured the overture to *Tannhäuser*. The poet reflected that "the overture to *Tannhäuser* met with

[126] Ibid., 147.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 148.
[129] Ibid., 139.

opposition, yet I clapped, for there was a whole painting within it.”[130] The next diary entry comes some years later on 21 May 1852, when Andersen is in Weimar, which is at this time, under Liszt’s leadership. Andersen notes how he visited the painter Eckermann, who told Andersen that Liszt “damages the theater a lot—he will not program Mozart, who is in the past—but Wagner and other effective composers.”[131] Andersen here has been exposed to the tides of change that have been enacted by Liszt, from which Andersen himself will feel excluded in the ensuing years in Weimar. A few days later, on 25 May 1852, Andersen described a meeting with Liszt: “I went to see Liszt, who lives outside the city. He happily received me and invited me to dinner, but I had to apologize and decline, as I already had a dinner invitation for Thursday. He gave me his French book on ‘*Lohengrin* & *Tannhäuser*;’ it was very pleasant.”[132] In one of his autobiographical volumes written in 1855 that covered the preceding eight years, Andersen elaborated on these early experiences with Wagner’s music. He described the above mentioned meeting with Liszt and what Wagner meant to the pianist:

> It is Wagner’s music, which in large measure appeals to Liszt, who is making every effort for its propagation and recognition; partly through performance, and partly through written texts. He has published in French a whole book about the two compositions, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. The first one is already quite meaningful to the people of Weimar, as it includes lines from Thuringian stories, and takes place in or near Wartburg. Wagner is described as our most important contemporary composer, which is something that, to my natural sense, I cannot acknowledge. It seems to me that all his music is intellectually composed. However, I must admire in *Tannhäuser* the unbelievable recitatives, such as when Tannhäuser returns from Rome and tells of his pilgrimage—it’s lovely! I acknowledge the great use of color of the poetic tone, but for me, what is missing here is the musical flower: the melody. Wagner himself has written the text to his operas, and as a poet in this regard, he occupies a high place. There is deviation and situations where the music itself was—when I heard for the first time—a great sea of tunes rolling over me both spiritually and physically! Then late at night, after a showing of *Lohengrin*, Liszt came to the lodge to me, where I told him I was tired and overwhelmed. ‘What do you say about it now?’ he asked; and I replied, ‘I’m half dead!’ *Lohengrin* seems to me like a wonderfully

130 Kåre Olsen og H. Topsøe Jensen, eds., *H.C. Andersens Dagbøger 1825–1875, III* (Copenhagen: Det danske Sprog-og Litteraturselskab/G. E. C. Gad, 1971–76), 6. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

131 Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger IV*, 79.

132 Ibid., 81–82.

> whistling tree without flower and fruit. But don't misunderstand me—my judgment of music is of little significance, but in this art, I demand, like in poetry, the three elements of sense, fantasy, and feeling, and this last one manifests itself in melodies! I see in Wagner a contemporary thinking composer, great through intellect and will, a mighty destroyer of the reprehensibly old, but I miss in him the kind of divinity that Mozart and Beethoven had. A great, talented speaker like Liszt is able to make a strong claim for Wagner in cities like this. I believe that Wagner has such recognition in Leipzig, but it was not like that before. During an evening at the 'Gewandhaus' several years ago when I was in attendance, after several pieces by difference composers were given and unanimously applauded, the overture to *Tannhäuser* was given; it was the first time I heard it and it was the first time I heard the name Wagner. (Wagner was employed by the orchestra in Dresden, but took part in the political movements of the people, and then fled to Switzerland where he now lives in Zurich.) The color of the tones grabbed me, and I broke out in applause. But I was almost the only one, and the people around me turned to look at me and booed. But I remained faithful to my impression of the music, clapped again, and shouted 'Bravo!' But inside, I felt embarrassed and the blood rushed up in my cheeks. Now, on the contrary, everyone clapped for Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. I said all of this to Liszt, and he with his surrounding musicians, paid me a 'Bravo!' because I had followed the right feeling.[133]

The passage above is interesting because it demonstrates Andersen's understanding of Wagner's innovative significance, yet also sheds light on his aesthetic conflict with the music, and his resistance of it in favor of earlier composers. However, as Celenza discussed earlier, Andersen was aware that he himself belonged to an outdated aesthetic ilk in Liszt's Weimar, so perhaps his declarations of Wagner to Liszt in the above passage has a subconscious motivation of self-preservation. Nevertheless, Andersen does express multiple accolades regarding Wagner's music, regardless of his other misgivings. Despite having had a positive exposure to Wagner's music so far, Andersen had yet to hear one of the operas in a complete version. This changed on 29 May 1852, when Andersen attended a performance of *Tannhäuser*, and noted how: "There was a full house; the text was good; the performance was generally better than expected. The music was on whole proficient, but without melody. What Carl Maria Weber or Mozart could have done with it."[134] Similarly, a few days later on 5 June, when Andersen attended a performance of *Lohengrin*, he noted that "*Lohengrin* has a good text and grand music, but it is

133 H.C. Andersen, *Mit Livs Eventyr II*, (Danmark: Gyldendal, 1996), 138–39.
134 Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger IV*, 85.

without melody. A whistling tree, but without flowers or fruit."[135] From these recollections of his first fully-staged Wagner operas—with only days between them—Andersen's cool but not outright dismissive attitude can be seen as an early aesthetic struggle to comprehend something that is so new to him; that he must contemplate what established (and musically more conservative) composers of the past would have done with these two operas. As perhaps a parody of himself with these sentiments, Andersen will decades later again invoke the images of Weber and Mozart in *Lykke Peer* as an aesthetic combatant to the novelties of Wagner. The outcome, however, will be different for the novella's protagonist, as we will see.

Two years would pass before Andersen would make note of Wagner again in his diary. However, amidst his long-standing correspondence with Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Weimar, Andersen received a letter from Carl Alexander on 14 February 1854, where the Grand Duke wrote to Andersen: "[Heinrich] Dorn's *Die Nibelungen* offers some interesting novelties as a new opera, and points to the work of the same name, which is not understood by this composer [Dorn], but which Wagner also deals with, and whose curious and highly poetic libretto had granted insight to a small circle that was astonished by it."[136] Andersen did not reply to this particular detail, so this letter is the only extant evidence to suggest that Andersen was nevertheless cognizant of Wagner's *Ring*, at least as far as the existence of the complete libretto.[137] But more importantly, it would inform Andersen of the subject matter, and that Wagner had embarked on a project that was based on Norse mythology, thus potentially reinforcing Andersen's aesthetic of unity between Nordic and German art. On 29 June 1854, Andersen was in Weimar after just having been in Leipzig. The occasion had triggered his nostalgia, and Andersen recounted in his diary that first experience of *Tannhäuser* in 1846, reminiscing how "in Leipzig, I was applauded because everyone had booed the *Tannhäuser* overture, but I alone applauded."[138] The following day in Wilhelmsthal, Andersen noted how the "low mountains with forests in a green-blue tint were like Wartburg appeared in

[135] Ibid., 89.

[136] Herausgegeben von Ivy York Möller-Christensen und Ernst Möller-Christensen, Mein edler theurer Großherzog!: Briefwechsel zwischen Hans Christian Andersen und Großherzog Carl Alexander von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1998), 192. Heinrich Dorm (1804–92) was a German composer and conductor who wrote an opera, Die Nibelungen, based on the Nibelungenlied, in 1853, several years before Wagner completed his Ring Cycle. He hated Wagner, but conducted Tannhäuser in 1855.

[137] Wagner had published his libretto to *The Ring* in 1853 for private distribution among a small circle.

[138] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger IV*, 155.

Tannhäuser; like the Venusberg."[139] On 24 August 1855, Andersen was in Zurich and called on Wagner, noting: "Visited the composer Wagner, who kindly accepted me. I stayed for a good half hour and promised to send him Hartmann's funeral march for Thorvaldsen."[140] Andersen elaborates on this meeting in his autobiography, written that same year:

> In Zurich, the composer Wagner lived in exile. I knew his music, as I mentioned earlier. Liszt had spoken to me warmly and vividly about the man himself. I went to his place of residence and was kindly received; among the works of Danish composers, he only knew those of Gade's; he talked about his [Gade's] importance as a musician, and then about Kuhlau's compositions for the flute. He did not know any of his [Kuhlau's] operas. Hartmann was only known to him by name. I came to tell him about the great repertoire of Danish operas and ballad operas, from Schulz, Kunzen, and the elder Hartmann, to Weyse, Kuhlau, Hartmann, and Gade. I mentioned that several of them composed opera, and mentioned Schall's ballet compositions, and Wagner listened to me with great attention: 'It is as if you told me a whole fairytale from the world of music, and raised the curtain for me on all that is denied me beyond the Elbe,' he said. I then told him about Sweden's Bellman, related to Wagner in that they both wrote the text for their music themselves, but were, nevertheless, utterly opposite from each other. Wagner made a full impression on me with his wonderful and genial nature. It was an unforgettable, happy hour, such as I have never since had.[141]

Later that year, on 21 September 1855, Andersen, now back in Denmark and in Funen, noted how "Ms. Jacobi sang us a song from *Tannhäuser*."[142] This is interesting to note, as it demonstrates that Wagner's music was present in private establishments in Denmark, (even if Ms. Jacobi was from Dresden), before any official performances had been heard in the country. It was also to be the final mention of Wagner in Andersen's diaries for the next five years. However, on 30 October 1857, Andersen wrote to Carl Alexander to report on a performance of Wagner in Denmark, noting that "a few days ago at a concert, the local public heard for the first time the *Tannhäuser* Overture, which was greatly enjoyed. *Tannhäuser* will probably be performed here in time; for me, this opera is the most interesting of Wagner's compositions."[143] On 3 May 1860, Andersen reported to Carl Alexander

[139] Ibid., 156.
[140] Ibid., 183.
[141] Andersen, Mit Livs Eventyr II, 190.
[142] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger IV*, 193.
[143] Möller-Christensen, *Briefwechsel*, 214.

that "an excerpt from *Lohengrin* was also performed in Aarhus and was received with applause."[144] This was one of the few recorded performances of Wagner to take place outside of Copenhagen during these years. On 8 July 1860, Andersen was in Munich, and after eight years, had attended a full Wagner opera that he summed up thusly: "*Tannhäuser* at the theater. The great music filled me."[145] There were no misgivings this time, and it would appear that Andersen had become more comfortable with the Wagnerian sound. On 17 August 1861, Andersen was in Dresden and attended a performance of *Lohengrin*.[146] It seems that whenever Andersen is now abroad, he does not miss an opportunity to attend a Wagner opera if it is available to him. After a further absence of three years, Andersen's next diary entry to include Wagner is curious. On 10 December 1864, Andersen was in Copenhagen with his close friend, the composer J.P.E. Hartmann, and noted of the evening: "Dinner at Hartmann's; he juxtaposed Wagner in the world of music with Kierkegaard in the world of poetry, and how both are breaking down the respective traditions of their crafts, but without adding anything of value themselves."[147] This is a useful insight in how it could represent a Danish awareness of Wagner's innovation, yet without attaching any merit to it. Indeed, despite Hartmann himself being a composer, he seems to have been in 1864 where Andersen was in 1852 when the latter could not fully appreciate Wagner's music. Andersen did not note that he made an attempt to dissuade this conviction of Hartmann's, but perhaps he did not want to take a position against his friend of several decades and arguably Denmark's most celebrated living composer. The last diary entry relating to Wagner in the 1860s came on 17 May 1867 when Andersen was a guest at Le Locle in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. On that night, he noted that his hosts had put on a casual house performance of the *Tannhäuser* overture.[148] This entry concludes all of Andersen's experiences with Wagner's music both outside of Denmark, and prior to the first fully-staged performance of any Wagner opera in Denmark in 1870, which would also be the central catalyst for *Lykke Peer*. These various experiences over the years sharpened Andersen's ability to appreciate Wagner and to recognize the importance of what his aesthetic theories represented for all of art. By the time that *Lohengrin* came to be staged in Copenhagen, Andersen was ready to provide his literary endorsement of Wagner to show Danish society the path of the future.

As stated earlier, 1870 was the banner year for Wagner in Denmark. Nor should it be seen as a coincidence that Andersen began writing *Lykke Peer* the night before

[144] Ibid., 241.
[145] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger IV*, 396.
[146] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger V*, 111.
[147] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger VI*, 163–64.
[148] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger VII*, 289.

the Danish premiere of any Wagner opera. Indeed, on 29 April 1870, Andersen wrote: "Stayed at home in the evening and began the adventure of *Lykke Peer*."[149] The following evening, *Lohengrin* premiered, and Andersen recorded the event: "The first production of Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* took place at the theater. It was masterfully done and very well received."[150] Andersen attended the performance again on the following night, noting how he was "at the theater and heard the first two acts of *Lohengrin*. Mr. Brosbøll said he understood nothing of the piece. Mrs. Heiberg was also against Wagner's music. I was fully satisfied by the performance, and was not fatigued by it like I was abroad."[151] Once again, Andersen was keen on recognizing the maturation that his reception of Wagner had experienced over the years, despite the misgivings of his concert companions. A few nights later, on 4 May, a similar situation ensued, as Andersen described: "Gave Eduard and Jette Collin tickets for the first parquet of *Lohengrin*, for which they were interested. Phister assured me that I could not possibly understand the music when he could not, as he had a highly developed musical ear. I replied that the music interested me, that I could understand the mood, and follow the performance. He assured me that only trained musicians could enjoy it, such as Mr. Gjerlach, and that if I did not understand figured bass, then I would not be able to enjoy it. All this he said with consciousness and superiority. I came for the last act."[152] This was a curious exchange that once again captured the resistance towards Wagner's music in its initial exposures to Danish society. The sentiment seems to have spread, because just two nights later on 6 May, Andersen notes: "*Lohengrin* was meant to be played at the Royal Theater, but the performance was changed to *Liden Kirsten*."[153] The Wagner opera was quickly reinstated, as Andersen noted on 10 May that he "heard the first two acts of *Lohengrin* at the theater."[154] On 14 May, Andersen again noted a performance exchange as "*Lohengrin* was exchanged for *Faust*; I saw the third act."[155] Two days later, on 16 May, Andersen recorded: "Was at the first and third act of *Lohengrin*."[156] And on 20 May: "At the theater for the first act of *Lohengrin*."[157]

The production took a seasonal hiatus, but resumed again in the fall, with Andersen continuing his attendance, as recorded on 7 October: "At the theater for

[149] Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger VIII*, 362.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., 363.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid., 364.
[154] Ibid., 366.
[155] Ibid., 367.
[156] Ibid., 368.
[157] Ibid., 371.

Lohengrin."[158] The following day, Andersen wrote: "Ate today and finished reading *Lykke Peer* at the table. The first part seemed to appeal to me the most."[159] This passage confirms that Andersen was diligently working on his novella while regularly attending performances of *Lohengrin*. Three days later on 11 October, Andersen wrote: "At the theater for *Lohengrin*. Read half of *Lykke Peer* for Collins."[160] A few days later on 16 October, Andersen described vivid imagery that the opera had seemingly instilled in him: "Went to the theater for the first act of *Lohengrin*, but had no peace! I was captivated when the battle of Sedan was heard and Napoleon was captured. It was like a dream I was waiting to wake up from. For many days, I felt the anxiety of the horrible war, followed by a feeling of weakness. There was no relief from the horror and anxiety. Wagner's *Lohengrin* couldn't lift my spirits tonight, so I ran from the theater during the second act. I have a horrible feeling with what happened today or what will happen tomorrow."[161] From this passage, it appears that Andersen's attendance at the opera that evening had triggered this unsettling imagery that was subconsciously connected to elements from his reality, such as the Schleswigian War, which he had emotionally endured just a few years prior. The admission that this vision had seemed like a dream is synonymous with metaphysical implications that his protagonist experiences in *Lykke Peer*. Therefore, the shared experience of writing *Peer* while attending all these performances of *Lohengrin* had seemingly caused a convergence of thoughts and emotions, emphasizing how intrinsically connected all these individual facets were for him.

During the first string of premiere performances of *Lohengrin* that Andersen attended, he wrote *Lykke Peer*, and after *Lohengrin* had returned to the theater in the fall of 1870, discussions of Andersen's novella started to emerge in his diaries with the opinions of his closest friends, as well as press acknowledgments of the work. In the first such entry on 23 November 1870, Andersen noted that he had "visited Mrs. Melchior; she said that it was not right that Peer died, and that the beginning of the book reminded her of the porter's son."[162] On 27 November, Andersen described the novella's first public review:

> The first review of *Lykke Peer* was printed tonight in 'Fædrelandet,' and was written by Vinkel Horn. He viewed it as one of my weaker works, noting that the idea was a failure, because Lykke Peer shouldn't die, due to having taken his

[158] Ibid., 419.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 421–22.
[162] Ibid., 437.

> rightful place. Horn especially dwelled on what he didn't like, and then gave me a few compliments as being a great fairy tale poet, though without the power and genius of my youth, I have become older! It was the first public acknowledgment and congratulatory remark of *Lykke Peer*. Although, there were characters in the book that deserved to be highlighted and applauded too. Well, never mind that! 'Fædrelandet' was never a particular friend or admirer of me; it has its clique.[163]

On 1 December, *Lohengrin* reappears in his diaries for the first time since his angst-filled reverie at the October performance: "Dinner with her and her husband at the Melchior's. From there, I went to the theater for one and a half acts of *Lohengrin*. Crone, the chief of police, told me that he read *Lykke Peer* in its entirety yesterday. Peter Koch thought that Lykke Peer shouldn't have died, but should have rather fought to remain Lykke Peer."[164] Andersen's records of the novella's reviews continue with an entry from 3 December, where he states: "In 'Heimdal,' it was stated that one smiles and is emotionally touched by *Lykke Peer*, but there is no steel in him—he is soft—and in our time, there is no use for the soft, but the hard. One must put the book down and ask why this is relevant to us. *Aladdin* by Oehlenschläger came in at the right time and was the picture of beauty. I was not discouraged by this critique, and am resolute. I read at Reitzel a very kind review of *Lykke Peer* in 'illustrerede Tidende' today; that lifted my spirits a bit."[165] On 9 December: "A beautifully kind review on *Lykke Peer* was printed today in 'Dagens Nyheder.'"[166] On 15 December: "In the evening, Brobølel congratulated me on a very good review of *Lykke Peer*, which was printed in the 'Berlings Tidende.' I read it, kind as it was, but it wasn't as brilliant as he said it would be."[167] On 19 December: " Sent the 'Illustrerede Tidende' and 'Dagens Nyheder' reviews to Scudder in New York."[168] On 21 December: "In the 'Folkets' newspaper, there was a very benevolent review of *Lykke Peer*, as well as one in the 'illustrerede Eventyr.'"[169] On 23 December: *Lykke Peer* was reviewed in 'Dagbladet.'"[170] On 24 December: "In his first Danish-written letter, Scudder reports from New York that he has received all of *Lykke Peer*."[171] That was the last diary entry of 1870 that was relative to Wagner or Andersen's novella. It traces a fascinating parallel between the two narratives, not

163 Ibid., 439.
164 Ibid., 441.
165 Ibid., 442.
166 Ibid., 444.
167 Ibid., 446.
168 Ibid., 448.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid., 449.
171 Ibid., 450.

least of all because Andersen had written the entirety of his story while attending virtually every scheduled performance of *Lohengrin*. However, this would not be the end of his Wagnerian experiences in Denmark.

After an absence of just over a year, Wagner entries once again abound in Andersen's diary, this time, as he recorded his experiences of the Danish premiere of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in 1872. First, however, on 25 January 1872, he records another attendance of *Lohengrin*: "Dinner at Henrique's, and from there, to the theater for *Lohengrin*. I came after the first act. A gentleman from Silkeborg was there with his companion. 'It's something damn silly,' said the man of *Lohengrin*. 'That's fine,' I said, 'It can't be judged from the first hearing.' After the second act, they got up, and before departing, he said to me, 'thank you for tonight, but I will have no more of it.'"[172] On 23 March 1872, Andersen wrote: "Was driven to the theater for the first performance of Wagner's opera: 'The Mastersingers of Nuremberg.' The overture was a jumble, the first act boring and tiring, the second act livelier, and the third was poetically and musically excellent."[173] Two days later on 25 March: "Dinner at Melchior's, and from there to the theater where I heard the second and third act of the 'Meistersinger.'"[174] On 26 March: "In the theater; the first and second acts of 'Meistersinger.'"[175] On 27 March: "Back to the theater where I heard the second and third acts of 'Meistersinger,' which has now become clearer and more interesting to me."[176] On 2 April: "I went over to the theater and heard the second act of 'Meistersinger.'"[177] On 5 April: "Attended the theater and heard the first act of 'Meistersinger.'"[178] In mid-April, Andersen was in Leipzig, and although he intended to go see *Lohengrin* on one evening, he went back home mid transit due to heavy rain. Back in Copenhagen, on 3 September, he wrote: "Went to the theater and heard the first act of 'Meistersinger.'"[179] On 16 September: "Heard the first act of *Lohengrin*."[180] On 20 September: "Heard the first act of *Lohengrin*."[181] And in his very last diary entry ever, related to Wagner, on 11 October, he wrote: "In the theater. Heard the first two acts of 'Meistersinger.'"[182]

172 Olsen og Jensen, *Andersens Dagbøger IX*, 208.
173 Ibid., 245.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Ibid., 246.
177 Ibid., 250–51.
178 Ibid., 252.
179 Ibid., 326.
180 Ibid., 331.
181 Ibid., 334.
182 Ibid., 340.

Although there was the occasional attendance of *Lohengrin* in 1872, for Andersen, that year was to focus primarily around his first experiences of *Meistersinger*. Indeed, he had recorded his attendance of the opera eight times, and noted after the fourth performance he saw how much he had come to appreciate the work. Even after having known Wagner's music for decades, Andersen still required time to develop an appreciation for the composer's new works that he had not heard before. Andersen would not live to see any other Wagner opera for the first time—either in Denmark or abroad. In one of his last letters to Carl Alexander on 2 June 1874, written when he was already terminally ill—just a little over a year before his death—Andersen wrote that "*Lykke Peer* came into the world three years ago, and was received with great sympathy and recognition both in Germany and abroad. Your Royal Highness will allow me to hand him this little book. Wagner's music shines like a sunbeam into the life of my hero."[183] This poignant remark demonstrates how intrinsically Andersen saw Wagner's presence in *Lykke Peer*; enough so to make that remark years later as the sole defining detail of his novella to his friend and former patron.

While this chapter discussed Andersen's history with Wagner and his music, it is worth noting an intriguing literary coincidence between Andersen and Wagner that may illustrate, for once, a subtle influence that Andersen's writing may have had on Wagner. Literary historian, theorist, and critic Dieter Borchmeyer mentions Andersen's fairy tale *The Garden of Eden* that the Dane wrote in 1839. Borchmeyer describes the plot (which will be excluded here), and then summarizes the symbolic connection between Andersen and Wagner thusly:

> Although Andersen's fairy stories were read to the children at Tribschen and Wahnfried, it is unclear whether Wagner knew *The Garden of Eden* at first hand. The motivic parallels are certainly remarkable and cannot be altogether explained by the fact that both Andersen and Wagner owed many of their ideas to the German Romantics. (The Danish poet's enthusiasm for Wagner was sparked off, significantly, by *Tannhäuser*, that most Romantically indebted of all Wagner's operas.) The sexual nature of original sin, the disillusionment at the moment of the kiss, the sudden disappearance of the Garden of Eden, the flower maidens, the reluctant seductress, the erotic mother-fixation—all of these motifs recur in Wagner's *Parsifal*, albeit differently motivated.[184]

[183] Möller-Christensen, *Briefwechsel*, 254.

[184] Dieter Borchmeyer, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 369–70.

This phenomenon is less important as an example that may tenuously prove how Andersen exerted influence over Wagner, and more important in emphasizing the closeness of their narrative imaginations. It suggests hypothetically that if Wagner was so pervasive in Andersen's consciousness (as the next section will hopefully prove), there must have been an innate aesthetic congruence between them. So why could not the inverse be plausible as well—Wagner creating his works from a conceptual underpinning that existed first in Andersen's output. It is a curiosity that can be expanded explicitly in the subsequent literary analysis of *Lykke Peer*.

Section II: *Lykke Peer*

Wagnerian Symbolism in *Lykke Peer*

Similarly to *The Pepperman's Nightcap*, which was replete with symbolism derived from *Tannhäuser* because the opera was being performed when Andersen was leaving Weimar, *Lykke Peer* was more synonymous with *Lohengrin* because Andersen had attended that opera at the time of writing *Peer*. Celenza confirms that "Andersen began writing *Lykke Peer* the evening before the Danish premiere of *Lohengrin*, and the influence that this opera had on his writing of the novel is undeniable."[185] Andersen once again projects himself literarily via the protagonist Peer, but also imbues his hero with many traits that characterize Lohengrin's journey through Wagner's opera. However, a general overview of the novella's subtler Wagnerian allusions will put into perspective just how acutely imagery associated with the German composer permeated the text even before Wagner entered the narrative scheme by name at the climactic ending. Furthermore, it will likewise be posited that *Lykke Peer* served as a refutation of Wagner's polemical and highly controversial essay *Judaism in Music*, by emphasizing more tolerant moral tenets that Andersen may have been compelled to incorporate out of a dual feeling of loyalty to both Wagner and the Jewish intellectuals of Copenhagen with whom the poet had deep associations.

From the very beginning, Andersen sets the moral tone for his story by emphasizing the tolerant and mutually-respectful coexistence between the wealthy and working classes that lived within the same residence, and how this harmony translated to the two boys—one born to each demographic—who entered the world on the same day and in the same house. It should not be coincidental to assume that the wealthy boy, Peer's alter-ego, was named Felix to symbolize Felix Mendelssohn, who came from a wealthy Jewish banking family, and whom Wagner mercilessly attacked in *Judaism in Music*. Despite natural strains that would befall the two boys as they grew up, they would always remain friends. Also, in a mirroring of Wagner's own childhood, Andersen had Peer's father die when he was quite young, and grow

[185] Möller-Christensen, *Briefwechsel*, 208–09.

up in a household of women. Indeed, similarly to how Wagner's stepfather, Ludwig Geyer, had introduced the young Wagner to the theater that ostensibly set him on his path in life, so too did Peer's first surrogate father figure, his godfather, introduce Peer to the theater from which he likewise never again strayed. The very first theatrical representation that Peer witnessed was a ballet where there "appeared a woman, and she was the most beautiful of all, with a gold helmet and spear; she seemed to be above all the others, and sat between an angel and a troll."[186] This imagery clearly resembles Wagner's *Ring*, and could have subconsciously predisposed the young Peer to Wagnerian mythology that would later help him relate more profoundly to Wagner.

Andersen uses very subtle foreshadowing throughout his narrative to carefully steer the seemingly-inevitable destiny of his hero through a logical progression. Despite a ballet being his first exposure to theater, Andersen took particular care to emphasize that Peer's reenactment of his experience was more operatic in nature, while simultaneously pointing out Peer's naturally-beautiful singing voice. So with this careful redirection, it is implied that the protagonist might have a greater predisposition for opera. Nevertheless, Peer did start at the ballet first, but this was more to distinguish how it was not the right path for him. Peer had become discouraged from the craft after experiencing the negative effects of others' jealousies. As Peer was from the time of birth always "well-formed and moral,"[187] as an adult friend would say, the experience would be the first of many such unpleasant events that would test his resolve, but from which his morality and positivity never really faltered. Peer next went to the conductor of the ballet and exclaimed, "I am at the dancing school, but there is so much jealousy there, and so I would rather be a player or a singer, if you would help me, please."[188] The evolution of his career path and moral maturation were now in evidence. Peer ironically demonstrated his keen musicality by singing a song from Meyerbeer's opera, *Robert le Diable*. Meyerbeer, incidentally, was the other Jew besides Mendelssohn whom Wagner had attacked in his essay, so to again project a tolerant Wagnerian alter-ego, the real-life victim once again becomes a narrative vessel for the protagonist's success and triumph over intolerance. Andersen may have been aware of Wagner's known jealously towards Meyerbeer, and therefore used the latter as a positive reconfiguration of that trait within Wagner's character. Soon, however, Peer's voice changed, and he was left in a precarious situation, which yielded his next evolutionary step: composition. In a clever twist, Peer's first foray into composition

186 Hans Christian Andersen, "Lykke Peer" in *Complete Fairy Tales*, trans. Jean Hersholt (San Diego: Canterbury Classics, 2014), 666.
187 Ibid., 668.
188 Ibid., 669.

was in the form of composing songs without words, which he also gave as a gift to Felix. Andersen was very close to Mendelssohn, and was certainly aware of that composer's famous songs without words. The reference in his novella is another subtle allusion that looks to narratively redeem the hostile connection between Wagner and Mendelssohn by continuously emphasizing the unity of the composers' literary projections.

After a few years in the provinces, far from the capital, where Peer recuperated his voice and sought to acquire a formal education (identically to Andersen's upbringing), he returned home to live and study with his singing master. This section represents the most redemptive part of the story, in regard to Andersen's refutation of *Judaism in Music*. Under the singing master's tutelage, Peer was described as someone who "grew in a wholesome, happy way, knowing no want or sorrow. His was a rich and wonderful life, with a future full of blessings before him. His trust in mankind was never deceived; he had a child's soul and a man's endurance, and everywhere he was received with gentle eyes and a kind welcome. Day by day the relations between him and the singing master grew more heartfelt and confidential."[189] Peer was essentially incorruptible, and his proximity to the singing master had only reaffirmed and strengthened this conviction. The latter, though, was described as a man whose "personality was characterized by a southern ardor, and one saw at once that this man could hate vehemently or love passionately, and, fortunately, this last governed in him. He was, moreover, so situated by a fortune his father had left him that he did not need to work, unless it interested and pleased him to do so. Secretly he did a great deal of good in a sensible way, but didn't want people to thank him or to talk about it."[190] This was a curious way to describe a man whose qualities are meant to be displayed. Certainly, the singing master had in the past expressed disdain towards people that Peer had viewed positively, but it was perhaps important to present this man in a realistic and non-idealized way. After all, people are generally predisposed to polarizing emotions such as hatred and love. Wagner was certainly such an individual. However, this admission of hatred should not be seen as a natural tenet of the singing master's character, but rather as a reactionary feeling that is drawn from him by others' treatment of him. Moreover, the disdain that he had expressed to Peer about the young man's friends were predicated upon the singing master's belief that those people in truth looked down on people like himself and Peer. So his hatred is born from a position of feeling like a victim rather than an aggressor. It should therefore become transparent what the truth of the singing master is as a victimized individual who comes from old money: he is a Jew.

[189] Ibid., 690.
[190] Ibid.

The singing master had one day told Peer about the nature of good deeds and rewards, and had said that "when one does not think of it, it is sure to come. The reward for good deeds is like dates that are spoken of in the Talmud; they ripen late and then are sweet."[191] When Peer asked what the Talmud was, the older man replied with: "A book from which more than one seed of thought has been implanted in Christianity."[192] He went on to say that "you will find in it the proof of culture more clearly than you find it in the layers of Earth. For me, as a Jew, it is, moreover, an inheritance from my fathers."[193] Peer had admitted that he had not known that the singing master was a Jew, and that neither had his family, but that he "always had known that the singing master was an honorable, wonderful man."[194] At this point, it was secretly revealed to Peer that the singing master had also covertly been the boy's anonymous benefactor who had paid for his education. Andersen had therefore imbued the Jewish teacher with the greatest of qualities, and had sought to convey the similarities between Judaism and Christianity to the pious Peer, in order to once again project a tolerant atmosphere of coexistence. Celenza agreed that "Andersen made every effort to learn as much as he could about the Talmud and Judaism in an effort to present the character of the singing master in a respectful manner."[195] She continues, suggesting how this character portrayal of the singing master "serves as a refutation of Wagner's *Judaism in Music*."[196] Furthermore, she claims that "in *Lykke Peer*, Andersen goes to great lengths to show that the singing master's Judaism is as culturally valid and respectable as his love of Mozart's opera."[197] In addition, she argues, "constructing his cast of characters in this manner enabled Andersen both to praise the music of Wagner and separate himself from the composer's distasteful anti-Semitism."[198] The admission of the unknown faith had in no way shattered or even challenged Peer's view of his teacher. Instead, the boy chose to focus on the qualities of the man and to accept his faith as a non-issue in relation to this. A converse theory to this was posited by Andersen scholar and professor of cultural studies and literature, Jacob Bøggild, who had seen the singing master's admission of Jewishness as a representation of him being "an exile in the culture he inhabits, which the narrator points out on a couple of occasions. Now, the Wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, is quite as romantic a motif as Aladdin. What happens in *Lykke-Peer*, however, is that these two figures join hands. Alas, this does not bring about the end

[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid., 691.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Celenza, Hans Christian Andersen and Music, 210.
[196] Ibid., 211.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid., 214.

of the exile of the choirmaster, rather it points to the fact that Peer is exiled, too."[199] He continues, believing that Andersen's narrative "denounces a Philistine culture which is unable to understand and/or unwilling to accept its hero, thus reinforcing their homelessness."[200] This presumptuous viewpoint would correlate to Andersen's often projecting his protagonists as social outcasts, but the detailed religious imagery and correlations drawn between Christianity and Judaism suggests that this narrative dialogue was meant more to bridge divides rather than explicitly emphasize those divides, and the singing master and Peer with them.

In a momentary tangential expansion of Andersen's projections, it is helpful to reiterate that Peer is an autobiographical depiction of Andersen's lifelong ideals, as well as his own childhood, such as studying various theatrical arts; spending a few years in the provinces to gain an education; and dealing with envy from others. However, Peer had the luxury of being given lessons on morality by his singing master, which can be viewed as Andersen speaking to his younger self from the hindsight of old age and worldly experience to demonstrate what he himself would have benefited from hearing in his youth in order to better prepare him for what lay ahead. Andersen himself never had children, but the relationship between Peer and his most important teacher is as indicative of parental guidance as literary symbolism can be. It could also be surmised that the singing master was modeled on Jonas Collin, who had first supported the young Andersen and helped secure the finances that paid for his education. The point being that the morality and actions of the characters in *Lykke Peer* both reflect the course of Andersen's life and represent his idealized commentary on the social function of art if he were its grand architect.

Wagner's Explicit Role in the Narrative

The next and most significant section related to Wagner occurred about a year after the singing master's admission of his faith to Peer. In that time, he had performed (sung) various operatic roles, yet he continuously returned to poetry to express the deepest corners of his convictions. One such lengthier poem was deemed by the singing master as having the potential to be set to music. However, he quickly added, "it is not your destiny to be a composer."[201] The narrator's voice interjects here to say that Peer's talents went far beyond his vocal abilities, and that he had "remarkable dramatic talent as well. He very much preferred the regular opera to the

[199] Jacob Bøggling, "Pontoppidan's 'Rewritings' of H.C. Andersen," in *Hans Christian Andersen: A Poet in Time*, ed. Johan de Mylius, Aage Jørgensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1999), 134.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 700.

light opera. The music of the future, as the new movement in opera is called, and for which Wagner, in particular, is a banner-bearer, had a defender and admirer in our young friend."[202] This moment is epoch-making for Peer, as he was compared to Wagner in terms of dramatic quality, but also labeled as his defender. Andersen is strongly projecting himself into his protagonist to describe what Peer is about to do musically for Wagner's aesthetic movement, simultaneously to how Andersen himself is defending Wagner with the story he is crafting. Interestingly, this epiphany that directly names Wagner and the music of the future was neither spoken by Peer nor the singing master, but just appeared as if it was the most natural evolutionary step that Peer had now reached in his development. Celenza adds to this notion, saying how "*Lykke Peer* can be viewed as an example of music historiography, above all a meditation on the relationship that had developed over the course of the nineteenth century between visions of the future and a respect for the past. Although Wagner's operas are presented as the model for a new age, the immortal spirit of Mozart's string quartets and Beethoven's symphonies are revered as well."[203] Peer's path to Wagner had been clear based on their shared developmental trajectory, but since accepting Wagner had not been established as an idea that Peer was to embrace, but rather as the next logical progression, it becomes plausible to consider that Peer had, in a way, become Wagner. And just like the real Wagner, Peer had to overcome skeptics who doubted his path. After Wagner was mentioned, the first dialogue belonged to Peer, who said, referencing Wagner's musical style in response to Andersen's descriptions of it, how "it is most unnatural to include those long arias." The singing master emphasized his skepticism by mentioning Mozart—an establishment of the past—defending the use of arias by saying "how they, in the works of most of the great masters, stand out as a most important part of the whole! That is as it should and must be. If the lyric has a home in any place, it is in the opera." He continued: "I bow to the ingenuity that lies in this new musical movement, but I do not dance with you before that golden calf."[204]

This resistance by the singing master can be seen as a social commentary on Denmark's aesthetic views on opera at the time: They acknowledged Wagner's revolutionary and innovative changes to the art form, but were still slow to completely embrace it, and would rather hold onto the aesthetic that arias stood for; namely, the past. Nevertheless, Peer had ignored this position from his mentor, and replied by saying that "I will appear in one of Wagner's operas. If I cannot express my meaning in words, I will do so by my singing and acting."[205] The narrator

202 Ibid.
203 Celenza, Hans Christian Andersen and Music, 209.
204 Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 700.
205 Ibid.

interjects once more, having the final word of that section, by saying that *Lohengrin* would be the Wagnerian opera that Peer would appear in as “the young knight who came, conquered, and vanished.”[206] There could not be a more apt representation of Peer in terms of his entire life up to that point, as well as what awaits him in the future, than with those three words that described the character Lohengrin. And to confirm that this Wagnerian epiphany was indeed seemingly destined for Peer, Andersen writes: “This evening was, if possible, another step forward in the artistic greatness and significance of our young friend; and to the singing master [Denmark personified] it was a step forward in the recognition of the music of the future.”[207] As if he was responding directly to Andersen’s observation of what Wagner would bring to him as well, the singing master simply offers: “Under certain conditions.”[208]

The next section details some events that put into place Peer’s final, crowning achievement: to become a composer. Peer is subsequently introduced to a wealthy widowed baroness and her young daughter. The two women expressed their admiration for Peer’s operatic performances, and as if figuratively pushing Peer towards Wagner even harder, the elder baroness told Peer that “we common people stand in need of a spiritual airing.”[209] This admission represents the social ripeness for unleashing the Wagnerian music of the future, as it was an aesthetic change that the baroness requested. Furthermore, to say that “we” common people need it implies that it is not some elitist campaign of cultural esotericism that is in need, but an ideal that will unify all of society—rich or poor. And in that sense, all people are therefore common and indistinguishable to the influence of the music of the future.

But skepticism still abounds, and the singing master resists the air of change by standing against the source of the admission. Indeed, he tells Peer that the baroness and her ilk “are good enough, but they look down on us plain citizens. For some of them it is only a matter of vanity, an amusement, and for others a sort of sign of exclusive culture, when they receive into their circle artists and the lions of the day. These belong in the salon much as the flowers in a vase; they decorate and then they are thrown away.” Peer resists and defends his news friends—already playing Lohengrin in reality—but the singing master continues: “They pat you and look at you just as they pat and look at a racehorse that is expected to win a wager. You belong to another race than they. They will let you go when you are no longer in fashion. Don’t you understand that? You are not proud enough. You are vain, and you show that by seeking these people’s company.”[210] Their discussion on the matter

[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid., 701.
[210] Ibid., 702.

ended there. It is curious that Andersen would paint the Jew as the only character in the narrative to distinguish between races, and to express such hostility when no such treatments had befallen Peer. If anything, it is again emphatic of the singing master's inability to comprehend progressive trends in both social decorum and aesthetic evolutions of thought. Despite being a kind man towards Peer, he is no longer capable of influencing either the development of his pupil musically or morally. He has shown himself to be too ensconced in the past, and unable to evolve. This is a strange narrative ploy, since Andersen is attempting to defend Jews against such polemics as *Judaism in Music*. So why does he invoke such intolerance and hostility in a character that should be seen as a noble victim? It could logically stand to posit that this was so in order to demonstrate that Peer stands alone in the development of this final and most glorious conviction. That it must come solely from within, and that what will arise within him is precisely the most authentic representation of his morality because it was shared with only Wagner. Or, perhaps, the singing master was referring to the fickleness of art, and how that which is fashionable is purely fleeting. Perhaps that is why Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn are his gods—because they have never been discarded. Or, the tirade could have been another display of his distrust and ultimate lack of understanding for the path that Peer was on. Peer was still not to be deterred, and the abrupt end to their dialogue could have signified that it was ultimately a non-issue to Peer, and that his destiny was inevitable. The last obstacle to face Peer was to find the specific type of inspiration that would act as his creative catalyst. It is not surprising that such an inspiration came from the baroness's daughter, who exclaimed when hearing Peer's improvisations at the piano that it reminded her of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and more specifically, of the lamp of Aladdin. Peer's young muse had given him the idea, to which Andersen chimed in, writing: "That evening was the turning point in his life. A new chapter surely began."[211] Interestingly, the baroness's daughter used the word improvisation to describe the déjà vu that Peer's playing instilled in her. One will recall that it was the accusation of being an improviser that had first compelled Andersen to leave Denmark, and was also to be the essential component of his first literary success: the novel *The Improvisatore*. Just as that story had launched Andersen's career, so too would the foundation of Peer's career be launched from the seed of inspiration that was planted by the art of improvisation. The autobiographical implication is no coincidence.

Once Peer had become set on the subject of his opera, Wagner was once again invoked as a comparison for the young man's endeavors: "Our young friend had a talent in common with Wagner, in that he could construct the dramatic poem himself;

[211] Ibid., 703.

but did he, like Wagner, have the fullness of musical emotion to create a musical work of any significance?"[212] Andersen is once again displaying his affinity for Wagner's works and the quality of his craftsmanship, while simultaneously declaring Peer's opera to be Wagnerian in scope and inspiration. The true test, however, would come in the form of the singing master's judgment of the work. After Peer submitted the completed composition to him for evaluation, in due course, his mentor had acknowledged that "I had not expected this. I had not believed it of you. Indeed, I do not yet have a clear judgment, so I dare not express it. There are single things, bold and novel, that one must hear under proper conditions. As there is in Wagner a certain influence of Carl Maria von Weber, so there is noticeable in you a breath of Haydn. That which is new in what you have given is still rather remote to me, and you yourself are too near for me to be the right judge."[213] The lack of faith that the singing master admits is telling in his distrust and lack of comprehension for this Wagnerian path towards the music of the future that Peer had so naturally embarked on. By mentioning Weber's association to Wagner, he is still projecting an aesthetic alliance with the past, and by further invoking a direct comparison between Peer and Haydn—an even earlier composer than Weber—the singing master is making his final attempt at keeping Peer bound to the musical status quo, and within the parameters that he, the mentor, can both control and understand. He confirms as much by admitting that Peer's new creation, and subsequent path, are remote to him. Nevertheless, he is diplomatic enough to declare himself biased of proper judgment. Ultimately, the singing master accepts the work as a triumphant creation, thereby ending his part in the narrative with a display of tolerance and empathy, as Andersen had most explicitly sought to depict him when he divulged his religious faith. His mentor's support was precisely the assurance Peer needed to quell any doubts he had of the value or quality of his opera. All that is left is for him to stage the debut and take his place in history. He himself had said—rather prophetically—"Happen what may, I must know my place in the world, understand what I can and must create, or give up."[214]

At the opera's debut, the narrator described the musical offering through a variety of implicit and explicit allusions to various composers and styles. One such description, undoubtedly in homage to the singing master, stated that "the lamp was in Aladdin's hand, and then there swelled forth a sea of melody and grandeur such as only the ruler of spirits and the masters of music can create."[215] This imagery was a subtle reference to both Weber and Wagner, as the singing master had noted. Weber

212 Ibid., 706.
213 Ibid., 706–7.
214 Ibid., 707.
215 Ibid., 708.

had written his overture to *The Ruler of the Spirits*, and Wagner—perhaps more tenuously—was referenced as one of the other masters of music, as Weber was so clearly noted to have influenced him. Subsequently, the narrator describes a section where "the strains of music, as in Gluck's *Armida* and Mozart's *Magic Flute*, arrested the attention of everyone as the scene was disclosed. Different melodies blending in one great harmony. Arising from this harmony, and supported by it, was the song monologue of Aladdin—what one indeed calls a great aria, but so entirely keeping with character and situation that it was a necessary dramatic part of the whole."[216] The explicit reference to Mozart and use of aria is identical to the singing master's first rebuttal of Wagner and the music of the future. This is confirmed with the quoted text of that earlier encounter, which stated that the aria is "a most important part of the whole." Nevertheless, the opera's Wagnerian vein is expressed via the "different melodies blending in one great harmony." This implies then that Peer's opera is an amalgamation of both old and new, despite his conviction of adhering to Wagner's music of the future. This should not be seen as any sort of late-stage refutation of Wagner, but rather a compromise based on a tolerant acceptance of past styles and techniques, and how they can still be valuable inclusions in a piece that conceptually resides on a more progressive foundation. The music itself here is described with a "sympathetic voice" that is seen as creating unity rather than division—a microcosm of Peer's entire morality. Wagner is never once mentioned by name in this closing section, but his essence was felt in his implied association amongst the pantheon of other musical heroes. However, Peer's *Aladdin* is nevertheless described as a novelty, albeit one that invokes familiarity. Such was the inclination of Wagner's own *Lohengrin* at its Danish premiere, and that association with Peer's opera cannot be underestimated. The narrative of *Lykke Peer* ends a few short lines after this musical amalgamation, as Peer seemingly drops dead at his moment of greatest triumph.

"Come, Conquer, and Vanish": Peer as Lohengrin

As it was described in the previous chapter, Peer (or Andersen for him), had decided that he would sing the title role of *Lohengrin*, the "young knight who came, conquered, and vanished." In context of Peer's musical development—ultimately evolving to become a composer—and his composition of *Aladdin*, it will now be investigated just how acutely symmetrical the protagonist roles of Wagner's Lohengrin and Peer are in relation to each other, as well as how Andersen crafted his

[216] Ibid.

hero's ambiguous departure in a reminiscent gesture of Lohengrin's departure at the end of Wagner's opera.

An examination of the *Lohengrin* libretto yields the clear motifs of "coming, conquering, and vanishing" that the narrator used to describe the opera, but there are also motivic examples of fate and the notion of mortality that overlap between Wagner and Andersen's narratives. To begin with, the concept of fate was central to both Wagner and Andersen. Indeed, Peer was seemingly always groomed for a destiny of greatness as he was singularly talented at every creative endeavor he partook in. The question for him was to find one where he could merge the inner conviction of his morality with the outer representation of skill. Likewise, in *Lohengrin*, the title character's arrival is prophesized in detail by the heroine who has need of his services. The heroine, Elsa, proclaimed her dream vision of her savior, describing how "I saw a knight approaching in armor gleaming bright; his purity was dazzling, I never viewed its like. A golden horn beside him, he leaned upon his sword, thus, suddenly I saw him, my radiant, future lord. His tender, gentle manner from sorrow set me free. I now await his coming, my champion he shall be!"[217] Like Peer's incorruptible morality, so too is Lohengrin's pureness of virtue consistently reiterated throughout the opera. So Elsa's fatalistic prophecy has set the stage for an ambiguous arrival (or coming) for which no one present could have anticipated or accounted for. The same dubious awareness of coming was applied to Peer, albeit more abstractly. His origins were known, but his arrival, or rather the discovery of his talents, were thoroughly incomprehensible to the people around him. After he had established himself as a brilliant singer, but before he evolved into a composer, people who knew him well expressed shock, and even asked: "From whom did the boy get it? said the merchant's rich wife, as she thought of Peer's parents and his grandmother up in the garret. The father had been a warehouseman, good and honorable, and had fallen as a soldier on the field of honor—the mother, a washerwoman—but that does not give the son culture; he had grown up in a charity school—how much knowledge could a provincial schoolmaster give him in a period of two years? It is genius! said the merchant. "Genius—that is born of God's grace."[218] From this, another major motif can be gleaned: the invocation of God as a signifier of that which is logically inexplicable. Peer's origins were logically weighed, and his talent was seen as incongruous with his upbringing. Therefore, it must be God-given. Similarly, with Lohengrin, Elsa prophesizes once more: "I now await his coming, my champion he shall be. He who was sent by heaven will freely

[217] Richard Wagner, *G. Schirmer's Collection of Opera Librettos: Lohengrin*, trans. Stewart Robb (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1963), 3.

[218] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 697.

from my hand win crown and full possession of all my father's land."[219] After a few more brief exchanges of dialogue, Elsa prays to God for her champion to come, and Lohengrin is suddenly seen approaching in a boat drawn by a swan. Upon his arrival, onlookers exclaim: "All hail! All hail, you hero sent by God!"[220] In the first lines that Lohengrin utters, he thanks his swan, bids him farewell, and adds: "Come once again when fortune smiles. Thus hold your faith to service done."[221] This implies that Lohengrin is already prophetically anticipating his conquest and ultimate vanishing.

The next example of fatalistic foreshadowing occurs when Lohengrin is preparing to battle the arch antagonist, Frederick Telramund, for Elsa's absolution. In a fervent display of jubilation at the impassioned exchange between Lohengrin and Elsa, the gathered onlookers ask: "What winning wonder do I see? Has someone cast a magic spell?"[222] This is the first mention of magic, and it only comes to be known at the very end of the opera that a magic spell had indeed been cast, but not by the hero—rather by the evil and duplicitous Ortrud, wife of Frederick. Furthermore, upon their conviction that Frederick will lose any battle that he may attempt to wage against Lohengrin, the assembled nobles attempt to dissuade Frederick from the contest. To this, he replies—again prophetically—"Much better dead than fear[ful]!"[223] Although Frederick survives the initial battle with Lohengrin, and is purely dishonored and banished, he later stages an attempt on Lohengrin's life that finally prompts the latter to kill Frederick, thereby fulfilling his own prophecy of death being a more suitable option for him. Once they engage in battle, Lohengrin fells Frederick, and exclaims his conquest thusly to the conquered: "Through [the] might of God your life belongs to me. I spare that life: keep it to cleanse your sin!"[224] He further iterates to Elsa: "The power that made me conquer came through your purity!"[225] Therefore, another invocation of God and the concept of purity are expressed to convey the motif of conquest. Similarly, in Andersen's narrative, Peer achieved the same ecstatic loftiness of conquest, albeit right before his "vanishing," with the narrator poeticizing: "What a moment of life for the young artist—the highest, the greatest! A mightier one could never again be granted him, he felt."[226]

Following Frederick's initial defeat, he and his wife engage in fatalistic machinations of revenge. Ortrud symbolically decrees the plot that will unseat the hero, and ultimately lead to his departure. She deviously exclaims to Frederick to

219 Wagner, Lohengrin Libretto, 4.
220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
222 Ibid., 5.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid., 6.
225 Ibid.
226 Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 708.

listen to her, "for my prophetic eyes to lend you light! Do you know who he is, that hero brought here by a magic swan? What if I said, if one compels him to utter forth his name and birth, then, all that might is at an end which he had won by magic art."[227] Ortrud explains that only Elsa has the ability to inadvertently usurp Lohengrin's power, claiming that Frederick must "arouse in her a just suspicion. Step forth, charge him with magic art, whereby he has perverted truth."[228] The seeds have now been sown that will bring about all the characters' final destinies. Likewise, a prophetic allusion to vanishing, or synonymously in the case of Andersen's narrative, to death, is projected throughout *Lykke Peer* as a destined outcome, of sorts, for Peer. However, Andersen weaves this imagery in subtler ways than the overt manner in which Wagner sets the foundation for his character's destinies. This phenomenon in *Lykke Peer* will be investigated in greater depth in a subsequent chapter on death and vanishing in the novella.

Ortrud now seeks out Elsa, and plants the seeds of discontent within her psyche. She prophetically issues: "Just attend my warning, do not too blindly trust your luck, just so a mishap may not hurt you. Now let me scry your future fate. Have you never wondered how with an art so marvelous, this man might leave you through that magic, through that same art whereby he came?"[229] Ortrud is proclaiming Lohengrin's departure under the same dubious conditions in which he arrived. She also, coincidentally, warned Elsa not to rely on luck. Coincidentally in regard to the abundance with which the concept of luck is associated with Peer throughout Andersen's entire narrative. Within the *Lohengrin* narrative, luck here is emphatic of Elsa's idealistic complacency in her conviction that Lohengrin will stay by her side. This is, of course, a malicious ploy to manipulate Elsa into precisely causing the harm to herself and Lohengrin that Ortrud is trying to convince her she would be avoiding by maintaining doubt. The same prophecy holds true for Peer, for even though he was not idealistically complacent with the amount of luck that he perpetually enjoyed—since Andersen had imbued him with humble self-doubt—he nevertheless harnessed his luck, and it ended up bringing about his corporeal downfall, even if the narrator claimed ultimate victory at the end of his story.

Once Lohengrin reenters the fold, he realizes that Elsa is in danger of doubt, which has still not been made explicitly clear. Frederick and Ortrud are more convinced, and prophetically exclaim in unison: "A doubt is sprouting in her inmost heart! He will be lost who brought me woe within this land, if he but make reply!"[230] Elsa contemplates the repercussions of betraying Lohengrin's trust, yet convinces

[227] Wagner, Lohengrin Libretto, 8.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid., 10.
[230] Ibid., 14.

herself that knowing the secrets that he has asked her not to inquire about would actually allow her to somehow keep his confidence. She ultimately seals Lohengrin's doom with her admission: "But if I knew, I truly would protect it. (Yet doubt still stirs within my inmost heart!)"[231] Doubt was the prophetic ploy that Ortrud had wished to instill in Elsa, and now that Elsa has admitted as much, there will be no recourse for Lohengrin's vanishing. The hero himself attempts to dissuade Elsa's conflict by telling her: "Let not the power of doubt hold sway. Is there a question you would risk?"[232] Elsa reassures him of her fidelity, but had Lohengrin believed in her incorruptibility, he would not have encouraged her faith in him and asked if it is still secure. Therefore, his own doubt of her, in turn, perpetuates the imminent string of events that Elsa's doubt has sealed.

Matters quickly deteriorate as Elsa uncontrollably badgers Lohengrin to divulge his secrets. Perhaps in an attempt to satisfy her, Lohengrin tells her that "from joy and splendor I have come."[233] This does not sate Elsa, who rather comes to believe that Lohengrin now wishes to go back to that wondrous place from where he came, thinking that she is not worthy to keep him with her, and expresses it thusly with a prophetic declaration that "a day will come that robs me, when your love is turned to rue!"[234] Elsa's final fatalistic admission comes in the form of her imagining seeing the swan return to take Lohengrin back: "Ah, no! It's there, the swan, the swan! I see him coming on the watery highways! You call him here! I see him draw the skiff!"[235] She asks the forbidden questions again, and suddenly, Frederick barges in with the intent of killing Lohengrin, who quickly dispatches his attacker. The culmination of Elsa's paranoia and this sudden blood on his hands convinces him that all joy is lost, and that he will yield to her desires and then vanish.

Back on the river bank, with all parties assembled, Lohengrin speaks of his origins, and how he is a knight of the Grail from Monsalvat. He claims that once per year, the Grail bestows power on a worthy knight who is "armed therewith with more than mortal might. No evil power can ever overthrow him. To look on the Grail destroys the dream of death. While he's unknown he's master of the spell."[236] Powerful notions of mortality and death are expressed here, or more specifically, eternal non-death. This power that Lohengrin wields in conquest is abstractly possessed by Peer as well, as his own conquests are mortality-defying in essence of an eternal aesthetic legacy that cannot die. But like Peer's corporeal vulnerability, so

[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid., 15.
[233] Ibid., 17.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid., 19.

too is Lohengrin's power susceptible to loss if the spell is broken. And they both ultimately have to yield to their respective weaknesses and vanish under dubious guises in order to perpetuate their mythologizing legacies.

He ends his monologue by saying that he has been sent to these lands by the Grail, that his father Parsifal is king of the Grail realm, and that his own name is Lohengrin. Upon this conclusion, Elsa suddenly exclaims: "The floor is reeling! It is night!"[237] This is an extraordinary occurrence that has befallen Elsa. The spiritual turbulence of what she has just learned has caused her to experience a metaphysical suspension of temporal ambiguity, as she is suddenly rendered incapable of differentiating between the metaphysical realm outside of time and the empirical world, and comes to believe that it is now night. The reeling floor imagery is also reminiscent of an obfuscation of the plane of existence. This event for Elsa is a powerful Wagnerian display of narrative metaphysics that foreshadows precisely how such events will be handled in *Parsifal*, Wagner's later Grail drama. In the first act of that drama, Parsifal experiences a similar reeling when his own planes of existence are blurred, resulting in his entrance into the Grail realm. Even before the composition of *Parsifal* (the prose draft of which already existed at the time that *Lohengrin* was composed), Wagner had plunged into operatic metaphysics with *Tristan und Isolde*, where the symbolism of night and day are the most profound images used to describe the two temporal-existential realms of the metaphysical and the empirical. An awareness of this metaphysical phenomenon will be necessary when subsequently delving into relative characteristics surrounding the perceived death of Peer at the end of Andersen's narrative, and just how Wagnerian that imagery will be.

In Lohengrin's final moments with Elsa, the swan is seen approaching down the river. In a final display of Wagnerian redemption, Ortrud blurts out that "your knight, if he had stayed much longer, would then have freed your brother too!"[238] In turn, Lohengrin offers a prayer, and the white dove of the Grail appears. His swan then suddenly sinks under the water, and up in its place rises Gottfried, Elsa's lost brother, for whose perceived death Lohengrin was summoned to defend Elsa, on whom blame for her brother's disappearance had fallen. Reunited with her brother, and observing Lohengrin's departure, Elsa again experiences a metaphysical repercussion from the Grail's magic, and sinks lifeless to the ground. What she experienced earlier upon learning Lohengrin's name was a metaphysical suspension, but now, comes her full metaphysical transfiguration, in another foreshadowing of Isolde's Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde*. Lohengrin's final vanishing back into an unperceivable realm creates ambiguity for both his subsequent whereabouts and for

[237] Ibid., 20.
[238] Ibid., 21.

any potential of a return. Despite saying that he could not return, as he is not dead, this does not unequivocally rule out any possibilities. This same fusion of ambiguity and intrigue surrounding Peer's vanishing at the end of his story will be investigated later.

Prophetic Bird Imagery in *Lykke Peer* and *Lohengrin*

Another curious motivic device between Wagner and Andersen's narratives is the use of birds to represent metaphysical and abstract notions. In various world mythologies, birds are often symbolic representations of the underworld, or as bridges between planes of existence. Indeed, birds were seen as prophetic indications to the ancient Greeks. To them, birds were "the principal agents through which the gods revealed their will to humans; hence the practice of ornithomancy, divination by the observation of birds. The first 'ornithologists' in Homer's great epics were men 'who knew the future, the present, and the past.'"[239] In relation to the underworld, "ravens were generally bad news. They were often portents of death or disaster."[240] Since mythological appropriations were commonplace for both Wagner and Andersen throughout their careers, it could stand that Andersen would have been keenly aware of such allusions in *Lohengrin*, and that in the context of *Lykke Peer*, would have incorporated some subtle references to Wagner's opera using the same bird motifs. Furthermore, based on the metaphysical implications of both narratives, the use of birds as predestination or fatalistic catalysts becomes explicitly apparent. Former publisher (head of Cambridge University Press), turned-author, Jeremy Mynott, also explains that "augury was not always a matter of predicting the future in any detail so much as seeking a reassurance that you were acting in an appropriate way. The omens were thought to be favorable when birds flew by on the right, unfavorable when on the left."[241] These types of vague and nondescript prophetic qualities were just the type of motivic subtleties that Wagner and Andersen employed to advance their narratives.

The first bird imagery in *Lykke Peer* is presented when the young Peer's singing is compared to that of a little bird, and sounded as if he could vocally "imitate a whole orchestra. There were both flute and bassoon in his voice, and there were violin and bugle. He sang as the birds sing."[242] Naturally, this invocation of an

239 Jeremy Mynott, *Birdscapes: Birds in Our Imagination and Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 268.

240 Jeremy Mynott, *Birds in the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 255.

241 Mynott, *Birdscapes*, 270.

242 Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 671.

orchestra via bird imagery acts as a fatalistic implication of Peer's future success as a composer. The next bird motif to arise in the narrative is presented when Peer is dreaming of a cuckoo bird that is fatalistically predicting how many more years Peer will live based on how many times the bird cuckoos.[243] Likewise, the "Hindus considered cuckoos to be the wisest of all birds, with extraordinary fortune telling abilities."[244] In addition, this association with death will be presented further in the next chapter. Peer's next dream bore the same imagery, this time resulting in a more metaphysical tone of temporal ambiguity—albeit replete with fatalistic symbolism of the future—with the imagined personification of flowering trees where "each flower was a brilliantly colored bird that sang with a human voice."[245] The historical association between birds and dreaming is profound. Artemidorus was an ancient Greek analyst (for medical purposes), who studied dreams in an attempt to extract prediction of the future from them. Birds featured prominently in his analytic techniques.[246] By modern standards, these practices can be dismissed as superstitious musings, but the essential point is that birds, dreams, and prophesies were intrinsically connected, and yielded narrative significance in *Lykke Peer*. The perception of Artemidorus's studies is that "birds *portend* consequences, but his terminology runs together the very different notions of *signifying* them and *causing* them. These birds must have been familiar to the dreamer, analyst, and reader for the 'interpretations' to make any sense at all, even as stories."[247] At this time, Peer's voice was still damaged, but the singing birds, yet again, like in his previous dream with the cuckoo, yielded to his own singing in unison with the birds. He will ultimately, of course, regain his voice later in the story and use it to great acclaim. Once Peer had regained his voice, he attended an orchestral concert of a Beethoven symphony that took Peer on another seemingly spiritual experience to a place where "the nightingale rejoiced, and the cuckoo sang there."[248] This is another subtle allusion to Peer's ultimate and predestined path to becoming a composer and being led by the birds to get there. The nightingale, incidentally, "is such a bird of romance and fancy that it has gathered around itself more myths and legends than almost any other bird."[249]

Subsequently, when Peer is dining with an elderly family friend, another bird allusion is presented. The elderly friend, Madam Hof, was depicted as a former star

[243] Ibid., 681.
[244] Rachel Warren Chadd and Marianne Taylor, *Birds: Myth, Lore & Legend* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2016), 31.
[245] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 684.
[246] Mynott, Birds in the Ancient World, 286.
[247] Ibid., 288.
[248] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 689.
[249] Mynott, *Birdscapes*, 312.

dancer in her youth who then became forgotten. However, later in life, she became lucky and married into wealth—which she now generously shares with her closest friends. Peer can be seen as an artistic prototype of Madam Hof, were he to live to see old age. Indeed, she describes her new fortune as synonymous with "the phoenix bird; one rises up young again."[250] The imagery of the phoenix and renewed youth is an ironic glimpse into what could have been but never will be for Peer. The phoenix can also be seen as "Representing the human desire for immortality, [for] when it ages and dies, the phoenix is consumed by fire and then reborn from the ashes."[251] To reiterate, the notion of artistic immortality was a vital concept to Andersen, who vicariously projected his personal desire to achieve such a status by allowing his doppelgänger Peer to acquire it at the time of the latter's death at the end of *Lykke Peer*. Mynott adds that "one reason why birds are such good symbols in myth and fable is that they seem so *like* us in many ways. They walk upright on two legs; they have behavior we think we can understand—feeding, hunting, fighting, washing, parading, mating, and singing; they have domestic arrangements and social gatherings we can observe; and, above all, they have roundish heads with two eyes in front, and faces into which we think we can read expressions."[252] These qualities undoubtedly inspired Andersen to anthropomorphize birds and project his imagery upon them. A less subtle irony using bird imagery emerges shortly thereafter when Peer writes a poem that is meant to counter fatalistic pessimism, but only superficially. The poem includes such lines as: "The trees are frost-rimmed, full of crows; the cuckoos sing. Hear them sing that your life will be long. The world is young, so be young with the young; every little bird sings, for never does youth come to an end."[253] These lines emphasize great prophetic meaning, first with the crow, which symbolizes bad luck and mortality. This notion is expanded by the return of the cuckoo, which foretells of how many years of life one has left. And like Madam Hof's phoenix, yielding to renewed youth, Peer only speaks of eternal youth, as that is all he will know from his early death.

In the section where Wagner is first explicitly discussed by name, the very first image that is presented of *Lohengrin* is that he arrives by a swan-drawn boat.[254] The swan is mentioned again later, but only as a simile in how stage artists are like swans. It is not a prophetic gesture, but is used as a transition back to Peer's role in *Lohengrin*, and ultimately to his fatalistic expression of vanishing that yields to the epiphany of Aladdin, which, as will be discussed in the next chapter, is one of the

[250] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 692.
[251] Chadd and Taylor, *Birds: Myth, Lore & Legend*, 224.
[252] Mynott, *Birdscapes*, 282.
[253] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 699.
[254] Ibid., 700.

definitive motifs that are shared between Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Andersen's *Lykke Peer*. Once Peer sets out on composing his *Aladdin*, Andersen's narration describes the process as "many free fancies were welcomed at the piano as birds of passage from that Land of Perhaps."[255] This can be seen as yet another subtle simile comparing Peer to birds that freely traverse existential planes. Since Peer is now thoroughly engrossed in his Wagnerian destiny, the metaphysical imagery is becoming palpable. Mynott concurs, stating that "birds are above all creatures of the air, the realm intermediate between that of gods and humans in which they move with such ease. Angels have wings. And it is the power of flight, surely, that we most envy and admire, in our conscious lives as in our dreams."[256] On the evening of the opera's premiere—at the very start of the performance—the narration draws comparison to "a twittering of birds. This was somewhat similar; the cuckoo cuckooed with them; the thrush sang."[257] These were the final images of any birds in Andersen's narrative, and at this crucial juncture in the story, the cuckoo's presence suggests that Peer's time may be up. And if this was not convincing enough, almost immediately after, there was "a flash of deadly lightning,"[258] which is the same description written a page later to describe Peer's fatal heart bursting.

The thematic significance of the separation of the two realms of existence are vital in the understanding of Andersen and Wagner's narratives on a philosophical level. Mynott quotes biologist Adam Maclean, who states:

> The essential thing about birds is that, having as their domain the air element, they mediate between the earthly realm and the heavenly world. The alchemist, in observing the flight of birds, recognized in them a picture of the human soul undergoing spiritual development. The soul, aspiring upwards, flying free of the restraints of the earth-bound body, is seeking the heavenly light, only to have to return to earthly consciousness again after the meditation. ('The Birds in Alchemy'.)[259]

In a brief digression, it will be helpful to mention the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), who exerted a profound influence on Wagner and his entire world-view for approximately the last 30 years of the composer's life. In the interests of the present study, attention will be drawn to the nature of Schopenhauer's philosophy on metaphysics, which juxtaposes a temporal duality of existential planes

255 Ibid., 706.
256 Mynott, *Birdscapes*, 283–84.
257 Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 707.
258 Ibid.
259 Mynott, *Birdscapes*, 284.

that consists of the empirical world of reality in which we live and suffer, and the metaphysical realm of non-reality above space and time that is accessible when the invisible bondage of empirical desires is denied in favor of an emancipating higher form of spirituality and existence. The philosopher and author Bryan Magee most compellingly describes Wagner's complex relation to Schopenhauer,[260] which is an association that will reverberate in *Lykke Peer* as well, as Andersen's novella presents imagery associated with the dichotomy of temporal realms, especially in the discussions of death and the artist's empirical transcendence into immortality—all of which is ultimately Schopenhauerian in nature. All subsequent allusions to the philosopher will be in the context of these notions. Indeed, the imagery of the passage above is pure Schopenhauerian metaphysics, and is very much congruent with Andersen and Wagner's values. Like the character of Peer, this description of the bird's traversal of realms is indicative of how Andersen's hero also straddles both realms in his quest for metaphysical transcendence, to break those "earth-bound restraints," which Schopenhauer equates to the empirical will. In this sense, birds are not only seen as exemplifying freedom, but also a path to salvation, which is also integral to Andersen and Wagner: Peer seeks salvation through his art, and in *Lohengrin*, salvation is emphasized through faith.

Prophetic imagery using birds can likewise be seen in the narrative of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. When Lohengrin first appears in the opera, he arrives in a boat drawn by a swan. There are subtle, prophetic indications in this moment, such as the stage direction: "…Ortrud in consternation at [the] sight of the swan."[261] This is, of course, in reference to Ortrud deviously turning Elsa's brother into a swan using magic, as is made known at the end of the opera. This concept of bodily transformation between birds and humans also has a mythological precedence where "birds [are] suitable subjects also for myths of metamorphosis, the process whereby people are not just represented by birds or animals but where they *become* them."[262] Mynott also notes that "there are also a few other metamorphoses where becoming a bird offers a means of escape from some dire threat. It is noticeable that most examples are portrayed as forms of punishment or revenge."[263] This latter sentiment is precisely the context in which Ortrud turned Elsa's brother into the swan. Furthermore, Lohengrin instructs the swan to "come once again when fortune smiles. Thus hold your faith to service done."[264] This line alludes to the "come, conquer,

260 For a comprehensive study on Wagner and Schopenhauer, see Bryan Magee, *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000).
261 Wagner, Lohengrin Libretto, 4.
262 Mynott, *Birdscapes*, 285.
263 Mynott, Birds of the Ancient World, 280.
264 Wagner, Lohengrin Libretto, 4.

vanish" motif that is inherent in the opera and Andersen's narrative. Here, it is prophetically used to imply that there will indeed be a departure, even though Lohengrin will marry Elsa in the wake of his conquest and impart upon her his conditions for staying, which he sincerely hopes that she will comply with.

In Act II, Ortrud again suggestively remarks on her role in the swan imagery, stating to Frederick that "the hour has come for my prophetic eyes to lend you light. Do you know who he is, that hero brought here by a magic swan?"[265] Ortrud is now explicitly associating her prophetic powers with an overt admission of the swan's magic. She could have just as easily called the swan divine, but decided to describe the bird using imagery that she was aware of that the narrative has not yet disclosed, which again suggests a later clarification.

The next swan iteration occurs in the final act when Elsa has already gone back on her word to Lohengrin, and senses his pending departure. The fatalistic motif of vanishing is expressed when Elsa prophetically exclaims: "It's there, the swan, the swan! I see him coming on the watery high-ways."[266] In the latter stages of the opera's final scene, the only other bird in the opera is introduced: a dove. This bird acts as a mythological, holy messenger of God, who sends the dove from heaven every year to strengthen the power of the Grail. Mynott describes this kind of holy symbolism with birds thusly: "Birds were thought of as 'signs.' They were the principal agents through which the gods revealed their will to humans, so they could reasonably describe themselves as the gods' messengers and privileged intermediaries, who should be consulted about future plans and important decisions."[267] In addition, "Doves were always closely linked with immortality. The theme would be conveyed in religion, art, and literature across the centuries, the bird often signifying the transformed soul of the dead. Doves served as messengers in ancient Greece. The heavenly messenger, meanwhile, was increasingly elevated within Christian beliefs, becoming the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Doves can also be omens of impending death."[268] These sentiments both relate to the divinity of the Grail and perhaps also as an omen of Elsa's transfigured death at the end of the opera. After Lohengrin finishes describing the role of the dove, the swan reappears, drawing the boat. Suddenly, the white dove also appears—descending from heaven—and with it, Ortrud's magic is undone, and the swan transforms back into Elsa's brother. The final motif of Lohengrin's vanishing is enabled via bird imagery, as it was prophesized from the very beginning of the opera.

[265] Ibid., 8.
[266] Ibid., 17.
[267] Mynott, Birds in the Ancient World, 249–50.
[268] Chadd and Taylor, *Birds: Myth, Lore & Legend*, 115–17.

Death/Vanishing in *Lykke Peer*

The concept of death was a notion that was frequently in the forefront of Andersen's perceptions. Certainly, he had often expressed his apprehension at the thought of being forgotten after his death, especially since he had no family of his own. Both subtle and overt allusions to death are therefore replete within the narrative of *Lykke Peer*, and can ultimately be seen as an interchangeable phenomenon with the notion of vanishing. Ergo, there are keen similarities between the portrayal of death in Andersen's story and the presentation of vanishing in *Lohengrin*. However, it is necessary to first trace the allusions of death that Andersen portrayed, and to investigate how they were crucial in developing Peer's Wagnerian inclinations and final fate.

From early in the narrative, a romanticized view of death is expressed. Frank Hugus, Professor Emeritus of Germanic languages and literatures, also asserts that "*Lykke Peer*, in fact, abounds with prefigurative devices that point both to Peer's artistic triumph and to his early death."[269] Hugus continues that the death imagery is subtly presented with the early death in battle of Peer's father. However, this event does not gain more traction until Peer's mother invokes the memory of the father's early death after Peer returns from the provinces, by noting how closely he resembles his father.[270] Furthermore, from the time that Peer leaves his home, Hugus believes "that it is from this point in the novel that the negative allusions begin to eclipse the positive. That it is to start him down the path that will ultimately lead him to his death is less clear—unless the reader pays close attention to the somber imagery of the rail journey that takes him away from his happy childhood into the complexities of adulthood. His traveling companion is the black-clad widow whose entire conversation revolves around death and the grave."[271] On the very first night of his arrival in the provinces, Peer has his first dream premonition that was foretelling of his death. He dreamed that the amber heart talisman he wore grew into a tree that bore thousands of hearts, but that it ultimately "became mold, earth to earth—gone, gone forever!"[272] As it will be explained later in greater detail, Peer will come to view his heart—as it is the root of both his morality and luck—as intrinsically connected to his art. Therefore, for his talisman heart to expand so pronouncedly implies that his art will ultimately reach thousands of adoring patrons, but that as a

[269] Frank Hugus, "The Ironic Inevitability of Death—Hans Christian Andersen's *Lykke-Peer*," in *Hans Christian Andersen: A Poet in Time*, ed. Johan de Mylius, Aage Jørgensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1999), 529.

[270] Ibid., 530.

[271] Ibid., 531–32.

[272] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 675.

result, his own original amber heart will die, becoming a part of the earth, and will be gone forever. In other words, Peer himself will die when he is most beloved. These images will motivically return throughout the narrative until the very end. Hugus concurs by noting how "this dream encapsulates the tragic irony that is to be Peer's fate: his genius, represented by the amber heart, will swell to great proportions but will in the process destroy Peer's fragile earthly existence."[273] During his time in the provinces, Peer also acquires his education and is constantly exposed to Greek epics, Shakespeare, and Goethe, to name a few. From these readings, he sees a more poetic approach to notions of honor and victory, and comes to believe "how blessed [it is] to die in the midst of one's joy of victory! What could be more fortunate!"[274] This is the second foreshadowings of Peer's death at the Gabriel's residence, as it both emphasizes Peer's conviction and the notion of being fortunate, or lucky, which he most certainly always has been and will be. Furthermore, it also expresses Peer's complete acceptance of death, as long as the terms of its arrival are as aesthetically favorable as he idealizes. Since this is a death that favors those who are lucky, there is no reason to believe even at this early stage that Peer's death will be anything but how he envisioned a heroic death even now. It is interesting to note that this initial idealization of death should also come in context of Peer learning about the singing contest at Wartburg, which was associated with similar displays of poetization in the ancient Greek world. This imagery is very indicative of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* due to the discussion of the song contest at Wartburg, as well as the early Wagnerian ethos that was predicated on Greek social paradigms. These may be tenuous associations to make for Peer, but considering Andersen's forward-looking gaze to the end of the narrative regarding Peer's death, this Wagnerian imagery can be seen as an even subtler indication of Peer's final evolution of character as a mature Wagnerian.

Peer's next prophetic dream expressed imagery of his mortality as he attempted to converse with a cuckoo. Peer asked the bird, "how many more years shall I live?"[275] The narration interjects, explaining that "one always asks the cuckoo that, the first time in the year one hears it cuckoo; and the cuckoo answered, 'cuckoo!' but no more; it was silent." To this, Peer replied: "Shall I live only one more year? That is really too little. Be so good as to cuckoo again!"[276] Hugus maintains that "by compelling the bird to sing again, he [Peer] attempts to avert his 'fate;' but both Peer and the reader should realize that it is the first, and not the second, cuckooing that is

[273] Hugus, "Inevitability of Death," 532.
[274] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 678.
[275] Ibid., 681.
[276] Ibid.

the valid predictor of the future.—In actuality, of course, Peer does live more than the single year prophesized by the original solitary trill of the cuckoo."[277]

The next iteration of death is also the most metaphysically symbolic, and has strong associations with *Lohengrin* again. A fever had gripped Peer, and the narrator described him as being in a state of "half dreaming." Dream states were twice alluded to in *Lohengrin*: first, when Elsa prophesized of Lohengrin's arrival to exact her absolution, and then at the end of the opera where Lohengrin exclaims that to behold the Grail "destroys the dream of death." This dream of death is precisely where Peer finds himself now, albeit more abstractly. Peer finds himself in a castle where "the castle walls moved; they glided toward each other. They closed about him. He was inside, and the world of man was outside."[278] This clearly describes a state of metaphysical temporal ambiguity that Wagner uses quite often. Peer, like Elsa, was rendered unaware of which temporal plane he was inhabiting at the moment that his reality was suspended—suggesting a metaphysical emplacement—within the dream. The ambiguity is implied due to the perceived moving of inanimate objects, such as walls. For Elsa, the floor began to reel. An even greater implication that Peer had transcended his empirical plane was the description of how he was outside the world of man. The most symbolic representation of his temporal suspension, however, is his subconscious avatar (in the form of a young girl), telling him in the dream that "one hour here is a hundred years outside. You have already been here a whole hour. Everyone you know and love outside these walls is dead. Stay with us! Yes, stay you must, or the walls will squeeze you until the blood flows from your brow!"[279] Although Andersen could not have known it, the line about one hour here being a hundred years outside is incredibly reminiscent of Wagner's final drama, *Parsifal*, during the transformation scene of Act I where Gurnemanz utters to Parsifal during their journey to the metaphysical realm that "time here becomes space." In other words, there is no quantification of time—neither in Wagner's realm, nor in the one that Andersen crafts for Peer. For Peer, though, the transcendent state is rendered more ominous when he is warned that everyone he knows and loves outside of this plane of existence is dead, and that he himself will die if he departs, or prophetically, if he vanishes. This is a crucial insight into Peer's final future fate back in the empirical world. His metaphysical projection is essentially telling him that in this transcendent state, he cannot die, or to use Lohengrin's image, destroy the dream of death. Therefore, it can be posited that when Peer ambiguously dies/vanishes at the end of the narrative, he is, in fact, returning to a permanent metaphysical state, and that his departure at the end of the story is as ultimately open-ended as that of

[277] Hugus, "Inevitability of Death," 533.
[278] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 684.
[279] Ibid.

Lohengrin's. And if Peer is cognizant of the potential for such a transcendence, it can also explain the peace with which he views corporeal death.

Peer ultimately recovers from his feverish metaphysical dream, and leaves the provinces to return to the capital and fulfill the crowning achievement of his Wagnerian destiny. Peer returns to live with the singing master, and upon his very arrival, the narrator injects a subtle reference to Peer's premature mortality. The singing master directs Peer's attention to the two composer busts that are in his house: those of Mozart and Weber. It has been surmised that these two composers are of particular significance because they had both died young, as Peer will, but had died famous and beloved, as Peer ultimately will as well. Hugus agrees, noting that "the narrator injects an oblique reference to Peer's early death. The narrator could have chosen Beethoven or Haydn, who are later to become Peer's favorites. So why does the choice devolve upon von Weber and Mozart? The answer, it would seem, lies in the fact that Beethoven and Haydn lived more or less normal life spans for their era, while both Mozart and von Weber died at relatively young ages. By replacing the bust of a composer who died at 40 [sic] with one who died at an even younger age, the narrator has made yet another subtle inference about the fate of his protagonist."[280] Shortly thereafter, as if the metaphysical dream still held sway over him, Peer composed a poem that once again foreshadows his empirical death:

Everything passes, like the wind that blows;
There is nothing lasting here.
From your cheek will fade the rose,
As well as smile and tear.

Why be burdened with pain and grief?
Away with your trouble and sorrow,
For everything goes, fades like the leaf;
Time and man pass with the morrow.

All vanishes, everything goes,
Your youth, your hope, and your friend.
Everything passes, like the wind that blows,
Never to return, only to end![281]

The imagery associated with his own death is profound in this poem, as is the motif of vanishing. Peer describes an empirical fleetingness of Schopenhauerian pain, as

[280] Hugus, "Inevitability of Death," 534.
[281] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 696.

he alludes to both time and man as equal constructs within the confines of the empirical realm. He is describing a fatalistic pessimism inherent of things that end. By confronting the empirical will, Peer equips himself with the realization of the necessity to transcend those limitations. As his Wagnerian penchant develops, he will come to reject the musings of this poem, as he already implied to the singing master by noting that the notions within "will never fly farther into the world."[282] The poem focuses on an end, but Peer is not yet ready to wax poetic on the metaphysical insights that his subconscious is aware of. This distinction informs the reader that such an awareness is certainly within him—he only needs to gain an awareness of Wagner before his subconscious awareness shifts to the forefront of his consciousness. Peer was, however, still under the influence of his feverish dream, as he admitted that "his dream had shown him a tree growing out of his amber heart, bursting through ceiling and roof and bearing thousands of hearts of silver and gold; that surely meant that in the heart, in his own warm heart, lay the power of his art, whereby he had won and still would win thousands upon thousands of hearts."[283] The imagery of Peer's heart, and more specifically of a bursting phenomenon, is the first allusion to his actual empirical death from a burst artery in his heart. However, the more important realization here is that Peer derived inspiration and awareness from his dream in the conviction that his heart was indelibly connected to his art, and that through his art, he would achieve his legacy.

Peer would subsequently harness the imagery from his dream to take a more metaphysical approach to his poeticizing. Indeed, his next poem—one that drew him even closer to Wagner—represented the evolution of his insight. The conscious awareness of his heart and art being intrinsically connected had momentarily distracted Peer from the fatalistic pessimism of his previous poem. The new poem expresses perhaps a delusion of grandeur. When musing on the song of a cuckoo, the poem reads: "Hear them sing that your life will be long. The world is young, so be young with the young! For never does youth come to an end! Life on Earth is a magic blend, of sunshine and storm, joy and pain. Within our hearts a world was lain; it vanishes not like a shooting star…for never does youth come to an end!"[284] These lines emphasize less resignation; they accept fate and rejoice in the empirical world, instead of invoking the fear and resistance of the previous poem. However, the repeated imagery of youth that lasts forever and does not vanish is irrational unless one associates it with the prospect of a legacy rather than actual life. So for Peer to advocate a desire to remain young forever, it is another subtle reference to his youthful death. Furthermore, both this and the previous, more pessimistic poem,

282 Ibid.
283 Ibid., 698.
284 Ibid., 699.

conclude with the word end, and contain the word never. The final line of the previous poem is: “Never to return, only to end,” while this one’s is: “For never does youth come to an end.” This implies a congruity between both poems, despite their vast difference in tone. And as all references and images go with Andersen, they have a tendency to return in a less blindly idealistic way that captures a more authentic essence when recapitulated. Nevertheless, this poem was deemed by the singing master as having potential for a setting with orchestra and choir. And from this discussion, sprung the initial mention of Wagner and the music of the future. From this point, Peer’s evolution from singer, to performing the title role in *Lohengrin*, to ultimately composing *Aladdin*, was now firmly established, and it perhaps ironically stemmed from an idealized, yet essentially insincere glorification of empirical existence. Nevertheless, the allusions of death were still subtly hinted at, and would only intensify henceforth.

Hugus also draws a parallel between Lohengrin and Peer, noting that:

> Although the hero of this opera [Lohengrin] does not undergo physical death, he suffers an equally bleak symbolic fate. Like Lohengrin, Peer, too, appears, triumphs, and as we learn on the last page of the novel, is suddenly gone. We should note that a common thread runs through all four of these operas [that Peer appeared in as a singer]: that of the forced separation of the protagonist from his loved ones. In *Lohengrin*, separation is paramount; the motif of reunion is absent, and the titular figure’s fate is psychologically worse than death: Lohengrin is forever cut off from the love that should be rightfully his. The narrator hereby adumbrates that Peer, too, will be faced with this loveless future—if he does not die in the meantime.[285]

In the ensuing dialogue, Wagner’s aesthetics are abstractly conceived of, and Andersen contrived slight allusions to *Lohengrin* by first comparing the stage artist to a swan, and then overtly naming the role from Wagner’s opera as an image that Peer had now cultivated and was seen publicly as embodying. Peer was happy about this, but just like the unsustainable euphoria of his empirical poem, so too did a pessimistic darkness once more return to his consciousness, and he prophetically returned to an acceptance of the older poem by playing a musical representation at the piano of the final stanza:

> All vanishes, everything goes,
> Your youth, your hope, and your friend.

[285] Hugus, “Inevitability of Death,” 535.

> Everything passes, like the wind that blows,
> Never to return, only to end![286]

The imagery of death had suddenly permeated the narrative fabric, and it was to bare the most important fruit of all: the conception of *Aladdin*. The baroness and her daughter were in attendance for this short musical offering, and the baroness observed how melancholy the passage was, and how she believed no one was as lucky as Peer. To this, Peer replied with his most abstractly Wagnerian monologue of the whole narrative:

> Call no one fortunate before he is in the grave, the wise Solon said. It would be wrong, a sin, if I were not thankful and happy in my heart. I am that. I am thankful for what is entrusted to me, but I myself set a different value on this than others do. It is a beautiful piece of fireworks that soars forth and then goes out! So it is with the stage actor's work. The everlasting shining stars may be forgotten for the meteors of a moment, but when these are extinguished, there is no lasting trace of them other than what may be found in old records. A new generation does not know and cannot picture to itself those who delighted their grandfathers from the stage; the youth of today perhaps applauds the luster of brass as fervently and loudly as the old folks once did the luster of pure gold. Far more fortunately placed than the performing artist are the poet, the sculptor, the painter, and the composer. They often experience trying conditions in the struggle of life and miss the merited appreciation, while those who exhibit their works live in luxury and in arrogance born of idolatry. Let the mob stand and admire the bright-colored cloud and forget the sun; the cloud vanishes, but the sun shines and beams for new generations.[287]

With this passage, Peer described his moral kinship with both Lohengrin and Wagner. From the start, he essentially claims that death brings fortune, and that he himself is on a different path than the one that everyone believes him to be on. Peer is here directly alluding to his pending metaphysical transcendence and ultimate achievement of luck through death. He expresses a total acceptance in the concept of a flame that burns brightly and beautifully, and is then expunged—only to be remembered by the legacy it leaves behind. He laments that the performing artist is forgotten because they cannot leave behind a trace of their work like a visual artist or composer who leaves behind something tangible. Andersen is speaking directly through Peer, and imbues his young hero with his shared ethos of a lasting legacy

[286] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 703.
[287] Ibid.

being more essential to the artist than the profit mongering of those who would exploit them. This mentality strikes accord with Wagner's own pre-Schopenhauerian revolutionary ideals, and had remained a valued belief when other views he held at the time had been supplanted by later theories. Indeed, in his literary treatise, *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner says how "the celebration of death is the noblest thing that men can enter on."[288] Wagner here is essentially describing how an intentional death (akin to sacrifice), leads to the surrender of ego, which enlightens the artist and serves in the authentic creation of drama. This notion will be discussed later in greater detail in the chapter analyzing Wagner and Andersen's correlating theoretical writings, but it is applicable here to draw attention to the explicit congruence between Wagner's theories and Peer's embodiment of them. However, Andersen was presumably aware of the bitterness that Wagner had harbored by having Peer speak of the struggles that artists experience while lesser individuals thrive. Peer's monologue ends by condemning such visionless people to a forgotten oblivion, while those who burn brightly yet fleetingly will be remembered like the beams of sunlight that posterity recognizes. In a way, Peer's admission is a paradoxical expression of pessimistic optimism, yet is devoid of hypocrisy or contradiction. It is ultimately a rejection of the empirical will that will free Peer to achieve his crowning glory, and with it, metaphysically transcend to a higher plane. But the transcendence must come with the price of death, and Peer illustrates this with the imagery of vanishing clouds that yield the sun. Once again, he is aware of the luck of death, or more specifically, the luck of his own death. This is pure Schopenhauerian Wagnerism on full display, with the musical representation shortly to follow suit.

At the end of his monologue, when he begins playing the music of his Wagnerian ideology, the narrator describes it as "a richness of thought and power such as he never before had shown."[289] The baroness chimed in by observing that the music was "as if I heard the story of a whole lifetime. You gave your heart's song in the music."[290] Once more, a subtle allusion to death: the music has, in fact expressed Peer's entire lifetime, and his heart was indeed given for the music both figuratively and literally. However, it was the baroness's daughter—Peer's young muse—that noted how the music had reminded her of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and specifically of the "lamp of fortune, of Aladdin!"[291] Her realization had been an

288 Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 199.
289 Ibid.
290 Ibid.
291 Ibid.

epiphany to Peer, and it would be the spark of inspiration he took to creating his own *Aladdin*.

Interestingly, the theme of *Aladdin* was used by Andersen in his previous writings. His 1857 novel *To Be, or Not To Be?* was written in response to the first Schleswigian War, and it discussed the conflicting inner turmoil of its young protagonist as he grappled with abstract philosophical notions and those more rooted in reality. One line from the novel reads: "He had dreamed on night that, like Aladdin, he descended into a cave. Yes! That dream had its significance in his afterlife! Children can dream what elder people after the struggle of life manage—not indeed to seize,--but to catch a glimpse of."[292] The significance of this passage is to emphasize the symmetrical symbolism between this earlier work and *Lykke Peer*. The mention of *Aladdin*; dreams and the afterlife as imagery related to metaphysical transcendence; and the purity of children's dreams over adult's dreams are all motivic points of interest for Andersen that he only fleetingly addressed in *To Be, or Not To Be?*, whereas they become the focal point later on for his child protagonist Peer. The inclusion of *Aladdin* in the narrative structure of *Lykke Peer* was, therefore, a strategic ploy that reflected a long-standing ethos of Andersen's. Also, the metaphysical imagery in *Lykke Peer* that would so intrinsically associate it with Wagner had brief glimpses in *To Be, Or Not To Be?* as well. Through the mouthpiece of his protagonist in the earlier novel, Andersen wrote: "Latterly it has been ascertained that they have their own destined, individual courses. May not the spirit-world, like the comets, have its natural transfiguration, though we have not yet attained a knowledge of it? In the great miracle which the whole is, why should I not believe in a higher world of spirit, with its own laws and paths, quite beyond the merely material?"[293] The juxtaposition between the empirical and metaphysical is palpable here, yielding once again a conceptual groundwork in this novel that would be developed to its conclusion in *Lykke Peer*, when Andersen steers his protagonist to achieve the feat in that work instead of just questioning the possibility of it in this one.

Upon the completion of his opera's composition, and the singing master's approval, the score of *Aladdin* was distributed and studied in preparation for its premiere. Some subtle, tongue-in-cheek references to imminent death were made, such as a young trumpeter uttering: "There are a good many horns in the piece. If only he doesn't run a horn into himself!"[294] Nevertheless, as innocent and humorous as this admission may be, it will take on a more ominous reference when it returns

[292] Hans Christian Andersen, *To Be, Or Not to Be?*, trans. Mrs. Bushby (United Kingdom: Sagwan Press, 2018), 23.
[293] Ibid., 300.
[294] Andersen, "Lykke Peer," 707.

on the night of the premiere. Peer himself echoes the atmosphere of darker premonitions by saying how "tomorrow at this time, the scaffold will be raised. The judgment is, perhaps, already passed."[295] To further express this point and to imply his acceptance of fate, in whatever form it may come in, Peer continues: "Happen what may. I must know my place in the world, understand what I can and must create, or give up."[296] There is a sentiment of urgency in this text, which not only accentuates Peer's spiritual acceptance of fate, but that time is preciously limited, and that this operatic attempt at establishing a lasting legacy may be the only such chance that he gets. Andersen himself raises the metaphysical stakes in the subsequent narration on the opening night, calling it "the evening of decision. A popular artist was to be exalted to a higher place or humiliated in his gigantic, vain effort."[297] Simply put, the stage had been set for spiritual struggle that would either see Peer metaphysically transcend to the higher place that Andersen spoke of, or to be chained in the empirical hubris of his failure.

Once the opera began, a flurry of literary allusions flew from Andersen's narration—all of which bore some implication for what was to ensue regarding Peer's fate. The opera started joyously, reminiscent of the "jubilation of the innocent child mind."[298] This was the biographical echo of Peer's own happy childhood. In the opera, Aladdin is the happy child, and Peer is singing the title role of his own alter-ego. The idyllic tranquility is quickly supplanted by a thunderstorm that emits a "flash of deadly lightning."[299] This imagery of deadly lightning will resurface again very shortly. This action is currently taking place in an enchanted grotto, which could be a nod to the magical realm of the Venusberg in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, which was a powerful image used in *The Pepperman's Nightcap*. As the ominousness of the thunderstorm gave way to blissfulness once more, that false security was quickly displaced by a growing fatalism in the orchestra that was described as if it was "the trumpets of judgment day."[300] The earlier imagery of the trumpet player and Peer's belief that judgment may have already been passed now seem to be converging in the realization of those prophetic musings. Immediately after this, the fateful adjective of swelling is used for the first time to describe the scene's action in specific proximity to Aladdin.

The following act opens with the narration associating the music with Gluck and Mozart's *Magic Flute*. The double implication being, once more, that Mozart died

[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid., 708.

young and that the *Magic Flute* was his last completed opera. And if that imagery was too subtle, the point is embellished with the description of the music "swelling in might and then dying away."[301] This is the second use of the word swelling, which is now accompanied by the more assertive image of dying away. Aladdin's great monologue aria came after this, and it was to be the final acting that Peer performed in his opera. One can perhaps imagine that this monologue contains the same poetic text from which Peer constructed his whole opera: specifically, the final stanza that speaks of vanishing and everything going, and concludes with the line, "never to return, only to end." This poem gave way to Peer's great Wagnerian monologue of seeking metaphysical redemption, and it is entirely plausible that this was the crux of Aladdin's aria, as Andersen's narration spoke that it was "intense music of the heart."[302] Peer himself, through the narration, came to understand from his first metaphysical dream suspension that his art and heart were fundamentally connected, therefore, music that comes from *his* heart, is unquestionably of the most authentic meaning. This was the epicenter of Peer's great existential epiphany, and he had said all that there was to say. The opera was not finished, but Peer had delivered his Wagnerian message, and by extension, had earned his legacy. There was nothing else left for him to do, and in his final moments, his inner monologue had recognized the significance of his crowning achievement fulfilled, where "a mightier one could never again be granted him, he felt."[303]

Peer's final conscious awareness was of the baroness's daughter throwing a wreath to him on stage. He noted that she seemed to be "rising like a spirit of beauty."[304] However, it was not her rising spirit that he saw, but his own, reflected in her. An instant later, "a fire rushed through him; his heart swelled as never before; he bowed, took the wreath, pressed it against his heart, and at the same moment fell backward. Fainted? Dead? What was it? The curtain fell."[305] The third and final swelling had signified Peer's vanishing, and symbolically, it was his heart—his art—that swelled to bring an end to his empirical existence. The ambiguity of his fate—whether he had fainted or died—is a crucial signifier in expressing that Peer's state of being was unknown, and that by not overtly expressing that he had died in that moment, the narration creates the potential for Peer's metaphysical transcendence. However, onlookers claim that he did die, and "in the moment of triumph. An artery in his heart had burst, and as by a flash of lightning his days here were ended, ended without pain, ended in an earthly triumph, in the fulfillment of his mission on Earth.

[301] Ibid.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.

Lucky Peer! More fortunate than millions."[306] Peer had indeed triumphed, and it was perceptible to all present. The symbolism of bursting, like swelling, had found its final utilization, as did the flash of lightning that came at the start of the performance of *Aladdin*, which was prophetically deemed as deadly. More importantly, though, is Andersen's narration that says how Peer's end came in earthy triumph and the fulfillment of his mission on Earth. A description in that way implies one final time that Peer's triumph on Earth allowed him to reject the Schopenhauerian-Wagnerian will because he needed nothing further from his empirical existence. He was therefore spiritually ready to break from the bondage of the will and transcend to a higher plane. Therein lies the true semblance of Peer's luck: that he achieved what few others could, not just in establishing a lasting legacy, but in the negation of the empirical will. In this sense, once more, Peer and Lohengrin share dubious departures from their respective narratives, effectively never to return, but had both left behind legacies that would not be forgotten. Ergo, Lohengrin's vanishing and Peer's death are ultimately the same, as they both entered a metaphysical realm at the end of their stories: Lohengrin to Monsalvat, and Peer to a more abstract existence that is not quantified by a tangible location. This ultimately reiterates that for Andersen, there is no death, per se, in the traditional sense, but rather the death of an artist, or more specifically, their art—their legacy. This is what he feared most, and why he ensured that his hero would not suffer this fate, yielding to Peer's ultimate triumph in a way that was redeeming for both Wagner's aesthetics and Andersen alike.

Jacob Bøggild once again offers an entirely different perspective on Peer's death. Firstly, he incorrectly states that Peer dropped dead immediately after the first performance of *Aladdin*. There was no indication to suggest that the opera had concluded when Peer had died. If anything it was suggested that he "died" sometime in the second act while taking bows after his aria. Bøggild then questions what Andersen meant by saying that Peer was luckier than millions:

> Maybe he suggests that Peer will then not have to realize that his triumph was, in a deeper sense, a fiasco, that his audience was completely unable to grasp the real significance of his work. And, furthermore, that Peer did not realize this because he was too gratified by the overwhelming acclaim which his work was met with. That would be incriminating enough. But what is worse, it might not, after all, be this fulfillment, which makes Peer's heart burst literally. Amongst the audience he in fact catches a glimpse of a young baroness that he has more or less fallen in love with. Is it the luck of the artist or that of the lover which is

[306] Ibid., 708–9.

> too much for the frail heart of our hero? And why does Andersen represent the per definition suffering and misunderstood romantic artist, who always suffers from unhappy love, as a character who depends on how his work is received by either a girl he fancies or his philistine audience as a whole? The most obvious answer to these questions is that *Lykke-Peer* is an ironic comment on the sentimental myths about the same romantic artist. Which would further explain why Andersen in his novelette follows the typology of the fairy tale, since all the characters of the text, including Peer, are stereotyped ones.[307]

This view takes on an entirely too literal assessment of the action, and betrays a cynicism of an audience's ability to immediately grasp the significance of an artistic work. It also paints Peer as an oblivious, self-centered egoist, who cannot perceive of his fleeting acclaim and expendability in the eyes of the social elite. This is the same accusation that the singing master leveled onto Peer, who vehemently denied it. The narrative elements of unrequited love and even the young baroness as a potential love interest for Peer are all incidental to the Wagnerian and metaphysical evolution of Peer's art and heart, which are, as continuously stated in the text, one and the same. Andersen's understanding of Wagner and his close association to the Weimar court for many years had deepened his philosophical threshold, ultimately rendering these literal interpretations of Bøggild as illogical, unsubstantiated, and ultimately trite. Celenza believed that "Lucky Peer is 'lucky' because he dies at the peak of his career and is thus spared the torment of watching tastes change. Peer will never know the biting critique of an operatic critic, and he will never have to witness the eventual neglect of his greatest achievement—a Wagner-inspired opera called *Aladdin*."[308]

Frank Hugus argues that:

> The conclusion of Andersen's last novel stands as one of the most brilliantly ironic endings that the author ever wrote. Peer, who yearned for immortality, has been granted his wish by a whimsical fate at the very moment of his greatest triumph and happiness. Peer will be long remembered, but whether he will go down in the annals of music history as a genius like Mozart who died before his time or whether as a curious footnote, the narrator leaves unspoken. And there is perhaps one additional irony in Peer's sudden death: we cannot even be certain whether Peer has finished performing his opera when his coronary artery bursts.

[307] Bøggild, "Pontoppidan's 'Rewritings,'" 132.
[308] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 215.

> If Peer has not managed to perform the entire opera before he dies, he has not managed to be fully triumphant.[309]

Hugus's assertion that Peer's lasting legacy is left open ended is synonymous with Andersen's personal uncertainty over his own legacy, as he is unsure whether his fame will endure for long after his own death, despite knowing that he has certainly achieved it already. However, due to the metaphysical transcendence that Peer felt was his at the moment that he collapsed on stage, it is foolish to believe that his triumph would not have been complete had he not actually finished the entire opera. The aria was clearly of fundamental importance, and based on the symbolism of what it stood for, could very well have been the opera's denouement, regardless of whether there was ensuing dramatic action or not.

Placing *Lykke Peer* in context of Andersen's other novels, as well as through their overlapping features of music, is a fascinating comparison that Johan de Mylius describes thusly:

> Looking through the novels Andersen wrote, six in all, one is struck by the frequency with which musicians or composers appear as central figures or even protagonists. In *The Improvisatore*, the protagonist Antonio is a combination of poet and composer/musician. In *Only a Fiddler*, one of the protagonists, Christian, is – as the title implies – a poor village musician, a violinist with abilities for something greater than his restricted circumstances allow. And his Norwegian godfather is a demonic musician like Paganini or perhaps resembling the Norwegian violinist Ole Bull to whom, incidentally, Andersen presented the novel, apparently without any ulterior motive, after they became acquainted in Copenhagen. In *The Two Baronesses*, a Groom-in-Waiting, who is a pianist, appears, but he injures his hand and becomes a composer instead. And finally in *Lykke Peer* the title character ends up as an opera composer and singer rolled into one. An obvious feature that links Andersen's otherwise largely realistic contemporary novels with romanticism, is that they are so often about artists, here in particular musicians and composers.[310]

As this quote attests, music and musicians played a vital role in Andersen's narratives, where he himself identified with his characters intimately enough to present them as autobiographical abstractions. Both Andersen and Wagner crafted their characters as idealized members of society who were conflicted, misunderstood, but who were also displayed as righteous leaders in fundamental

309 Hugus, "Inevitability of Death," 538.
310 Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 205.

ways, whom their creators wished to exhibit as virtuous and aesthetically ahead of their times. A palpable emphasis was placed on depicting deficiencies in the present that could be redeemed in the future, as aesthetic and moral lessons of right and wrong, especially in context of society's perception and interpretation of the arts. What emerged, then, can be seen as a subtle commentary—and one that will next be rendered explicit in the investigation of Wagner's and Andersen's prose works, which aimed to present a framework of why a reevaluation of the social function of the arts was necessary, and how artists of the future could bring about the essential changes that the arts required in order to flourish and constitute greater significance in society.

Before that, let us briefly reiterate Sarah Tracy's notion of narrative analysis, which concerns the recognition of stories that have plots and audiences, and are both told and untold. This section, amongst the first three, constitutes the previously-mentioned arc of a pro-German persuasion, which will be juxtaposed in the subsequent section with a decidedly polarizing pro-Danish conviction. If a large-scale plot can be extracted from Andersen's background and Wagnerian projections, it is ultimately an argument for cultural unity and coexistence between Denmark and Germany. Andersen's audience is primarily the Danish people with amicable overtures to Germany as well. Similar yet varied narrative conclusions will be seen when isolating the same sweeping motivations of Wagner and Grundtvig.

Section III: Theoretical Analyses

Wagner and Andersen's Theories on the Future of the Arts

Following the second Schleswigian War of 1864, Andersen experienced the political and moral upheaval that was inflicted upon the Danish nation, as well as on Danish-German relations. After the war, the disillusioned Andersen desired to find a way to reconcile Danish and German ideals towards a new, unified national identity. Denmark was leaning towards establishing a new identity based on its cultural past, but Andersen felt that the arts, and especially music, could establish a human element that had the potential to unify Denmark and Germany in a way that transcended nationalistic divisions. Despite his national loyalty, Andersen's career was largely formed in Germany, and his work was accepted there before it was in his native country. However, Andersen had begun to imagine his aesthetic new world order well before the war, in the 1850s, and had expressed his views on the future in a series of poeticized essays that emphasized the centrality of the arts upon future world societies, and the mutually-beneficial implications of shared aesthetics.[311] It was in this context that Andersen ultimately came to view Wagner as the prime example or progressiveness for both musicians and poets. The fact that Wagner experienced a long exile from Germany, resulting in prolonged stays in Switzerland and Paris, prompted many Danes to view him as a cosmopolitan individual who was not blinded by German nationalism at the expense of Denmark. Although Wagner was later labeled as a hyper German national, that image was not prescribed to his persona in Andersen's time. Again, Wagner was viewed as a harbinger of the future.[312] Mylius describes Andersen's interest in Wagner thusly:

> The increasing preoccupation with Wagner, culminating in the significant role which Wagner's music played for the protagonist in Andersen's last novel *Lykke Peer*, is only partly a sign of spiritual affinity. Here it was probably neither the

311 Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 189–90.
312 Ibid., 204.

> music nor the personality of the artist as such which served as the 'model' for Andersen. What fascinated him was rather that, as a phenomenon, Wagner was a distinctive forerunner for the future possibilities of art. Through Wagner he saw one of several paths to the art of the future.[313]

Over the next several years, as Andersen grappled with his own ideas on how art should represent the future, he began to grow weary of the virtuosic instrumental music that had captivated him so readily decades earlier. He now felt that there had to be an inherent philosophical abstraction in art that focuses more inwardly into the mind rather than on exterior and empirical details. A representation of psychology became more important than depicting pleasures of the senses.[314] At roughly the same time, Wagner had embarked on his own aesthetic treatises on the future following his socio-political disillusionment after the Dresden uprising in 1849 that had sent him into exile. Like Andersen, Wagner at this time also sought to forge a new path for the arts, and it was the realization of this shared conviction that finally stimulated Andersen's literary creativity to depict his ultimate idealization of the future artist: Peer.

In his treatise, *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner establishes the social position of several key aesthetic tenets, and describes the purpose that they serve. Such notions would have an implicit congruence with Andersen's theories in the ensuing years. When discussing aesthetic patterns within ancient Greek society, Wagner noted how "tragedy flourished for just so long as it was inspired by the spirit of the Folk, and as this spirit was veritably popular, i.e. a *communal* one."[315] Wagner therefore acknowledges the social solidarity towards an all-encompassing aesthetic ideal, which he had always valued from the Greeks. Andersen the poet would have been in agreement with Wagner's claim that following the fall of tragedy, poetry ceased to be a communal endeavor: "The lonely art of Poetry—prophesied no more; she no longer showed, but only *described*; the poet's strain became a *written dialect*, —the poet's breath the *penman's scrawl*."[316] Wagner here describes the deterioration of poetry from an outwardly expressive means—as befitting a tragedy—to only a written form that is no longer in service to a communal endeavor, but to just the poet, thereby rendering the art to be an inauthentic form of description. In its natural form, Wagner believed, the art form would encompass such a breadth and depth that "thus poetry turned to *Science*, to *Philosophy*. To the struggle for a deeper knowledge of Nature and of Man, we stand indebted for that copious store of literature whose

313 Mylius, "Andersen and the Music World," 201–02.
314 Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 199–200.
315 Wagner, The Art-Work of the Future, 136.
316 Ibid., 136–37.

kernel is the poetic musing which speaks to us in Human- and in Natural- History, and in Philosophy."[317] This was the authentic evolution of poetry, as a bridge between science and philosophy. As we will see, this fusion was precisely the exact course that Andersen had independently come to agree with. Wagner believed that poetry could represent the desire to have the sciences uncover existential truths of life. To Wagner,

> science, therefore, can only gain her perfect confirmation in the work of Art; in *that work* which takes both Man and Nature—in so far as the latter attains her consciousness in Man—and shows them forth directly. Thus the consummation of Knowledge is its redemption into Poetry; into that poetic art, however, which marches hand in hand with her sister arts towards the perfect Artwork; —and this artwork is none other than the *Drama*. Drama is only conceivable as the fullest expression of a joint artistic longing to impart; while this longing, again, can only parley with a common receptivity.[318]

Wagner once more draws attention to the communal aspect of enlightenment, as the poet fuses science and art to form drama. He reiterates this saying how "a common impulse toward dramatic art-work can only be at hand in those who actually enact the work of art in common; these, as we take it, are the *fellowships of players*."[319] Wagner cites Shakespeare as the inheritor of this idea, through the playwright's dramatic creations, as stemming from a communal endeavor, thereby making Shakespeare, by Wagner's estimation, the greatest poet of all time. And as Shakespeare represented the poet of the future, his kindred spirit was Beethoven, "who found the language of the Artist-manhood of the Future: only where these twain Prometheus'—Shakespeare and Beethoven—shall reach out hands to one another."[320] Wagner concludes this train of thought where poetry yields to drama by noting: "For, with our eyes directed toward the Artwork of the Future, we are seeking out Poetic art where she is struggling to become a living and immediate art, and this is in the *Drama*."[321] Wagner calls the fusion of literature-poetry as the only means for the modern artist to create the kind of poetic art that leads to drama, and calls the desire for this phenomenon the *longing after Life*. Wagner claims that "the only

[317] Ibid., 139.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid., 140.
[320] Ibid., 141.
[321] Ibid., 148.

possible assuagement of her [poetry's] longing, to be *her own self-abrogation, her dissolution into Life, into the living Art-work of the Future*."[322]

Wagner continues by alluding to his famous notion of the fusion of the arts by suggesting that they contribute to one another instead of appropriating elements of one for the sole gain of another. He describes it thusly:

> But the *Will* to form the common artwork arises in each branch of art by instinct and unconsciously, so soon as e'er it touches on its own confines and *gives* itself to the answering art, not merely strives to take from it. It only stays *throughout itself*, when it *thoroughly gives itself away*: whereas it must fall to its very opposite, if it at last must only feed upon the other: --'whose bread I eat, his song I'll sing.' But when it gives itself *entirely* to the second, and stays *entirely* enwrapt therein, it then may pass from that *entirely* into the third; and thus become once more *entirely itself*, in highest fullness, in the associate Art-work.[323]

Such a union, Wagner claimed, invariably leads to "the *Opera*, as the seeming point of reunion of all the three related arts," and it is to "the genuine artwork of the Drama, that we owe the Opera at all."[324]

Interestingly, Wagner next names Gluck and Mozart as two composers who pushed operatic music towards poetry. These same two composers are mentioned in Andersen's narrative of *Lykke Peer* as traditionalist composers that Peer admires, but nevertheless transcends. There is fascinating symmetry, therefore, between Wagner's admission of indebtedness to the operatic examples of Gluck and Mozart (whom he, Wagner, would evolve), and to Peer making the same explicit admission before he set out to compose his Wagnerian opera, *Aladdin*. Wagner noted how "for the full absorption of Music into Poetry, these masters [Gluck and Mozart] have accomplished the redemption of their art into the conjoint artwork."[325] Wagner elaborated by noting how "Gluck and Mozart, together with the scanty handful of kindred tone-poets, serve us only as load-stars on the midnight sea of operatic music, to point the way to the pure artistic possibility of the ascension of the richest music into a still richer dramatic poetry, namely into *that* Poetic art which by this free surrender of Music to her shall first become an all-effectual Dramatic art."[326] To Wagner, therefore, they were, again, precursors of opera's true poetic potential, and

[322] Ibid., 149.
[323] Ibid., 150.
[324] Ibid., 152.
[325] Ibid., 154.
[326] Ibid.

had set the course for such a future realization. He concludes by saying that Gluck and Mozart "revealed the capability and the instinctive will of Music without their being understood by her sister arts, without the latter contributing towards those deeds from a like-felt genuine impulse to be absorbed in one another, and in fact without any response from their side."[327] Therefore, in Wagner's mind, a fusion of the arts was not achieved by the two composers, as music did not sufficiently allow for a symbiosis with the other arts. Such a phenomenon would only be possible "when at last each art can only love itself when mirrored in the others; when at last they cease to be dissevered arts, --then will they all have power to create the perfect artwork; aye, and their own desistence, in this sense, is already of itself this Art-work, their death immediately its life."[328]

Wagner provides a comprehensive summation for the aesthetic climate necessary for the dramatic artwork of the future to flourish in:

> Thus will the Drama of the Future rise up of itself, when nor Comedy, nor Opera, nor Pantomime, can any longer live; when the conditions which allowed their origin and sustained their unnatural life, shall have been entirely upheaved. These conditions can only be upheaved by the advent of those fresh conditions which breed from out themselves the Art-work of the Future. The latter, however, cannot arise alone, but only in the fullest harmony with the conditions of our whole Life. Only when the ruling religion of Egoism, which has split the entire domain of Art into crippled, self-seeking art-tendencies and art-varieties, shall have been mercilessly dislodged and torn up root and branch from every moment of the life of man, can the *new religion* step forth of itself to life; the religion which includes within itself the conditions of the Artwork of the Future.[329]

It is not particularly difficult to surmise from the above text how Andersen, and in turn his narrative offspring, Peer, could be influenced by this bold ideal. Art was indeed a religion to Andersen, and one that he found to be as flawed and divisive as Wagner had. Andersen sought unity and solidarity, and through Wagner's philosophy, there was an explicit blueprint for the aesthetic conditions that society required to enact the Wagnerian artwork of the future. It was this realization that Andersen imbued Peer with, resulting in the latter's Wagnerian apotheosis.

In mapping out his vision for the future of the arts, Wagner went beyond solely discussing the transformation that the individual arts themselves would have to

[327] Ibid., 154–55.
[328] Ibid., 155.
[329] Ibid.

undertake in order to homogenize more harmoniously. He also posited the overall (and deplorable) state of people's cultural morality, and the type of comprehensive public mentality that would have to evolve as well. He suggests that "if we consider the relation of modern art—so far as it is truly *Art*—to public life, we shall recognize at once its complete inability to affect this public life in the sense of its own noblest endeavor. The reason hereof is, that our modern art is a mere product of Culture and has not sprung from Life itself. Art has become the private property of an artistic-caste; its taste it offers to those alone who *understand* it; and for its understanding it demands a special study, aloof from actual life, the study of *art-learning*."[330] Wagner here describes a privileged cultural climate where the arts are only really accessible to a select few rather than all, and are truly understood by an even smaller group. This was the social climate that Wagner had fought, resulting in his exile. He goes on to describe a society of vapid egoism that has reduced the arts to a business commodity that offers shameful entertainment. Wagner offers another summation of his theory thus far:

> Artistic man can only fully content himself by uniting every branch of Art into the *common* Artwork: in every *segregation* of his artistic faculties he is *unfree*, not fully that which he has power to be; whereas in the *common* Artwork he is *free*, and fully that which he has power to be.
>
> The *true* endeavor of Art is therefore all-embracing: each unit who is inspired with a true *art-instinct* develops to the highest his own particular faculties, not for the glory of these special faculties, but for the glory of *general Manhood in Art*.
>
> The highest conjoint work of art is the *Drama*: it can only be at hand in all its *possible* fullness, when in it each *separate branch of art* is at hand in *its own utmost fullness*.
>
> The true Drama is only conceivable as proceeding from a *common urgence* [sic] *of every art* towards the most direct appeal to a *common public*. In this Drama, each separate art can only bare its utmost secret to their common public through a mutual parleying with the other arts; for the purpose of each separate branch of art can only be fully attained by the reciprocal agreement and co-operation of all the branches in their common message.[331]

This is the most commonly-attributed depiction of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* ethos, which seeks to unify the arts in order to free man's creative impulses, which

330 Ibid., 182.
331 Ibid., 183–84.

will yield the most authentic and complete variation of drama. Wagner's vision for the artwork of the future is encapsulated most clearly within these lines.

Within Andersen's narrative of *Lykke Peer*, we can notice the aesthetic evolution that Peer experienced through Wagner's words:

> Tone itself is able to transcend into the motion of the mime and the word of the poet; while the *Poet* first becomes a Man through his translation to the flesh and blood of the *Performer*: for though he metes [sic] to each artistic factor the guiding purpose which binds them all into a common whole, yet this purpose is first changed from 'will' to 'can' *by the poet's Will descending to the actor's Can*. Not one rich faculty of the separate arts will remain unused in the United Artwork of the Future; in *it* will each attain its first complete appraisement.[332]

Indeed, Peer embarked on such a development from the poet who embodies the will to create, to the performer who embodies the will to execute. Wagner's notion of tone, or sound—ultimately music—is the binding agent for the poet/performer to create drama. He once more cites Beethoven as such an architect of tone, infusing the orchestra with the newfound notion of drama. One could argue that had Andersen written *Lykke Peer* decades prior, Peer might have been viewed as an archetype of Wagner's idealization of Beethoven.

Wagner's seemingly future characterization of Peer is elaborated in his description of the artist of the future:

> The most imperious and strongest need of full-fledged artist-man, however, is to impart himself in highest compass of his being to the fullest expression of Community; and this he only reaches with the necessary breadth of general understanding in the *Drama*. In Drama he broadens out his own particular being, by the portrayal of an individual personality not his own, to a universally human being. He must completely step outside himself, to grasp the inner nature of an alien personality with that completeness which is needful before he can portray it. The perfectly artistic Performer is, therefore, the unit Man expanded to the *essence of the Human Species* by the utmost evolution of his own particular nature. The place in which this wondrous process comes to pass, is the *Theatric stage*; the collective art-work which it brings to light of day, the *Drama*.
>
> This purpose of the Drama, is withal the only true artistic purpose that ever can be fully *realized*; whatsoever lies aloof from that, must necessarily lose itself in the sea of things indefinite, obscure, unfree. This purpose, however, the

332 Ibid., 190.

> separate art-branch will never reach *alone*, but only *all together*; and therefore the most *universal* is at like time the only real, free, the only universally *intelligible* Art-work.[333]

Again, one can glimpse how Peer progressed on this existential and metaphysical realization of himself outside of empirical parameters, to step outside of himself, as Wagner suggests. Wagner names this novelty as an alien personality, and certainly, it is inexplicable to all that perceive it at first, including Peer himself, until he accepted it as destiny. And, like Wagner further espoused, the crowning achievement of the drama takes place on the theatrical stage, which is precisely where Peer manufactures his universal expression of drama in the dual form of poet/performer in his dramatic opera.

Wagner expands on this notion of the future artist further:

> *Who*, then, will be the *Artist of the Future*? Without a doubt, the Poet. But *who* will be the Poet? Indisputably the *Performer*. Yet *who*, again, will be the Performer? Necessarily the *Fellowship of all the Artists*.
>
> The Art-work of the Future is an associate work, and only an associate demand can call it forth. This demand, which we have hitherto merely treated theoretically, as a necessary essential of the being of each separate branch of art, is practically conceivable only in the *fellowship of every artist*; and the union of every artist, according to the exigencies of time and place, and for *one definite aim*, is that which forms this fellowship. This definite aim is the *Drama*, for which they all unite in order by their participation therein to unfold their own peculiar art to the acme of its being; in this unfoldment to permeate each other's essence, and as fruit thereof to generate the living, breathing, moving drama. But the thing that makes this sharing possible to all—nay that renders it necessary, and which without their cooperation can never come to manifestment—is the very kernel of the Drama, the *dramatic Action*.[334]

To Wagner, the dramatic action is what gives cohesion to the entire endeavor of creating drama. The union of artists—the aforementioned fellowship—join to instigate the communal drama, and do so via the dramatic action. Wagner believed that the unfurling of the artwork occurs quite organically when this is achieved, devoid of all individual ego. Even in Andersen's narrative, such a communal idealization seems evident from the display of fervor and like-mindedness that the participants in Peer's opera *Aladdin* express. And although they might not have the

333 Ibid., 193–94.
334 Ibid., 195–96.

same foresight of the performance as Peer does, they nevertheless feel a sense of urgency and importance in their own contribution, thereby contributing to the dramatic action, which Wagner cites as being crucial for the realization of the drama.

Lykke Peer ends with the death of Peer amidst his greatest achievement. Andersen presents his death not as a tragedy, but a triumph. Wagner's depiction of the dramatic artist's death is perfectly aligned with both the narrative and symbolic scope of Peer's death:

> But an episode is not completed, until the *Man* who brought it about—who stood in the focus of a series of events which, as a feeling, thinking, willing person, he guided by the force of his own innate character, --until this man is likewise no longer subject to our arbitrary assumptions as to his possible doings. Now, every man is subject to these so long as he lives: by Death is he first freed from this subjection, for then we know All that he did, and that he was. That action, therefore, must be the best fitted for dramatic art—and the worthiest object of its rendering—which is rounded off together with the life of the chief person that evolved it, and whose denouement is none other than the conclusion of the life of this one man himself.
>
> But hereof he conclusively persuades us by this alone: that, the effectuation of his personal force, he literally *went under*, he veritably threw overboard his personal existence, for sake of bringing to the outer world the inner Necessity which ruled his being. The last, completest renunciation of his personal egoism, the demonstration of his full ascension into universalism, a man can only show us by his *Death*; and that not by his accidental, but by his *necessary* death, the logical sequel to his actions, the last fulfilment of his being.
>
> *The celebration of such a Death is the noblest thing that men can enter on*. It reveals to us in the nature of this one man, laid bare by death, the whole content of universal human nature. But we fix this revelation in surest hold of memory by the conscious *representation* of that Death itself and, in order to make its purport clear to us, by the representation of those actions which found their necessary conclusion in that death. By the artistic re-animation of the lost one, by life-glad reproduction and portrayal of his actions and his death, in the dramatic Art-work, shall we celebrate that festival which lifts us living to the highest bliss of love for the departed, and turns his nature to our own.[335]

Wagner here describes how death is the ultimate artistic freedom, in service of the drama. With the artist's death, ego is unequivocally rejected, as is the judgment that

[335] Ibid., 198–99.

questions the selflessness of the artist's morality and motivation. Wagner claims that such a phenomenon is only authentic if such a death occurs seemingly intentionally and not accidentally. Indeed, throughout the entire narrative, Peer constantly experiences premonitions of his own pending death, but came to accept it as a transcendent necessity for his art. Andersen himself explicitly noted the nobility of such a demise, which he knowingly or unknowingly fully shared with Wagner. Although Wagner does not name (at this time) what he called "highest bliss" as a metaphysical transcendence, such an acceptance of death is certainly synonymous with that idea, as it was for Peer, whose death fixation was as much of an aesthetic culmination as it was the next step in his existential evolution. And as Wagner stated—that the triumph of the artist's death becomes our own transmuted triumph—so too was this the implied nature of Andersen's closing remarks: that Peer had essentially redeemed those who had witnessed the dramatic artwork of his death by virtue of what should ultimately be seen as his metaphysical transcendence of the empirical bondage that Wagner also alluded to by way of tenuous judgments placed on the artist's morality before the point of willing death and liberation of all uncertainty to his virtue. Also in the above passage, Wagner describes the dichotomy of the inner and outer world as it appears in regard to the artist's moral imperative to let go of his ego. He spoke of this phenomenon towards the beginning of his treatise, citing how "man's nature is twofold, an *outer* and an *inner*. The senses to which he offers himself as a subject for Art, and those of *Vision* and *Hearing*: to the eye appeals the outer man, the inner to the ear."[336] By this, Wagner is suggesting that the senses of sight and hearing are connected to these inner and outer representations of man's nature, and the greater virtue of the inner being as a more authentic version of the egoless artist that must manifest outwardly to bring about the full freedom of the artist in accordance with his intentional death in ultimate service of the drama.

Once the individual artist has achieved this artistic freedom, Wagner explains, his stature is raised to that of a hero. The hero ultimately radiates the earlier-mentioned "highest bliss of love," which is indeed a character trait inherent within all people, but one that the hero draws forth from those around him. The purpose of this, Wagner says, is to cultivate the "brotherhood of artists" under one "common" ideal. Indeed, "the *might of individuality* will never assert itself more positively than in the free artistic fellowship; since the incitation to resolves in common can only issue from precisely that unit in whom the individuality speaks out so strongly that it determines the *free* voices of the rest."[337] Again, a hero, of sorts, will lead others to the same enlightenment that he has found. Ultimately, "when once the artist has raised his project to a *common* one, by the energy of his own enthusiasm, the artistic

[336] Ibid., 91.
[337] Ibid., 200.

undertaking becomes thenceforth *itself an enterprise in common*. But as the dramatic action to be represented has its focus in the Hero of that action, so does the common art-work group itself around the *Representant* of this hero."[338] Wagner claims that such a phenomenon draws a distinction where "the hero's impersonator shapes and arranges *consciously* that which came *instinctively* to the actual hero. In this stress for artistic reproduction of the Action, the performer thus becomes a poet."[339] Following an understanding of these concepts, it is evident that Andersen ascribed such characteristics to Peer in his narrative. Peer expressed his artistry as a loving endeavor—just like Wagner's hero—and sought to universalize his expression into a commonality that would, as Wagner also said, take that which was instinctive to Peer and render it a conscious attribute to those around him. Andersen had always believed that future aesthetics would be derived from individuals who break free to lead others, rather than ideals that may evolve in the consciousness of a society. Therefore, Peer's Wagnerian heroism, in the form of establishing a common ideal for artists, was Andersen's explicit objective from the very start of *Lykke Peer*.

Wagner continues that once the individual artist has raised himself by virtue of his grand, communal purpose, his personal purpose is left behind "and thus, in a sense, not merely *represents* in the art-work the action of the fêted hero, but *repeats* its moral lesson; insomuch as he proves by this surrender of his personality that he also, in his artistic action, is obeying a dictate of Necessity which consumes the whole individuality of his being."[340] Wagner is here returning to the discussion of sacrifice of ego in favor of the dramatic artwork. However, this is but one step in a sequence of events that he elaborates thusly:

> The *free Artistic Fellowship* is therefore the foundation, and the first condition, of the Art-work itself. From it proceeds the *Performer*, who, in his enthusiasm for this one particular hero whose nature harmonizes with his own, now raises himself to the rank of *Poet*, of artistic *Lawgiver* to the fellowship; from this height, again, to descend to complete absorption in the fellowship. The function of this lawgiver is therefore never more than *periodic*, and is confined to the one particular occasion which has been prompted by his individuality and thereby raised to a common 'objective' for the art of all; wherefore his rule can by no means be extended to *all* occasions. The dictatorship of the poet-actor comes to its natural close together with the attainment of his specific purpose: that purpose

[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid., 201.

> which he had raised into a common one, and in which his personality was dissolved so soon as ever his message had been shared with the community.[341]

Wagner here describes the hero's moral imperative of not only establishing the new artwork, but by living its tenets in the selfless cause that transcends his personal ego. Therefore, the one individual who rises to the exalted status of poet among the group of artists, only maintains that position until he has brought the others to his state of realization. It is a fleeting position of superiority that is always in service of the art. And once the purpose has been achieved; once the others have been brought over to the common purpose, Wagner states, the power of the poet over the group dissipates. And was it not so for Peer, when he had achieved his purpose and seemingly dropped dead? Wagner spoke of death as both honorable and a necessary conclusion, and there is no better way to surrender the ego of the poet's power than by accepting death in the name of successfully achieving the common purpose.

The prospect of rising to the level of a poet and then surrendering that position is a cycle that is never-ending, according to Wagner. Indeed, it is the requirement for endlessly renewing an artistic aesthetic in an ever-changing social landscape. Wagner addresses this necessity thusly:

> Each dramatic art-work, as it enters upon life, will therefore be the work of a new and never-hitherto-existing, and thus a never-to-be-repeated fellowship of artists: its communion will take its rise from the moment when the poet-actor of the hero's role exalts his purpose to the common aim of the comrades whom he needed for its exposition, and will be dissolved the very instant that this purpose is attained.
>
> In this wise naught can pass into a standstill, in this artistic union: it is formed for the one sole aim, attained today, of celebrating this one particular hero; to be tomorrow, under entirely fresh conditions, and through the inspiring purpose of an entirely different individual, resolved into a fresh association. Thus, and thus only, must the future Artist-guild be constituted, so soon as ever it is banded by no other aim than that of the *Art-work*. Who, then, will be the *Artist of the Future*? The poet? The performer? The musician? The plastician? –Let us say it in one word: the *Folk*. *That selfsame Folk to whom we owe the only genuine Art-work, still living ever in our modern memory, however much distorted by our restorations; to whom alone we owe all Art itself.*[342]

[341] Ibid., 201–02.
[342] Ibid., 204–05.

Wagner, therefore, summarizes the ethos of his treatise by naming society as the artist of the future. Or rather, society as the impetus for the artist to create the artwork of the future, and thereby absorb the rest of society into his conception. Wagner clearly saw himself in the role of emancipating poet-hero, and this view was not lost on Andersen when he idealized this Wagnerian self-reference in *Lykke Peer*. Andersen always took care to present Peer as an egoless individual, seemingly to mold him into accepting the role of society as the driving force behind the inception of his morality, as well as the hindrance of innovation that must be renewed and therefore redeemed, albeit at a personal cost. It's doubtlessly an idealized and romantic way of perceiving aesthetic change, but there is also an inherent logic that Wagner justifies by drawing attention to past examples, starting with the Greeks, and culminating more recently with Shakespeare and Beethoven. Yet, in true Wagnerian fashion, only the successful synthesis of these examples into something completely new could yield the future artwork in the society that he found himself living in. As a result, both Andersen and by extension Peer, came to thoroughly accept the Wagnerian ideology as the most authentic method of ushering in the future of art, and one that would build aesthetic bridges across national divides, which the Dane had desired above all else. In a further reiteration of these theories, Wagner closes his next treatise, *Opera and Drama*, with the following familiar remarks: "The begetter of the Artwork of the Future is none other than the Artist of the Present, who presages that Life of the Future, and yearns to be contained therein. He who cherishes this longing within the inmost chamber of his powers, he lives already in a better life; –but only One can do this thing: the Artist."[343]

It is well known that Wagner wrote these and other theoretical essays during his Swiss exile as a reaction to the failed Dresden uprising.[344] However, only a few short years after the publication of these prose works, Wagner's discovery of Schopenhauer prompted him to shift his entire ideological outlook and ultimately abandon the theories that he espoused earlier. In an essay that he wrote a little over a decade after *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner recounted his earlier theories, and what they represented to him at the time. In an open-letter type essay, titled *Music of the Future*, Wagner writes that:

343 Richard Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 376.

344 For discussions on Wagner's involvement in the Dresden uprising, see: William Ashton Ellis, *1849: A Vindication* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1892); Rüdiger Krohn, "The Revolutionary of 1848– 49," trans. Paul Knight in *The Wagner Handbook*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski, trans. ed. John Deathridge (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 156–65.

> I believed I had reached the insight that each single art-branch evolves along a line of force which finally brings it to its limit, and that it cannot overstep this limit without danger of losing itself in the unintelligible and absolute-fantastic, nay, absurd. At this point, I thought I plainly saw in it a longing to reach out its hand to the other, the correlated art-variety—from this point on, the only capable one; and though, in regard of my ideal, it must actively interest me to follow these tendencies in each particular art-variety, I finally believed I could prove such a tendency to exist the plainest and most strikingly (especially in view of the uncommon significance of the newer music) in the relation of Poetry to Music. Whilst trying in this wise to picture to myself that Artwork in which all the single art varieties should combine for their own highest completion, I lit upon a conscious glimpse of that very ideal which had unconsciously been forming in my mind and hovering before the longing artist. Since I could not assume the possibility of a complete appearance of this ideal Artwork in the Present—particularly when I remembered the thoroughly false position of the Theatre, as regards our public life—I called my ideal the "Artwork of the Future."
>
> From a closer account of the details of that essay, too, I will exempt you, my honored friend! I myself attach no further value to it, than it may have for those who would be interested to hear how, and in what manner of speech, a productive artist was once at the pains of throwing light—above all for himself—on problems which are generally left to the critic by trade to puzzle out, but which can hardly thrust themselves upon the latter with the same peculiar urgency as on the former.[345]
>
> Thus my mental state was like a brain-cramp; I was trying to speak out theoretically what the aforesaid disparity between my artistic tendencies and the tendencies of our public art, and especially the Opera-house, seemed to preclude me from conveying on the inerrably convincing path of direct artistic production. For refuge from this torturing state, I felt driven back to the normal exercise of my artistic powers. I sketched and carried out a dramatic plan of such considerable dimension that, in mere obedience to the claims of my subject, I deliberately removed myself from all possibility of grafting this work upon our Opera-repertoire, as it now is.[346]

Wagner clearly and honestly described the aesthetic beliefs that he held in the past and their ultimate folly. Nevertheless, in context of Andersen and *Lykke Peer*,

[345] Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music and Other Essays*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 308–09.

[346] Ibid., 321.

Wagner's disavowal of his younger morality bore no significance to Andersen, who chose to align his own conception of art around similar parameters. Indeed, throughout his decades of familiarity with Wagner's music, that familiarity was squarely predicated on two operas: *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, which were never intended by Wagner, even at that earlier stage, to be representational of the artwork of the future. Yet, Andersen projected Wagner's earlier views onto *Lohengrin* in particular. The inaccuracy of such a projection, from the perspective of Wagner's evolved outlook, is incidental, because what is more significant is the confluence and influence of the ideas on Andersen's own art. That much is undeniable, no matter what Wagner may have thought of his own theories later. Furthermore, as stated earlier, the notions outlined in *Art-Work of the Future* came from approximately the same time when Andersen was contemplating his own vision of the future for the arts, thereby demonstrating their mutual and near-simultaneous preoccupation with similar ideas, which could have further prompted Andersen to sympathize more readily with Wagner. And it certainly becomes evident that Andersen did not abandon the theories like Wagner did. However, there are also traces of Schopenhauerian metaphysics in *Lykke Peer* as well, thereby demonstrating Andersen's flexibility and abundance of theoretical appropriation for the sake of his literary narrative.

This presentation of symbolic prose can be seen as an example of this study's methodological approach to cultural reception, which is utilized here as an inclusive social phenomenon of a broader scope (in terms of the diversity of source materials) that investigates early interpretations of Wagner's theories and music in Denmark through a blending of primary sources that look at Wagner through the lens of their own socio-cultural histories and experiences. Andersen viewed Wagner as a cosmopolitan martyr, of sorts, who lived in exile due to being persecuted for his efforts to socially elevate the arts to a position that Andersen agreed they should exist at. The concept of perspective varies greatly depending on associations of time and place, but the key is to understand the personal elements that informed reception, and how this played a decisive role in how Andersen formulated his thoughts on Wagner.

Andersen's Future-Oriented Prose

As discussed in the previous chapter, Andersen's desire to emphasize the aesthetic homogeneity that he felt existed between Denmark and Germany inspired him to contrive his own theories that posited the future of the arts in a socially-favorable climate that would promote unity and acceptance. Like Wagner slightly before him, Andersen envisioned a *Gesamtkunstwerk*-like synthesis of constituent arts that were derived from his understanding of the "natural sciences, [and] in the decades that

followed, eventually led him to embrace a view of the future that involved a fusion of literature, music, and philosophy."[347] Andersen's resulting essays bore the influence of Danish scientist H.C. Ørsted, to whom Andersen acknowledged his influence in the same way that Wagner did with Schopenhauer. Andersen wrote to Ørsted such things as: "I seem only to have seen my own thoughts [within Ørsted's writings], which previously I had not made clear to myself in such a way. It almost seems to me to be the result of my own thoughts."[348] Wagner had likewise given Schopenhauer credit for essentially bringing a set of theories to the forefront of his consciousness that he himself had intuited, but could not have rendered explicitly cogent without the philosopher's intervention. Andersen appears to be making the same claim with Ørsted. From this, it becomes evident how Andersen and Wagner's aesthetics evolved in parallel, at nearly the exact same time, ultimately allowing Andersen even greater fertility to Wagner's aesthetics when the composer became the means for Andersen's idealized narrative projections. Furthermore, continuous allusions to *Aladdin* were made in Andersen's essays and letters to Ørsted. The theme of *Aladdin* found its ultimate literary expression in *Lykke Peer*, so it stands that decades of Andersen's philosophical insights were brought to their apex via Wagnerian symbolism that were built upon the foundation of these theoretical essays that Andersen wrote at the onset of his ideological journey towards Wagner.

The influence of Ørsted, however, cannot be overstated, and Celenza describes his influence on Andersen thusly:

> The primary influence behind Andersen's new enthusiasm for science was a recently published work by Ørsted entitled *The Spirit in Nature*. In the first volume of this work, Ørsted discussed his discovery of electromagnetism and presented his various experiments in chemistry and physics as an argument against the then popular concept of materialism. He continued this discussion in the second volume, presenting his scientific experiments as evidence supporting a philosophy of art and science. In an attempt to bridge the gap between the natural sciences and fine arts, Ørsted argued that man's perception of beauty was actually nothing more than an understanding of the laws of nature. Thus the discoveries made by man in the natural sciences were best understood as the 'spirit in nature'—a mystical force that would likely never be fully comprehended. These concepts led Ørsted to propose a new approach to the study of both art and science: because the world drawn by the poet, with all its freshness and daring, obeys the same laws that our spiritual eye discovers in the

[347] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 190.
[348] Ibid., 191.

> real world, the artist and the natural philosopher follow complimentary paths, thus freeing both art and science from the misconceptions of the romantic age.[349]

Wagner alluded to similar premises, but with more abstract notions. To him, an inherent natural state was locked away within the individual's conscience, where the artist must surrender his ego in order to combine the arts and create authentic drama. The concept of nature as being the key to enlightenment was central to both Wagner and Ørsted, but they came at it from different perspectives: Wagner came to it from an understanding of art and society, and from inner psychology rather than external senses, and Ørsted from the external natural sciences. Celenza used the word spiritual to describe the correlating dynamic between the arts and sciences, and as true as this might be, the ultimate Wagnerian implication in *Lykke Peer* would have a more decidedly metaphysical orientation with a depiction of the transcendence of the empirical will. Wagner and Andersen shared an obsession with death (as seen throughout *Lykke Peer*), which they both refined from a position of philosophy rather than from an aesthetic appropriation of the laws of nature. Therefore, as much as Andersen was influenced by Ørsted's novel fusion of art and science, it was but a stepping stone to the stronger ideology that Andersen would share with Wagner in the ensuing years.

The first fruits of this new outlook for Andersen were expressed in the chapter called "The California of Poetry," which was the final chapter of his travelogue *I Sverrig* (In Sweden), published in 1851. Andersen begins the chapter by expressing a nostalgia for the past, where it was once far easier to harvest riches from the earth. Now, he mused, there is no such simplicity. Such misfortunes were not to last, as Andersen claims that "suddenly the earth stretches forth her gold finger in the Californian peninsula, and we perceive there the childishly-invented treasures of Monte Christo; we see there the cave of Aladdin, with its mighty wealth. The treasury of the world is so infinitely full, that in order to live simply and honestly, we have stroked down somewhat from the heap, but the measure is yet full, the actual measure is still full. In Science, too, lies such a world for the discovery of the Human Mind!"[350] Andersen sets the tone for his chapter instantly by incorporating the Aladdin theme as a metaphor for the riches of California. He then conflates the physical riches of California with the riches of the mind that are to be found through science. And like the riches of Aladdin and science, "Poetry, too, hath its California."[351] Andersen proceeds to describe—like in his later essays—that poetry

349 Ibid.
350 Hans Christian Andersen, "The California of Poetry" in *In Sweden*, trans. Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie (Wentworth Press, 2019), 286.
351 Ibid., 287.

will flourish in California like it will in the future. Literary scholar Heinrich Detering concurs here, noting how "'The California of Poetry' tries to interpret the new scientific, technical, industrial developments as new chances for Romantic poetry; according to Ørsted's optimism, they attempt to widen the realm of Romanticism into the new era. Here, the Almighty speaks through science as well as through faith, and the coming poet will, as a new, childlike Aladdin, lead poetry to its 'new California,' the land of miracles in science."[352]

Andersen now tells a metaphoric story where a poet is greeted by two shapes: The first is an old woman who resembled a witch and personified superstition, and proceeded to persuade the poet to come with her to her kingdom. This was the temptation of past nostalgia, where sounds of "Death! Death! Echoed throughout the Spirit World."[353] Suddenly, the other shape, in the form of a cherub, said to the poet: "Follow me to life and to truth! I am Science; my world is greater, for it strives after truth."[354] In the metaphor, science slays the beast of superstition, ushering in a new age as the "Spirit of the Period. And the genius of Science raised his sword, the far-lighting sword, stretching it high, and away to the regions of space, and then—what a prospect! It was as when a sun-ray streams through a cleft in the wall into a darkened chamber, and shows itself to us as a ceaselessly circling column of myriads of atoms; but a universe was each atom here! It was the heaven of stars that is o'er us!"[355] In this passage, Andersen is emphasizing scientific preoccupation that has metaphysical implications as it leaves the empirical world behind. The imagery is nebulous, but there are shades of the future *Lykke Peer* in these sentiments, where Peer, the ultimate idealization of the future artist, steps outside of himself. Literary and Nordic scholar Ljudmila Braude describes the metaphoric story of the two shapes as "Andersen arguing with his fictitious opponent, who claims that the world which inspired poetry was rich and virginal in former times. But now all is exhausted. Andersen, on the other hand, says that poets born in his times are the happiest. They have inherited all the treasures which their predecessors have given to the world. Andersen claims that his time is a time of great discoveries. And that poetry has its California, its own gold mines."[356]

352 Heinrich Detering, "The Phoenix Principle. Some Remarks on H.C. Andersen's Poetological Writings," in *Hans Christian Andersen: A Poet in Time*, ed. Johan de Mylius, Aage Jørgensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1999), 57.

353 Andersen, "The California of Poetry," 289.

354 Ibid.

355 Ibid., 290.

356 Ljudmila Braude, "Hans Christian Andersen's Writer's Manifesto *In Sweden*—Andersen and Science" in *Hans Christian Andersen: A Poet in Time*, ed. Johan de

As Andersen says, "In Science lies the California of Poetry! Everyone, who looks only back, and not brightly forward, will say, –and no matter how high or honorable his position, —that if such a mine of wealth be hidden in Science; it would have been used long ago by great and immortal poets, that stood before Science with their eyes clearly open. The legends and mythology of the north were a treasure hidden from the existing stage, till Oehlenschläger made manifest what mighty forms could glide by us from thence."[357] This passage acts as another subtle allusion to Aladdin by mentioning Oehlenschläger, the Danish poet who wrote the play. Andersen continues:

> We think not that the poet should versify the discoveries of science; the sunlight of science should penetrate the poet, and he should perceive that the truth and harmony existing in greatest things co-exist equally in the smallest. What fairy stories does not the microscope give us, if we look at man in the same way. Electromagnetism can bring a new chord into use in plays and novels; wonder-works, which Science has to raise; wonder-works, greater than those which the poet's imagination can create. There will come a poet, who, with a child's mind, will enter the cave of Science, a second Aladdin. We say, with a child's mind, or else the strong guardians of the powers of nature will seize him, and make him their servants, which the lamp of Poesy, which is, and ever will remain, the human heart, he stands there as a ruler, and brings wonderful fruits from the dark passages, and has the might bestowed on him, to build the new palace of Poetry in one night by the aid of these serving spirits. And when his inward eye is accustomed to the glory, then will the new Aladdin come, and with him, who will sing, in clear tones and rich, the Beautiful in the True, wilt thou journey through the California of Poesy.[358]

The symbolic imagery of this passage is replete with allusions of the future Peer. Andersen presents for the first time his notion of a futuristic prophecy of the child redeemer of the arts, which will be more profoundly addressed in his next prose work, "Thousands of Years from Now," which will in turn find its ultimate aesthetic representation in *Lykke Peer* where the young child composes his Wagnerian opera *Aladdin* and embodies the Wagnerian poet from *The Art-Work of the Future*, who bridges science and philosophy to establish a new social awareness of the arts. In the above passage, Andersen mentions the human heart as the essence of the lamp of

Mylius, Aage Jørgensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1999), 237.

357 Andersen, "The California of Poetry," 290–91.

358 Ibid., 291–92.

Poesy, or the Aladdin metaphor, which is symmetrical with the symbolism that is associated with Peer's character in both life and death. The ultimate message of "The California of Poetry" is therefore introducing this prophetic redeemer or muse, who will usher in the desired new age for the arts, and will do so through the new Aladdin, who will sing of the riches of California's poetry as the Wagnerian singer-composer in *Lykke Peer*.

Celenza agrees that in this chapter, "Andersen presented a new path for the arts—a model of the future inspired by the wonders of natural science and the innovations of scientists and philosophers such as H.C. Ørsted. It described California as the land of discovery, where hard work yields 'the treasures of Aladdin.' Andersen was clearly on a new course, and 'Poetry's California' served as his informal manifesto."[359] As we will see in the two subsequent prose works, Andersen presented his vision of the future of the arts in ways that progressively aligned his aesthetics with Wagner and led to the embodiment of all of these convictions within *Lykke Peer*.

Andersen's first essay that discusses the future in any explicit capacity, entitled "Thousands of Years from Now," is more of a discussion of future travel and generalized aesthetic values than a vision for the future of the arts. However, there are implications made of Andersen's values at the time, and these are important reflections of the way in which Andersen attempted to synthesize past, present, and future ideals for the first time. Certainly, the essay opens with a bold futuristic claim: "Yes, thousands of years from now men will fly on wings of steam through the air, across the ocean. The young inhabitants of America will visit old Europe. They will come to see the monuments and the great cities, which will then lie in ruins, just as we in our time make pilgrimages to the ruined splendors of southern Asia. Thousands of years from now they will come!"[360] Andersen therefore begins his essay with the declaration that Europe will one day be a ruin that stands as a testament of the past, and that the future—along with its technological innovations—will be associated with America.

He continues: "The ship of the air comes. The electromagnetic wire under the ocean has already cabled the number of the aerial travelers." When they arrive to England, "it is there that they still take their first step onto the soil of Europe, in the land of Shakespeare, as the intellectual call it, or the land of politics and land of

[359] Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 190; 192.

[360] Hans Christian Andersen, "Thousands of Years From Now," trans. Jean Hersholt, *The Hans Christian Andersen Centre*, http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/ThousandsOfYearsFromNow_e.html [Accessed: 27 November 2018].

machines, as it is called by others."[361] This passage makes clear Andersen's indebtedness to Ørsted with the mention of electromagnetism, and utilizes the image of Shakespeare as the cultural representation of England. Shakespeare, it will be remembered, was, along with Beethoven, one of the two main constituent artists that Wagner emphasized in his *Art-Work of the Future*. From England, the tourists continue "through the tunnel under the English Channel, to France, the country of Charlemagne and Napoleon. The learned among them speak of Moliere and the classic and romantic school of remote antiquity; others applaud the names of heroes, poets, and scientists whom our time does not yet know, but who will in after days be born in that crater of Europe, Paris."[362] This passage is illuminating for the comment about heroes, poets, and scientists, where one can easily assume Andersen is speaking of himself, Ørsted, and perhaps some hero that will embody a future ideal that Andersen is not aware of at the time of writing these words. Moreover, the implication that they will be applauded in the future suggests that they are either unknown or unborn in the present, or are obscure and underappreciated. Either way, Andersen assumes that the future will exact justice upon valued individuals of those very specific categories.

Andersen continues to wax nostalgic on other European countries and historic luminaries, and when his fictitious travelers arrive to Germany, he invokes the personas of Luther, Goethe, and Mozart, where "great names of science and art now shine there-names [sic] still unknown to us. One day's stopover from Germany, and one for the other-the country of Ørsted and Linnaeus, and for Norway, land of old heroes and young Norwegians."[363] The inclusion of Mozart as the musical representative was quite a standard choice for Andersen at the time, as his musical affinities were still strongly rooted to the past, as we saw in the character of the singing master from *Lykke Peer*. However, in this iteration of science and art, Andersen finally presents Ørsted by name, with the inclusion again of heroes, which can be inferred as Andersen's heroes. The essay ends shortly thereafter, emphasizing the short timeframe in which all of Europe will be traveled and experienced in the future. Celenza confirms that in this essay, "there is no sense of where the future will lead or which path is best for the development of the arts."[364] Indeed, Andersen does not present his readers with a blueprint for the future like Wagner does, but rather chooses to establish a paradigm of value in his time that he believes will be sustained in the future. In that sense, perhaps he is not asking posterity to change, so much as he is asking them to derive and project their future ideologies onto individuals like

361 Ibid.
362 Ibid.
363 Ibid.
364 Celenza, Andersen and Music, 193.

he had done in the past, because there will still be value in doing so, even within an entirely new context. In addition, by also establishing a paradigm of value for the future, Andersen is emphasizing to his readers of the present what they should invest their own values in, implying that the deeds of all the individuals that he mentioned are timeless, and therefore valuable to all generations. In "Thousands of Years from Now," Andersen creatively merged the applicability of past, present, and future merit on a universal assumption that was subtly indicative of his desire to project a culturally-united Europe that everyone, including future Americans, would come to cherish as one great entity.

Andersen's final futuristic treatise was titled: *The Muse of the New Century*, and was written in 1861—about a decade after the two previously-discussed documents. Apart from having the luxury of time and intervening years in which to refine his ideology concerning these issues, this essay also had the distinction of having been written after Andersen's one and only meeting with Wagner in 1855. Celenza speculatively posits that since Andersen acknowledged in his written reflections of the meeting where he told Wagner about Bellman's custom of writing both the libretto and music to his operas, this may indicate that Wagner told Andersen about his theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.[365] At no time had Andersen disclosed explicit awareness with Wagner's prose works, but there are multiple reasons to believe that he may have been familiar with them: The letter from Carl Alexander discussing Wagner's reading of his *Ring* prose sketch, Andersen's direct mention of "music of the future" in relation to Wagner in *Lykke Peer*, his close ties with Bournonville, who, as it will be seen in the closing chapters, expressed direct knowledge of Wagner's prose works, as well as Andersen's overall awareness of Liszt, the Weimar circle, and intellectual-theoretical trends in German culture. What is certain, however, is that Wagner had impressed Andersen a great deal in 1855, and that it undoubtedly had an influential impact on Andersen's later reception of Wagner's music, where such a positive outlook could very well have compelled him to seek out anything associated with Wagner's name. Andersen was certainly devoted to Wagner far more completely that Bournonville was, and again, the latter was rather profoundly familiar with Wagner's theories.

The Muse of the New Century, like "Thousands of Years from Now," was perhaps more of a socio-cultural commentary of Andersen's time within a futuristic context than a pontificating guide on how to steer public conceptions. He opens his treatise with the text: "The Muse of the New Century, as our children's children, perhaps even a more distant generation, though not we, shall know her, when will she reveal herself? In what form will she appear? What will she sing? What chords

[365] Ibid., 194.

of the soul will she touch? To what elevation will she lift the age she lives in? So many questions in our busy time! A time in which Poetry stands almost solitary and alone, and in which one knows with certainty that much of the 'immortal' verse, written by poets of the present day, will perhaps in the future exist only in charcoal inscriptions on prison walls, seen and read by a few inquisitive souls."[366] From the very beginning, Andersen incorporates musical symbolism in the muse's future qualities, and projects her redemptive qualities as someone who will elevate the future age—albeit an age where poetry has been pessimistically reduced to the expressions of incarcerated prisoners. Andersen does recant slightly, and admit that poetry will still have viability, but that "the poetry of the future, like the music of the future, belongs to the stories of *Don Quixote*; to speak about it is just like talking about voyages of discovery in Uranus."[367] He then described poetry as a humanistic reflection of emotions, as an unknown phenomenon that harmoniously binds all people.

Andersen continues: "Every century, every thousand years, one may say, finds in Poetry the expression of its greatness; born in the period that is closing, it steps forward and rules in the period that is coming. In the midst of our busy time, noisy with machinery, she is thus already born, the Muse of the New Century. We send her our greeting. Let her hear it, or read it someday, perhaps among the charcoal inscriptions we spoke of above."[368] Once more, Andersen elevates poetry as a bridge between epochs, and that the future muse is a child of the soon-to-be past epoch, which she will reconcile with the approaching one. "She has been born in the great factory of the present age, where steam exerts its power, where 'Master Bloodless' and his workmen toil by day and night. She is the child of the people on the father's side, sound in mind and thought, with seriousness in her eye and humor on her lips. Her mother is the nobly-born, highly educated daughter of the French refugee with recollections of the gilded rococo period. The Muse of the New Century has blood and soul in her from both of these."[369] The poetic implication of this imagery suggests that the muse is aware of and sympathetic towards different social classes, and is representative of them all.

Similarly to "Thousands of Years from Now," Andersen invokes the imagery of Mozart, and combines it with Gluck, like in *Lykke Peer*, to describe how the muse of the new century is "surrounded by eternal harmonies from the thoughts of

[366] Hans Christian Andersen, "The Muse of the New Century," http://visithcandersen.dk/eng-the-muse-new-century%20.htm [Accessed: 27 November 2018].
[367] Ibid.
[368] Ibid.
[369] Ibid.

Beethoven, Gluck, Mozart, and all the great masters, expressed in melody. On her bookshelf are laid away many who in their time were immortal, and there is still room for many more, whose names we hear sounding along the telegraph-wire of immortality."[370] Despite these words predating Wagner's essay *The Destiny of Opera* by a decade, Wagner himself drew a very similar conclusion later, noting how "what moved Goethe and Schiller in Gluck's *Iphigenia* and Mozart's *Don Juan* was the idealizing effect of Music on the drama; here no need for apothegms, for all revealed by Melody."[371] Both Andersen and Wagner repeatedly cite the necessity of melody bound with the poetic. Beethoven was, of course, also intrinsically tied to Wagner's futuristic musings, and it is important to distinguish when these same core group of composers repeatedly find their way into Wagner and Andersen's prose works related to the future, to emphasize an aesthetic similarity of values regarding music. A few sentences later, Andersen also mentions the muse's reading of Shakespeare, which is another Wagnerian prose motif. However, it should be clarified, that in a larger context, despite their mutual affinities, both Andersen and Wagner discuss Mozart and Gluck particularly as vestiges of the past with which to juxtapose future aesthetics.

Subsequently, Andersen asks from where the new muse will originate. He amusingly suggests: "Is it from the land of Tycho Brahe, where he was not allowed to remain, or from the fairy-land of California, where the Wellingtonia rears its head as king of the forests of the world?"[372] The symbolism is perhaps slightly self-referential here, as Brahe was Danish, like Andersen, and California was a reference to his previous futuristic essay, "The California of Poetry," thereby creating a symmetry of past and future from subtle allusions. This notion, though, transitions to the essay's most directly-vague implication of what Andersen believes is the purpose of the muse:

> 'What is the programme of the new Muse?' say the skilled parliamentarians of our time. 'What does she want to do?' Rather ask what she does not want to do! She will not come forward as the ghost of the age that is past. She will not construct dramas out of the cast-off glories of the stage, nor will she conceal defects in dramatic architecture by means of specious draperies of lyric verse. Her flight before our eyes will be like passing from the car of Thespis to the amphitheatre of marble. She will not break honest human talk in pieces, and patch it together again like an artificial chime of bells with ingratiating tinkles

[370] Ibid.

[371] Richard Wagner, *Actors and Singers*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 346.

[372] Andersen, "The Muse of the New Century."

> borrowed from the contests of the troubadours. She will not set up verse as a nobleman and prose as a plebeian; they stand equal to melody, in fullness, and in strength. She will not sculpture the old gods out of Iceland's saga-blocks; they are dead, there is no feeling for them in the new age, no kinship with them. She will not invite the men of her time to lodge their thoughts in the taverns of French novels; she will not deaden them with the chloroform of commonplace tales. She will bring an elixir of life; her song in verse and in prose will be short, clear, and rich. The heart-beats of the nations are each but one letter in the great alphabet of evolution, but she will with equal affection take hold of each letter, form them into words, and link the words into rhythms for her hymn of the present time.[373]

By this, Andersen bears judgment on those elements from his present time that he believes will not be elemental to the new age. The tone at the beginning of the passage had a somewhat accusatory vein at the expense of poetry/theater/opera by suggesting that dramas will not come forth from stage works that have seen past glories, or be obscured by verse (which could be either written or sung). It stands as a valid assumption that the mention of gods out of Icelandic sagas could be a reference to Wagner's *Ring*, as evidenced from Carl Alexander's letter to Andersen. If this is so, then Andersen is curiously placing Wagner within the fold of art that cannot be renewed in the future, which ultimately contradicts the more explicit implications put forth in *Lykke Peer*. If it was a reference to Wagner, though, perhaps Andersen was not cognizant of its symbolic scope, but only took it at face value for its outer narrative designs. Or perhaps it is simply Andersen's way of devaluing the aesthetic of worshiping deities by giving them any sort of prominent artistic platform. Whatever the reason may be, it is clear that the muse considers all of these allusions to be regressive, and that her true purpose is to revitalize, like an elixir, as Andersen states. Once again, this rhetoric is decidedly less abstract and cerebral than Wagner's theories of inner states. For as much as they both place great value on certain elements of the past, Wagner advocates for more of a transitionary evolution, whereas Andersen seems to want to tear down the old and build the new on top of it. Nevertheless, as Andersen implied earlier, the muse is born in the present time, therefore a semblance of her values will be associated with the past, once more suggesting that there will be a bridge between the divide of epochs. Andersen's poeticizing voice obfuscates a consistent meaning, punctuated by his description of the muse's hymn of the future. And what is a hymn but a religious song of deity worship? The argument could be simplified to plainly suggest that Andersen is

[373] Ibid.

merely alluding to the implications of changing aesthetics and values, regardless of any implicit or explicit contradictions in the essay. The essay's final paragraph reads:

> All the power of steam, all the forces of the present, were levers. Master Bloodless and his busy workmen, who seem to be the powerful rulers of our time, are only servants, black slaves who adorn the palace-hall, bring forth the treasures, lay the tables for the great feast at which the Muse, with the innocence of a child, the enthusiasm of a maid, and the calmness and knowledge of a matron, raises the marvelous lamp of Poetry, the rich, full heart of man with the flame of God in it. Hail to thee, Muse of the new century of Poetry. Our greeting soars up and is heard, even as the worm's hymn of gratitude is heard, the worm which is cut asunder by the ploughshare when a new spring dawns and the plough cleaves the furrows, cutting us worms asunder, so that blessing may grow for the new generation that is to come. Hail to thee, Muse of the New Century![374]

The ending takes on the tone of a religious sermon, but there are several subtleties that are worth addressing. The associating image of a child's innocence with the muse is reminiscent of a great literary theme that is present in virtually all of Andersen's writings, including *Lykke Peer*. However, the image of poetry as a marvelous lamp is very unique. Poetry was a central aesthetic for both Andersen and Wagner, and took on multiple forms of meaning for them both. For Wagner, poetry was the catalyst of the drama, and for Andersen, it was a more literal representation of his occupation. Therefore, the symbolism of poetry—in whatever form of meaning it takes—is central to Andersen. And what else could the lamp be but the lamp of *Aladdin*? The one dramatic narrative that had taken on a plethora of permutations throughout Andersen's literary career, only to find its crowning achievement as a Wagnerian opera in his final great work of literature. The lamp is the symbol of poetry, and coupled with the child's innocence, and being born of the present time, can only mean that Andersen stylized Peer as his muse of the new century, despite the gender inconsistency of his essay. Peer ushered in the Wagnerian artwork of the future, and died in a blaze of glory, and with complete empirical denial of the will, thereby achieving a corporeal end and spiritual beginning worthy of both Wagner and Andersen. How could such an expression of aesthetic devotion not be the design of an epoch-making muse? Celenza offers her own assessments of Andersen's essay, noting that "'The Muse of the New Century,' for all its questions and predictions, does little in terms of offering a path toward the future. Largely philosophical in nature, the tale rejects many of the trends that had become

[374] Ibid.

fashionable during Andersen's day—lyric opera, the use of dialect, the retelling of myths and sagas, French novels, and popular histories. The act of contemplation is placed in the foreground of the tale, leaving little room for guidance concerning the actual creation of art and its role in society."[375] Conversely, Heinrich Detering believes that there is a clear path toward the future in this essay when he describes it thusly: "This 'phantasy play,' as Andersen also called it, starts off in an ironic mode that within a few paragraphs changes to an almost prophetic tone; and the role of a prophet is to be taken seriously: Here, a prophet announces the coming of the muse and its 'revelation,' he proclaims a new poetry as a new age of salvation."[376]

To draw a conceptual arc between these various texts, and more importantly, their ideological content, attention will be brought once again to Andersen's 1857 novel *To Be, Or Not To Be?* The book establishes many themes that Andersen will develop further in *Lykke Peer*, but there are also associations with his futuristic essays in it. For example, when discussing the musical tastes of a minor character, Andersen states: "…she preferred a very different draught, one from that fresh natural fountain which flows in the music of Gluck, Beethoven, and Mozart."[377] These are precisely the same composers that he listed in *The Muse of the New Century*, which he will, in turn, also mention in *Lykke Peer*, as staples of the cultural past. Yet, Andersen's most direct hypothesis about the art and music of the future—in either this book or in any of his essays—comes at the end of the novel when he writes about the possible future of music performance:

> In a few years hence, practice may have so improved our knowledge of this medium of communication, that the great geniuses of the day will not need to come to us in person. A Liszt, a Thalberg, a Dreyschock may make use of the electro-magnetic wires, put in communication with the pianoforte; we may go to the theater, a concert room here in Copenhagen, and Liszt remain in Weimar, Thalberg in Paris, Dreyschock in Prague, and play duets, or concerted pieces, and we shall hear them at the concert. The applause must necessarily be telegraphed to them, and likewise information when an encore is called for.[378]

In *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner discussed the central role of the poet as the singular type of artist that is capable of creating dramatic art. Wagner's sentiment about the idealized poet-hero is echoed at the end of Andersen's *To Be, Or Not To Be?* when the protagonist discusses his own idealized vision of a unity between art

[375] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 198.
[376] Detering, "The Phoenix Principle," 58.
[377] Andersen, To Be, Or Not To Be?, 297.
[378] Ibid., 337.

and science, citing Ørsted as the prime originator of the ideology. Andersen's own values are projected through his character's, who states: "The poet ought to stand on the highest pinnacle of the development of his age, to cast what was now quite antiquated away into the rusty old chambers of bygone poetry, and employ the spirit of science to create his Aladdin's palace. It is the innocent who reach the goal: children belong to the kingdom of Heaven, pureness of mind, like childhood's, attains it; and to this must be added wisdom, with its strength and knowledge."[379] In this passage, Andersen agrees with Wagner in terms of contriving a new path for the arts—one that is not hindered by a dogmatic conformity to the past, and one in which, again, the poet has a central role. The fusion of science and art is a staple of Ørsted's theory that Andersen embraced in his futuristic essays, but now with the added inclusion of *Aladdin*, which signifies once more the metaphysical path to Wagner and *Lykke Peer* that Andersen established in *To Be, Or Not To Be?* The inclusion of a child's virtue is certainly indicative of the emphasis that Andersen would place on Peer in his novella. Andersen takes this symbolism even further by infusing it with the kind of metaphysical imagery that will cement *Lykke Peer's* Wagnerian/Schopenhauerian stature when he writes the following reverie of his protagonist:

> Like a new Aladdin, he had descended deep into the magic caverns of science, amidst its wondrous treasures, to find the lamp of life, and he came forth with his mother's old Bible, not its substance, but its divine spirit! With the re-awakening feelings of his childhood, that had unconsciously become imbued with faith, science became a glorification of God's power, wisdom, and divinity. But the laws of love, in the spiritual kingdom, science cannot soar to. Upon this earth, we are only able to seize what belongs to earth—in the higher spirit-world we can but have hope and faith.[380]

The future associations to *Lykke Peer* in this passage are palpable, as are the implications of the two existential realms of the empirical and metaphysical. Yet, it is with the inclusion of love that Andersen brings his idealization closer to Wagner than Schopenhauer, as it was love rather than the denial of empirical suffering for the composer that yielded salvation in the form of metaphysical transcendence, which Andersen here elevates beyond science, ergo, beyond nature, the world, and ultimately, even beyond Ørsted. Hence, why Peer is purely a Wagnerian hero rather than the aesthetic and philosophical amalgamation that his protagonist embodied in *To Be, Or Not To Be?*

379 Andersen, *To Be, Or Not To Be?*, 339–40.
380 Ibid., 365.

Baudelaire, Wagner, and Andersen

Later on in the 1860s, in the aftermath of his futuristic essays, Andersen was keen to find a semblance of the future artwork as it would converge the science and philosophy that had so intrinsically appealed to him in the case of Ørsted. It is at this point that Anna Celenza offers an interesting hypothesis. Andersen was accompanied by his friend Robert Watt to the World Exhibition in Paris in 1867 at approximately the same time that Charles Baudelaire had died. Due to Watts' "rakish" demeanor, as Celenza puts it, she believes that it was entirely possible that in conjunction with the Parisian gossip that undoubtedly surrounded Baudelaire's death, Watt could very well have also introduced Andersen to Baudelaire's writings, among them the Frenchman's famous essay, "Richard Wagner and *Tannhäuser* in Paris."[381] Celenza contextualizes this essay as Baudelaire's only piece of music criticism, and the very first expression of French *wagnérisme*. In the essay, Baudelaire had espoused Wagner's philosophical theories, not least among them, his theories on the artwork of the future. And although Andersen never made it known in any of his diaries or correspondences that he had read Baudelaire at this time, Andersen's proximity and timing to Baudelaire's work, as well as his re-engagement with Wagner under a more serious pretense, were coincidences that both Celenza and the present author feel are too substantial not to investigate.

Baudelaire and Andersen had the distinct similarity in that both of their opinions on Wagner are virtually entirely predicated on *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* alone, as well as the early prose writings. Although they both cite awareness of *Tristan und Isolde* and *The Ring* (implicitly in regards to the latter for Andersen), they never disclose any awareness of Wagner's shift to Schopenhauerian philosophy, or even remotely associate any other theoretical trends with Wagner than the ones the composer expressed while in his Swiss exile. The point being, that precisely because Andersen could have been cognizant of Baudelaire's Wagner essay; and had expressed similar notions regarding future artistic aesthetics; and had written *Lykke Peer* after his return from Paris, all suggests, albeit tenuously, that Baudelaire's text could have elicited the Wagnerian symbolism that Andersen subsequently harnessed to write *Lykke Peer*. Furthermore, it should be reiterated that the Danish premiere of *Lohengrin* also took place during the writing of *Peer*, and that despite the title of his essay, Baudelaire had also extensively discussed *Lohengrin* within its pages. An analysis of the essay's more salient points regarding a possible congruence with Andersen's perceptions will help to clarify and assert how and why this hypothesis could be seen as a catalyst for Andersen's Wagnerian narrative.

[381] Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 200–01.

From the beginning, Baudelaire sets a defending tone of Wagner against the resistance that the composer had experienced in Paris both historically, as well as in 1860 when the composer returned to mount a new production of *Tannhäuser*. Baudelaire certainly does not shy away from asserting his adulation with such sentiments as: "What had been established was that, as a symphonist, as an artist expressing, by means of the innumerable combinations of sound, the tumults of the human soul, Richard Wagner was the equal of the most exalted and certainly as great as the greatest."[382] Such an expression may not bear much significance on its own, but could have subconsciously influenced Andersen to read such a statement of a cosmopolitan writer of Baudelaire's caliber, who clearly projected the kind of hero worship onto an artist the likes of which Andersen was keen to do as well.

Baudelaire continues: "In music, as in painting, and even in the written word, which, when all is said and done, is the most positive of the arts, there is always a gap, bridged by the imagination of the hearer. These are no doubt the reasons that led Wagner to look upon dramatic art—that is to say the meeting-point, the coincidence of several arts—as art in the fullest sense of the term, the most all-embracing and the most perfect."[383] Baudelaire's direct expression of familiarity with Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk* will be a pivotal factor in establishing Wagner as the artist of the future, but also aligns with Andersen in as much as it is receptive to presenting theories of the future. In his reflection of the *Lohengrin* prelude—the Wagner opera most familiar to Andersen and central to the narrative of *Lykke Peer*—Baudelaire writes how when listening to it, "my imagination inevitably conjured up from the same piece of music, when I heard it for the first time, with my eyes closed, feeling as though transported from the earth. The reader knows the aim we are pursuing, namely to show that true music suggests similar ideas in different minds."[384] The metaphysical imagery of this sentiment is quite indicative of how Andersen has his hero Peer reflect on his dreams in particular. In addition, it is a powerful notion to suggest that similarly expressed ideas can be harnessed by different minds. Not only is such a statement applicable to Andersen sharing such a union of perception with Baudelaire, but more importantly, between Wagner and Andersen, and in turn, Wagner and Peer. Baudelaire continues in this vein, reflecting: "I remember the impression made upon me from the opening bars, a happy impression akin to the one that all imaginative men have known, in dreams, while asleep. 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

382 Charles Baudelaire, "Richard Wagner and *Tannhäuser* in Paris," trans. P.E. Charvet in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 328.
383 Ibid.
384 Ibid., 330.

natural world. My own dream is less adorned with material objects, it is vaguer and more abstract."[385] The similarities of these sentiments with *Peer* are replete. Peer's dreams were indeed fatalistic and prophetic glimpses through the metaphysical realm, which ultimately led to his removal from the natural world. It is a strong coincidence that Baudelaire describes the same phenomenon as a repercussion of his listening to Wagner's music. The entire narrative of *Lykke Peer* develops to the point of empirical transcendence, and Baudelaire is in figurative agreement with this.

Baudelaire next isolates three varying sets of images, depicting this metaphysical transcendence, as described by Wagner, Liszt, and Baudelaire himself. He states that: "In the three versions we find the sensation of *spiritual and physical beatitude*; of *isolation*; of the contemplation of *something infinitely big and infinitely beautiful*; of an *intense light*, which is a joy to *eyes and soul to the point of swooning*, and finally the sensation of *space, extended to the furthest conceivable limits.* No musician excels as Wagner does in *depicting* space and depth, material and spiritual. He has the art of rendering by subtle gradations all that is excessive, immense, ambitious in both spiritual and natural man."[386] Such an overt expression of the metaphysical and empirical dichotomy is again a central tenet of *Lykke Peer*, which would have doubtfully been discussed at the time by many others besides Baudelaire. It is another intrinsic example of the strong plausibility that Andersen was familiar with this essay. Baudelaire reaffirms the literary origin of these theories by directly stating their sources: "I read Liszt's book, and at last, for want of *Art and Revolution* and *The Art-Work of the Future*, both works untranslated, I laid hands on *Opera and Drama* in an English translation."[387] Baudelaire goes on to discuss the essence of the dramatic poet, and, as it was illustrated in the previous chapter regarding Wagner's theoretical prose, describes Wagner's assertion that it is the poet's impetus that drives the all-encompassing unity of the drama. Crucially, however, Baudelaire states that: "Since every individual is a microcosm of humanity, since the development of one individual brain represents on a small scale the development of the universal brain, what more just and natural than to assume, in default of existing proofs, that the piecing together of Wagner's ideas was analogous to the developing process of humanity?"[388] Here is the most direct claim by Baudelaire that Wagner's theories represent a universal ideal that are not just fundamental to the future of the arts, but to all of humanity. One can only imagine how such a bold statement could have influenced Andersen's perceptions of Wagner. In essence, Baudelaire is providing a direct name for the artist of the future.

385 Ibid., 331.
386 Ibid., 332.
387 Ibid., 333.
388 Ibid., 341.

In his subsequent discussion of universalizing the notion of myths, Baudelaire suggests that “a given myth may be regarded as the brother of another, in the same way as the black man is called the brother of the white man. Myth is a tree that grows everywhere, in every climate under the sun, spontaneously and without propagation. The religions and the poetry of the four corners of the globe provide us with abundant evidence on this subject. Just as sin is everywhere, so is redemption everywhere, so is myth everywhere. What [is] more cosmopolitan than the Eternal?”[389] Baudelaire then ties these notions back to the myths inherent in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. But what is essential here is that he expresses a sentiment of myth making that can be seen in how both Wagner and Andersen treat myths (like the use of *Aladdin* in *Lykke Peer*), to represent what Baudelaire refers to as “eternal.” This is not without its metaphysical implications, which both Wagner and Andersen heavily embraced, especially in context of the earlier analyses in this study of *Lohengrin* and *Lykke Peer*. In a further elaboration of these notions, using examples from the operatic narratives, Baudelaire ultimately reaches the point where he states: “Here I humbly turn to Liszt, whose book (*Lohengrin et Tannhäuser*) I take the opportunity of recommending to all lovers of deep and refined art, and who succeeds in interpreting with infinite charm all the master’s musical rhetoric.”[390] This is significant because Andersen also described how he received the same book from Liszt himself in Weimar, therefore further establishing a case for Andersen’s plausible reception of Baudelaire’s ideas within this essay.

In his explicit advocacy of Wagner as the artist of the future, Baudelaire continues in the same vein: “That music expresses, now in the suavest, now in the most strident tones, all that lies most deeply hidden in the heart of man. An ideal ambition, certainly, hovers over every one of his compositions; but if, by the choice of his subjects and his dramatic method, Wagner comes close to antiquity, by the passionate energy of his expression he is in our day the most genuine representative of modern man.”[391] This same idealization could have further prompted Andersen to write his Wagnerian narrative of *Lykke Peer*.

At the end of his essay, Baudelaire provides a poetic summation of how Wagner’s theories have been met with resistance by those who oppose innovation:

> As for the reform the master wants to introduce in the application of music to drama, what will its result be? On that subject, it is impossible to make any clear prophecy. In a vague and general manner, we may say, with the Psalmist, that sooner or later those who have been humbled shall be exalted, and the exalted

[389] Ibid., 348.
[390] Ibid., 349.
[391] Ibid., 355.

> humbled, but nothing more than what is equally applicable to the known run of all human affairs. We have seen so many things, formerly regarded as absurd, that have later become models adopted by the crowd. The general public of today will remember the stubborn resistance met with, at the outset, by the plays of Victor Hugo and the paintings of Eugène Delacroix. Besides, as we have already observed, the quarrel which is now dividing the public was a forgotten quarrel, now suddenly revived, and Wagner himself had found in the past the first elements of the foundation on which to establish his ideal. What is certain is that his doctrine is just what is needed to rally all intelligent people long since tired of our Opera's errors, and it is not surprising that men of letters, in particular, should have shown sympathy with a musician proud to call himself both poet and dramatist. Similarly, the writers of the eighteenth century had acclaimed the works of Gluck, and I cannot help noticing that those who show the greatest dislike of Wagner's works also shows a clear dislike of his precursor.[392]

Baudelaire depicts here a fickle general audience that is essentially incapable of recognizing the value of that which is new and different. However, the notion that he views Wagner as the artist who is meant to revitalize the genre of opera is unmistakable, and does so using the ideals of Wagner's own theories that signify the inception of drama via poetry. In the penultimate sentence of the essay, before posing a rhetorical question, Baudelaire states: "And in the very near future we might well come to see not only new authors but even men with established reputations profiting in some degree from the ideas expounded by Wagner and passing successfully through the breach opened by him."[393] It is as if Baudelaire himself created the persona of Peer from exclaiming such a prediction. Indeed, Andersen's creation and alter ego is the very same beneficiary of Wagner's ideas, and it can further be surmised that Andersen created Peer's skeptical and parochial singing master as a representation of that public resistance that Baudelaire discussed, only to have the Wagnerian hero triumph and pave the way for the art of the future. Once again, it becomes evident how Baudelaire's text could have set an ideological precedence for Andersen, or simply even put into cogent thoughts that which he had already believed himself, and ultimately yielded the literary equivalent of this Wagnerian contextualization. Tenuous conjecture aside, the similarities are again quite striking. Celenza concurs that, "in Baudelaire's mind, Wagner was not striving for instant gratification. Instead he was laying the groundwork for a new artistic path in literature, a path that the future would embrace as a true and noble cause."[394]

[392] Ibid., 356.
[393] Ibid., 357.
[394] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 202.

The grouping of chapters that encompassed Andersen's developmental history; the literary analysis of *Lykke Peer*; and assessments of Wagner's and Andersen's theoretical prose works, presented an abstract framework that emplaced the individuals under scrutiny in a conceptual context of ideas and philosophies that informed their experiences amidst a changing landscape of artistic and cultural aesthetics. In the subsequent chapters, the nature of this framework will be both superimposed on and juxtaposed with an explicit historical framework that is meant to be intuited in this greater context that blends cultural history with a more politically-oriented history. This will set the stage even further for an all-encompassing comprehension of Wagner's reception in a Denmark that will now be seen as existing at a fundamental crossroads that rendered it uniquely receptive to extreme change and influence. What emerges is a backdrop of Danishness that will in turn inform the complex and historically-derived morality with which Wagner was judged by Danish critics in the closing chapters of this study.

Section IV: War, Grundtvig's Denmark, and a New National Landscape for Andersen and Wagner

The Schleswigian Wars

The aim of this section is to analyze key moments in Danish history—all confined to the scope of a few decades in the early-to-mid nineteenth century—in order to demonstrate the ideological shifts that influenced Danish national identity and Denmark's view of Germany. As previously discussed, these shifts greatly influenced the German-centric Andersen, but they must also be seen in a broader national context that influenced the Wagnerian reception in the minds of common Danes. As it will be evident from Danish ballet master August Bournonville's hostile view towards Wagner, these were significant and polarizing matters that were essentially repercussions of the political climate that existed between Wagner and Andersen's bordering countries. The historical events that will be subsequently analyzed are by no means meant to constitute comprehensive evaluations of said events. These are merely thorough contextualizations on which the narrative of Wagner in Denmark will be built in order to investigate and depict large-scale social receptions of Wagner's art and theories in Denmark. For that to be the case, the complex and problematic relationship between Denmark and Germany must be discussed first in order to determine why and how Danish ideologies shifted in the way that they did to constitute a new national outlook that was present at the time of Wagner's fully-staged premiere of *Lohengrin* and Andersen's publication of *Lykke Peer*.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Denmark had been enjoying several decades of relative peace—the Great Northern War with Sweden having been settled in 1720–21. Historian Lorenz Rerup summarized this moment in Danish history astutely, noting how there was a prolonged peace in the monarchy, starting with the end of the Great Northern War in 1720. As a result, government spending and taxation were low. A steady but broken up economic growth ensued in the agricultural and urban sections of society, yet Denmark stayed a small nation of agricultural capability, with an impoverished capital and industry, and a restricted

foreign trade policy. As the great European countries waged continuous war throughout the eighteenth century, though, Denmark stayed neutral, where commerce and shipping could take advantage of this neutrality for many more decades.[395]

The issues with Germany can be generally summarized via Germany's progression towards national unification from the start of the nineteenth century, which explicitly resulted in the first Schleswigian War of 1848–50, followed by the national disaster of 1864 that ended in Denmark losing the duchies Schleswig and Holstein.[396] The trouble for Denmark first began when it found itself caught in the middle of the conflict between Great Britain and Napoleonic France. The British government decided in 1801 to dissolve the neutrality treaty between Denmark, Sweden, and Russia to acquire access to the Baltic.[397] This resulted in a swift British victory over the Danish fleet, which was a sign to Denmark that their neutrality was now dictated by British policy. By 1806, Napoleon began his continental blockade of Britain, and once again, Denmark found itself in an undesirable position. If the Danes decided to give in to French desires to join the blockade, it would anger Britain, and the events of 1801 had demonstrated what that could lead to. Ignoring France, however, would endanger an invasion of Jutland, and Sweden could use that event to take over Norway. These scenarios would have put the dual monarchy in decline. British fears stemmed from Napoleon capturing the capable Danish fleet and using it against them. To deter this from happening, Britain attacked again in 1807.[398] This assault resulted in the bombardment of Copenhagen and a high number of casualties. This event gave the Danes no choice but to form an alliance with Napoleon and hope that he was victorious. Meanwhile, Sweden had joined forces with Britain, which meant that Denmark and Sweden were once again formally at war.

The destiny of the Napoleonic Empire was assured with the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812, which was followed by the signing of the peace treaty in 1814–15, where Denmark, as a collaborator of the losing French, was poised to suffer significant loses itself. The undisputed British supremacy of Danish waters during the war had split the two primary regions of the monarchy: Denmark and Norway. The peace treaty acquiesced to Sweden's stipulation that they take control of Norway

395 Lorenz Rerup, "N.F.S. Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," in *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World*, ed. A.M. Allchin, D. Jasper, J.H. Schjørring, and K. Stevenson (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993), 233.

396 Knud J.V. Jespersen, *A History of Denmark*, trans. Ivan Hill and Christopher Wade (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7.

397 Ibid., 21.

398 Ibid.

as a reparation for losing Finland to Russia in 1809. The outcome was that Norway was taken from Denmark and became a part of Sweden, where it remained until 1905. The paltry reparation that Denmark was given for this enormous loss was the small north-German county of Lauenburg.[399] This massive territorial loss was the first time that century that Danes were forced to take an introspective look at their state of being. That phenomenon is described as follows: In the aftermath of the treaty of Kiel in 1814, Denmark was forced to give up Norway to Sweden after being unified for 400 years, which resulted in Denmark taking stock of its own Danish national identity rather than a wider Scandinavian identity. Frederik VI, who was on the Danish throne at the time of the treaty, attempted to have his subjects forget Norway in an effort to overcome the bitterness of territorial loss, but also because he felt threatened by Norway's new liberal constitution, where he feared similar ideas taking hold in Denmark and endangering his absolute rule. Following the loss of Norway, Denmark started to take more notice of the duchy of Schleswig, which then became a hostile arena for opposing Danish, German, and local identities.[400]

Denmark's re-shifting of their focus onto domestic issues brought the emphasis now onto the coexistence of the Danish and German populations that fell under the auspices of the Danish monarchy. The increasingly expanding conflict between these two segments of the population was compounded by the escalating hostility of nationalist activities in both Denmark and Germany. This was the foundation of what many Danes, both then and now, believe was the ultimate national catastrophe: Germany's takeover of the duchies in 1864.[401]

The treaty of Kiel would also signify the arrival of Germany as an important player on the European stage, as the shifts in power took their course. Social geographer and author Norman Berdichevsky describes how significant changes to national borders and the distribution of power enveloped Europe following the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars and the peace treaty at the Congress of Vienna. Denmark lost Norway, and with it, naval control of the way in and out of the Baltic Sea. Prussia became the superior military and political apparatus, and also emerged as the primary instigator of a new nationalism associated with language, which sought to take the place of the obsolete multicultural inclusivity of the "Holy Roman Empire" (The First Reich). Between 1815 and 1864, there was a new nationalist

399 Ibid., 22.

400 Uffe Østergård, "The Nation as Event: The Dissolution of the Oldenburg Monarchy and Grundtvig's Nationalism," in *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National identity*, ed. John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove K. Pedersen (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 118–19. Slight paraphrase of the original quote.

401 Jespersen, A History of Denmark, 22.

sentiment that permeated across the German-speaking lands of Europe. It originated with the opposition of French imperialism, and after 1815, was focused against the Danish monarchy, which was seen as constituting the same antiquated feudalist tenets of the Holy Roman Empire.[402] These developments would play decisive roles in what happened next with Denmark's two German-speaking duchies, and would culminate with the 1864 war between Denmark and Bismarck's Prussia.

Europe had experienced a wave of nationalist sentiment in the wake of the popular revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and this ultimately had decisive repercussions on the union of Denmark and its German-populated duchies. However, up to that point, Denmark had no real issues with Germany and its many factions of independent states. This partitioned German federation was also a safety benefit for Denmark because it minimized pressure at its southern border, empowering the Oldenborg kingdom to maintain a position of power in the north-German territory.[403] The nationalist rhetoric in Germany, according to historian Knud Jespersen, that pushed for national unity came to the attention of the German majorities in the Danish-controlled duchies. This circumstance established a set of problems that were nearly impossible for the Danish government to overcome with its conservative, absolutist monarchy. The new national outlook generated a division between the Danish and German citizens that was not previously inherent. The German contingency in the duchies quickly embraced the trend of liberalism and nationalism in Germany, and desired to experience the democratic amendments that the German nationalist cause was promoting. The German population of the duchies now wanted to cut their ties with the conservative Danish Oldenborg state and become integrated into the new German national collective. These divisions resulted in the first Schleswigian War of 1848–50, which was in reality a civil war within the Danish state. The war ended with the German rebels losing in the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, but the fundamental problem was by no means settled. The result of the war had actually invigorated the Danes to overrate their strength and power. This delusion of capability extended to the monarchy, and set in motion the chain of events that would lead to Denmark's shameful loss in the second Schleswigian War of 1864.[404]

Lorenz Rerup adds to this insight by noting how the German peasants in Schleswig had made a plea in the decade prior to the first Schleswigian War to have the German language more socially representational than Danish. The notion of

[402] Norman Berdichevsky, The Danish-German Border Dispute, 1815–2001: Aspects of Cultural and Demographic Politics (Bethesda, Maryland: Academica Press, 2002), 36–37.

[403] Jespersen, A History of Denmark, 23.

[404] Ibid.

language provoked nationalism in the peasants of Northern Schleswig and in educated liberals within the kingdom. Activity against Schleswig-Holstein's demand of the entire duchy ensued, where it was desired that a German Schleswig-Holstein exist within the German Federation. Holstein, along with the small duchy of Lauenburg, which was given to Denmark as compensation in 1815, was already a part of the German Federation upon its formation in 1815. Schleswig, conversely, was not, as it was a Danish duchy.[405] Although Denmark initially viewed the outcome of the first Schleswigian War as a triumph, Danish liberals remained dissatisfied, believing that Denmark's perceived triumph would have resulted in the comprehensive absorption of Schleswig into the Danish kingdom. The liberals also recognized what the conservatives did not, namely that the establishment of peace and continuation of the political structure as it stood before the war did not resolve the larger national issue, but only slowed down the potential for a settlement. Simultaneously to this, Denmark's liberals miscalculated the international scope of Denmark's political compensation. It was via the diplomatic involvement of more powerful nations—primarily Russia—that had rescued the Danish crown, without whose assistance, Denmark's authority over the duchies would have been challenged again. Over the next decade, the Danish monarchy sought to reinforce its control and to direct a path that would conform to the public view in Denmark, the duchies, and abroad. Efforts to construct a general constitution that reflected postwar agreements broke down. German-oriented leaders in the assemblies of the duchies pushed for the reestablishment of a closer relationship between the duchies, while the German Confederation followed the progress closely in its two territories of Holstein and Lauenburg. The Danish liberals, likewise, continued to push for their own interests to form closer ties between Schleswig and the Danish state.[406]

This sentiment of discontent festered within the Danish government, and in 1863, Danish Prime Minister Carl Christian Hall believed that it was the right time for the Danish government to take action and quell the dispute. Negotiations with Schleswig-Holstein had reached an impasse. Russia was engaged with the Polish revolt, which redirected the attention of Prussia and other European nations to that conflict. In March, Holstein and Lauenburg were formally shut out of the Danish constitution, and on 13 November, parliament ratified the government's motion for a new all-encompassing constitution for Denmark and Schleswig.[407] In the ensuing years following the end of the first Schleswigian War, Bismarck was eager to start a war that would bolster his defense budget and quell the issues he faced in the

[405] Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 235.

[406] Peter Thaler, Of Mind and Matter: The Duality of National Identity in the German-Danish Borderlands (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2009), 36–37.

[407] Ibid., 37.

Prussian parliament. Denmark's eagerness to fully absorb Schleswig was the perfect scenario for Bismarck. The conditions for just such an event came about in 1863, when the Danish government finally gave in to the public's desire for further control over the Schleswig duchy and amended the Danish constitution to more fully integrate the duchy under the crown. This move completely disregarded the agreement that was established at the end of the first Schleswigian War. That law stated that both duchies should continue accepting the jurisdiction of the Danish monarchy, while staying unconnected to the monarchy constitutionally. Therefore, expanding Denmark's constitutional control over Schleswig violated international law. This allowed for the dissolving of the peace agreement of 1852 and gave Germany the opportunity it was looking for to become militarily involved. The avarice of Denmark's politicians, pressured by public beliefs, gave Bismarck the justification he needed for a fast and triumphant war.[408]

In the proceeding battle, Bismarck's forces swiftly defeated Denmark, successfully incorporated both duchies into the new Germany, and pushed the border with Denmark several hundred kilometers north. The new border also explicitly reflected the accurate division of language and character between Denmark and Germany. The Danish nation state now represented its most homogenous form. There was only one nationality and the Danish language was the only one spoken in the kingdom. The national form that Denmark took as a result of the 1864 disaster is the one that has perpetuated to contemporary times. Major repercussions also resulted in Danish self-regard. These years of hardship and misfortune cultivated the Danish view that Denmark is diminutive and unimportant in international matters, and would do well to adapt an insular position away from world matters. The prevailing historical view became that Denmark's prolonged decline from being a nation of influence and means to becoming tiny and unimportant was both destined and impossible to prevent.[409]

This introspective shift that started questioning the essence of Danishness in the wake of the Schleswigian Wars had paved the way for a nationalistic outlook. This background is summarized by Jespersen as follows: Right after Denmark's defeat, the Danish people experienced an intense uncertainty as to how their country would endure this last territorial loss. Bitter feelings extended to blaming Germany and all things German for Denmark's ruination, with a parallel escalation of support for everything Scandinavian or English. Following the shameful loss of 1864 and Bismarck's similarly-emphatic defeat of France in 1871, it became plain to Denmark that there was no chance for them to exact vengeance. In the ensuing years, Denmark's political position was primarily defined as the small country that

[408] Jespersen, A History of Denmark, 24.
[409] Ibid., 25.

bordered the new unified Germany. As a result, the national awareness turned inward, and the challenge of contriving a new national identity based on their smaller size began. The hardships of war and resulting misfortunes had opened the door for a meteoric rise in Danish nationalism. The country was now even more homogenized regarding its people, nation, and government in the aftermath of its territorial depletion. Therefore, as a result of all these conflicts and humiliations, the perfect parameters were established for creating a new and extensive national identity, which could not have been brought about in Denmark's previous two-nation form.[410]

The implications of the war of 1864 was the central pivot on which Denmark's new outlook turned as "modern Danish identity in all its facets would be inconceivable without the 1864 defeat."[411] Some scholars pinpoint the advent of the Danish nation state as occurring around the time of the first Schleswigian War from 1848–50. They profess that taking part in this war had made Danes aware of their Danishness. The soldiers sang patriotic war songs as they marched to face a common enemy in the Germans, becoming cognizant of the unprecedented realization that they were not only farmers from the various islands and peninsula, but were Danes fighting a common enemy, and united under a singular goal. Danish historians largely agree that the Danish identity was formed in these years, where people began thinking of themselves as Danes. The catastrophe of 1864 also came to signify an acute sense of Danishness.[412] Rerup believes that Danish nationalist sentiments were long embedded into the fabric of the society, and had many precursors. To begin, there was a profound and lasting allegiance to the king, both amidst the peasants in Denmark and the peasants who spoke either Danish or German in the duchies. The king was viewed as a defender of justice and would shield the peasants and commoners from discriminatory acts of the nobility or civil servants. This view may stem in part from the agricultural changes and the government's position against the ruling class, as well as from long-standing beliefs that the church was in line with the monarchy. Next, support for the Danish crown extended to the wealthier urban spheres within the kingdom as well as the duchies. There was a sense of pride in the population for being members of a robust and innovative country that was ruled by a just king and defended by a powerful navy.[413]

The implementation of this new mentality now came into question. It became apparent that rather than protecting the country by utilizing weapons at the borders, the preservation of Danishness should be maintained by redirecting exterior loss into interior benefit, both by decidedly tangible means of farming open country and

[410] Ibid., 208–09.
[411] Ibid., 215.
[412] Ibid., 216.
[413] Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 236.

marshland, and also by strengthening Danishness through erudition, wisdom, and the evolution of character. Other necessary realizations included coming to terms with the weakness of Denmark's international standing, and the need to adapt its foreign policy accordingly.[414] From these indications, it becomes clear that there was hostility aimed at anything German. Denmark never acknowledged its own political hubris in the aftermath of the Schleswigian Wars, and chose to justify its nationalist trend by blaming Germany. Historian Vagn Wåhlin contextualizes the social climate of the time by stating that "Everybody who in the Danish realm took part in literature, culture and politics in those days had to take a stand on the national question between German and Danish because those problems influenced the whole of social and intellectual life."[415] This would certainly create a tense atmosphere for both Wagner's reception in Denmark and Andersen's explicit support of Denmark's cultural unity with Germany. Rerup adds to this notion of growing hostility towards Germany by noting that contrary to previous forms of patriotism, the type of politically-driven nationalism of the 1830s and 40s maintained Danish management and Danish judicature in the interest of Denmark's peasantry. This nationalistic drive also demanded the widespread use of the Danish language and asserted that Danish territory is owned by Denmark. The result of this as well as Germany's own nationalistic growth were the wars of 1848–50 and 1864, which concluded with the abolition of absolutist rule of the monarchy, ended the monarchy-derived sense of patriotism, and lastly ended the cultural influence that Germany had on Denmark.[416] The Schleswigian Wars again created the opportunity for a seismic shift in national ideology, but the subsequent new path needed to express a direct and tangible course for the population to get behind, and this direction ultimately found its voice in the advocacy of N.F.S. Grundtvig and the vision that he promoted.

Grundtvig's Cultural Nationalism and the New Danish Identity

During his long life, Grundtvig (1783–1872) bore witness to both Schleswigian Wars and the end of absolutist rule of the Danish monarchy. His influence as a theologian, poet, philosopher, and politician had cemented his authority and legacy during his own lifetime. Indeed, the "creation of a particular Danish 'ism' –Grundtvigianism—

[414] Jespersen, A History of Denmark, 196.

[415] Vagn Wåhlin, "Denmark, Slesvig-Holstein and Grundtvig in the 19th Century," in *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World*, ed. A.M. Allchin, D. Jasper, J.H. Schjørring, and K. Stevenson (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993), 251.

[416] Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 237–38.

which probably affected Denmark far more than other European political or ideological movements."[417] Wåhlin described him as follows: "A genius like Grundtvig could not have had the success he had without the right economic, political and cultural preconditions and yet, at the same time he was an influential factor in transforming Danish social, political and cultural conditions and thus creating the future of Denmark."[418] His ambitions for instigating a more secular society in Denmark and bringing about social reforms are well documented, but a focus on how he specifically influenced Danish national identity will be of primary concern in this chapter, as those developments are most directly associated with Wagner's Danish reception and Andersen's literary reaction to it in *Lykke Peer*.

The strength of Grundtvig's influence lay with the fact that he reverberated the ethos of the times and the egalitarian rebellions, established his philosophy on the needs of ordinary people, and constructed his entire ideology on this foundation. No Dane before him had used the term "popular" as an entirely hopeful idea that penetrated all facets of life, including laws, administrative orders, organizations, and personal conduct, as long as they were sincere and useful.[419] Grundtvig created the concept of *folkelighed*, which equates to, among other things, "the equality of the people."[420] This principle would inform the majority of his nationalistic-related policies, to be assimilated by the population at large. It was meant to be seen as a progressive policy that would supplant the absolutist monarchy in favor of a new and educated democratic populace that would converge to pursue common interests on a national level. *Folkelighed* was meant to represent this cause and ambition. Furthermore, Grundtvig believed that this vision could only be achieved by connecting to groups of people who were oppressed and neglected in the past or unable to oversee their ventures. He thought these people needed to be taken into consideration and included in national organizations that sought to instill widespread education and wisdom. He trusted that this was the sole path to establishing distinct social categories for the successful foundation of a democracy—the people and nation.[421] Grundtvig always emphasized that this was a free choice of the people, noting that a person had the choice of joining or staying separated. If one chooses to be a part of the popular or national group, it comes with agreeing to conform to particular requirements of the group in its entirety, not just speaking the language, but to feel committed to everyone who also wants to be a part of the *folkelig*, or mutually responsible community. The center of Grundtvig's idea of *folkelighed* was

[417] Jespersen, A History of Denmark, 113.
[418] Wåhlin, "Denmark, Slesvig-Holstein and Grundtvig," 243.
[419] Jespersen, A History of Denmark, 116.
[420] Ibid., 117.
[421] Ibid.

exactly this communal responsibility and aspiration to diligently share it with anyone who wanted to be a part of it.[422]

To this end, Grundtvig created the Folk High School system, which was emphasized as a life-long education system for all people, rather than the established system of education for the elite. This system professed that the "popular" was not just a path to traverse, but the culmination, and that anyone who wanted to be a part of the "popular" community would belong to the privileged establishment. It gave the representatives of the farming communities the self-belief to personally commune with the former aristocracy within the new community. Farmers were encouraged to speak in the interest of the entire national community as authentic spokespeople of the *folkelighed* who learned to do so in Grundtvig's folk high schools, and became the archetypes of the new "popular" nation.[423]

Many of these progressive ideals that Grundtvig held were consolidated during his summer study trip to England in 1829–31, which "proved crucial to Grundtvig's views on life, society, and education. He believed the Nordic spirit had survived in England. His experiences translated into his most influential work, *Nordic Mythology* (1832), a wake-up call to build a new society based on the common experience of being a citizen of Denmark, with a common history and language rather than a common faith."[424] These were the initial tenets that ultimately led to his formation of the Folk High School system.

In context of the second Schleswigian War, Grundtvig's influence, and that of "Grundtvigianism" on the now-uniform Danish nation and society—devoid of any multiculturalism—was significant. A streamlining of the political apparatus had established a favorable atmosphere in which Grundtvig's theories, projects, and organizations could have a palpable impact.[425] Furthermore, "with the loss of Holstein, Schleswig, and Lauenburg, Denmark was close to fulfilling the ideal requirements of the nation-state envisaged by Gellner – that is, being a homogenous entity based on the co-extension of state, language, culture, and territory. This dramatic change let to a fundamental change in political thought and cultural life. Danish perceptions of themselves and of the rest of the world were entirely altered."[426] In the wake of this phenomenon, Grundtvig "sought to build a nation on a language, whose antiquity and importance his work on Norse myths had (at least

422 Ibid., 118.
423 Ibid.
424 John A. Hall and Ove Korsgaard, "Introduction," in *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National identity*, ed. John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove K. Pedersen (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 5.
425 Ibid., 12.
426 Ibid., 17.

in his eyes) made apparent."[427] It is crucial to remember, though, that various other social factors were also included in the establishment of a new Danish national identity. When the National Liberals were criticized for the 1864 catastrophe, it opened the door for the peasants and other Grundtvigians to display influence as the new social community. The organization of this body was efficient, authorizing changes, translations, and official standardizations of Grundtvig's theories. As the Danish political nobility continued to favor state organizations, Grundtvig and his followers employed nation-building tactics that prioritized organizations independent of the state. This practice established a populist appearance within the Danish political heritage.[428]

In terms of the legacy that Grundtvig's system left behind, it becomes clear that the policies that Grundtvig and his followers created and enacted at a specific moment in time in the mid-nineteenth century have left a profound and enduring impact on the Danish morality and manner in which Danish society functions today. The extent of this influence was not particularly due to the novelty of Grundtvig's ideas, but rather the timing of their expression when Denmark was at a crucial historical junction. Grundtvig's skill lay in his ability to construct his ideas in a way that would stimulate the most widespread support for a thorough plan that would transform the simple citizens of an absolute monarchy into an enlightened democratic society that was unified as one Danish nation. The primary tenets of this progression were *folkelighed*, sympathy, and open-mindedness, which had been reached through a combination of insight and open communication. In this capacity, the new Denmark of this time could be correctly described as a large community where unity prospered and where social gaps were minimal. In this society, Grundtvig's progressive trends of commonality and discourse could flourish, yet such unity and conformity would doubtfully be possible in the more expansive multiethnic and multicultural centers of Europe. This is most likely the primary reason why the Danish social structure was so intrinsically their own and was not appropriate for reproduction abroad.[429]

These reflections perfectly encapsulate the national climate in Denmark at the time of Wagner and Andersen's activities. The crossroads that was mentioned was naturally due to the wars with Germany, and the resulting national outlook implied that there would be no room to accept foreign influences under the terms of Grundtvig's new Danishness. The loss of the German duchies removed any official trace of multiculturalism when Denmark took its final territorial form (excluding the plebiscite of 1920 that returned Southern Jutland to Denmark). By all accounts, it

[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid., 18–19.
[429] Jespersen, *A History of Denmark*, 119–20.

would seem that the new national identity and hatred of Germans would entirely prohibit Wagner's favorable reception, but Andersen was prepared to combat this prejudice, and indeed, his clashes with the Grundtvigian ideology will be discussed later.

Grundtvig's theories were also crucial during these decades in orbit of the second Schleswigian War when Denmark was undergoing a process of nation building. The concept of nation building is analogous with state building in the sense that nation building is essential to the prosperity of state building. The state is comprised of palpable and visible organizations like "armies, police, bureaucracies, etc.," whereas the nation constitutes "shared traditions, symbols, historical memories, language, and other cultural points of reference."[430] This dichotomy is important when contextualizing Grundtvig's contribution to the formation of a Danish national identity, where nationalism and national identity are intimately connected with the method of modernization. The specific national identities that came about evolved from the conflict between formulated views and power politics as well as economic necessities. Nationalism is derived from the conviction that the political parameters of the government should relate to a cultural border, which is essentially delineated by a joint language and culture. An economic alteration, therefore, sets up the parameters for modern nationalism, where the primary method of social unity is based on a culture derived from a shared language.[431]

Political scientist and political economist Francis Fukuyama goes on to list four basic components to the formation of national identity. They are: "(1) the defining of political borders to fit populations, (2) the moving or physical elimination of populations to fix existing borders, (3) the cultural assimilation of subpopulations into the dominant culture, and (4) the modification of the concept of national identity to fit what is politically feasible, given the social and physical endowments of the society. Most successful national identity projects have resulted from the interaction of all four approaches."[432] This process is historically applicable to Denmark

> because a strong national identity emerged as the result of a bottom-up process in a country that was liberal and democratizing. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the country now known as Denmark was part of a multinational empire that included Norway, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the predominantly German-speaking duchies of Schleswig and

430 Francis Fukuyama, "Nation Building and State Building," in *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National identity*, ed. John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove K. Pedersen (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 29.

431 Ibid., 29; 31.

432 Ibid., 33.

> Holstein. In slightly more than half a century, this extensive empire would be stripped down to a rump Danish-speaking core, a process that culminated in the traumatic loss of Schleswig and Holstein as a result of the war with Prussia in 1864. Denmark lost a third of its population and territory, with a good number of Danish-speakers stranded on the German side of the border. [Their survival] became possible only because of the reorientation of Danish national identity that occurred in the years prior to the trauma of 1864. This would not have been possible without the work of a Lutheran priest, N.F.S. Grundtvig. Grundtvig's writings were crucial in positing the idea of a Danish folk, or people, who were united by their use of a common language across the class lines established by the feudal system of estates. Consistent with his view of the need for a linguistically based common culture, he made the following critical argument with respect to the territorial issue: 'The land of the Danes goes only so far as they speak Danish and no further than where they continue to speak Danish, in other words, somewhere in the middle of the duchy of Schleswig.[433]

Grundtvig's Folk High School system would also revolutionize accessibility of an education for the peasant class, where the vernacular was to be the language in which everyone was educated, as Danish was what the peasants spoke, whereas Latin was still used in the education of the wealthy classes across Europe. The subjects at the Folk High Schools contained the sharing of stories of Danish national identity. Grundtvig and his approach to education are fascinating for the establishment of a compelling and authoritative national identity that developed from the bottom up instead of a top down system that implemented autocratic processes. It also highlighted the formation of a national identity that is more synonymous with a democratic approach.[434] Again in context of the second Schleswigian War, which had changed Denmark's national narrative so completely, it is credible to suggest that "The father of modern Danish identity was in some sense as much Bismarck as Grundtvig: had Prussia not forcefully annexed Schleswig in 1864, Denmark would have remained a multinational, multilingual society with plenty of reasons for continuing cultural conflict."[435] Although these events certainly influenced general Danish perceptions, a cosmopolitan intellectual like Andersen would always retain his faith in the value of multicultural solidarity, and *Lykke Peer* can be seen as a testament of this ideal as much as any other symbolic depiction that can be deduced from its pages.

433 Ibid., 42–43.
434 Ibid., 43–44.
435 Ibid., 46.

Much of what Grundtvig advocated for during this transitional time in Denmark's history, however, was based on past ideological traits, whose societal reintegration he felt was integral to the survival of a Danish national identity. In 1848, the year that absolute rule of the Danish monarch ended, Grundtvig was elected in a new democratic system. He realized that the "external bond" between the king and the people that had been severed, in turn shed light on an "inner bond" between the people, which emphasized a solidarity of language, country, kingdom, freedom, and independence when the war in the duchies had threatened all of that. He believed that this was a wake-up call for the people to stand stronger against external forces that could challenge their bond. He readily believed that this unity would bring great things in the future. He was, nevertheless, worried about the implications of change, as he ultimately believed strongly in the monarchy and rule of the king.[436] Historian Michael Böss referenced Grundtvig's essay "The Transition Period in Denmark" (1849) as his treatise on how Denmark should be reformed with his own role as nation builder. Böss attempts to portray Grundtvig as a cultural nationalist "in so far as he mediated between the traditional and modernizing forces of his own time and saw himself as a spiritual nation builder."[437]

Böss describes how Grundtvig used his new position in parliament to further "the Danish cause." A focal tenet of this phenomenon was the "enlightenment" of regular people by instilling within them a sense of their language and cultural heritage as the tools with which they would help establish a united Denmark. This was entirely a psychological machination and Grundtvig had no inclination of presenting it or making it a political one. Grundtvig saw the opposition to these lofty ideals as those who sought to industrialize urban centers, and who were allied with French and German outlooks. Grundtvig sought to present these factions as foreign influences that were detrimental to the essence of Danishness.[438] To this end, Böss presented his definition of cultural nationalism as being associated with the procedure of modernization and the shift between conventional society and the principles of modernity. Cultural nationalists would frequently employ a position that targets emotions in order to draw out a sentimental longing for a more conventional system from the past, which has been debased by social change. Nevertheless, this should not be misunderstood as a desire for social and political backsliding.[439]

[436] Michael Böss, "Between Tradition and Modernity: Grundtvig and Cultural Nationalism," in *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National identity*, ed. John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove K. Pedersen (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 79–80.

[437] Ibid., 81.

[438] Ibid.

[439] Ibid., 82–83.

It is in this context that both Grundtvig's support for the monarchy and endeavor of creating a national identity should be seen: as the actions of someone who projected an aversion for foreign influence at the expense of the peasants, and who lobbied for the rights and social relevancy of the latter's place in helping determine the new course for the Danish nation. Furthermore, he was particularly worried that Danish culture itself was profoundly threatened by the "modern" culture that Germany was trying to impose on Denmark. He undoubtedly saw urbanization as a leading cause of this, which is another example of his cultural nationalist nostalgia for traditional society, where he could more easily impose his social aesthetics. Consequently, "defending Denmark against Germany was thus another way of defending the Danish vernacular and the values of the common people. Both threatened the dissolution of the kingdom and the end of the life of the people."[440] In a summation of these notions, Grundtvig's basic belief was that the modernization of both community and state in Denmark could only prosper if the social and cultural principles of the Danish people—as it was established long ago by an idealistic egalitarianism—were renewed and became the foundation of a new educated and wise society in which every person sought to assist in realizing the interests of the group. This could only happen if the interference of foreign cultures that had negatively influenced Danish society in the past, while dividing people, oppressing the peasants, and diminishing the language of the common people, was eliminated. However, Grundtvig was distressed about whether this modernization of society might impede Denmark's progression into a new age of the people.[441] German cultural dominance was a central threat to all of this, so this was the cultural landscape with which Wagner's art and Andersen's cosmopolitanism had to deal with.

Grundtvig's Reactionary Principles

After providing a context of the Schleswigian Wars and the roots of the ideological shift in Denmark regarding both national identity and a broad view of Germany, it is now necessary to trace these elements in Grundtvig's own writings. This will present an explicit historical context for these ideals from which Wagner's reception and Andersen's pro-German aesthetic crusade can be further validated. Grundtvig's book *Norse Mythology* presents many of his ideas regarding cultural nationalism, aesthetics, and language. Indeed, as Nordic literature scholar Niels Lyhne Jensen states, Grundtvig reflected a romantic character in the way he combined myths to fit his perceptions of them. To him, they are ethical dramas where the immortal lives of

[440] Ibid., 86.
[441] Ibid., 88.

the gods are impaired by eroticism, where crises of faith ensued, and where murders occurred as well. These elements unite to bring about Ragnarok, the end of the world, when the gods die in a war against the evil giants. The aftermath of the cataclysm brings about the resurrection of the gods in idyllic surroundings, which Grundtvig interprets as a metaphor of Denmark's national resurgence after its defeat at the hands of the English in the wars of the early nineteenth century.[442] There is an inherent Wagnerian congruence with this statement, as the composer also attached socio-political symbolism to his appropriation of Norse mythology in his *Ring* cycle. Grundtvig's *Norse Mythology* predates Wagner's *Ring* by decades, but the essential point is that Danish and German aesthetic ideals converged to illustrate commonality at a time when those two countries had few meaningful points of cultural solidarity. It is precisely this kind of a kinship that Andersen sought to emphasize and promote when tensions between the two countries were at their zenith. As for Grundtvig, *Norse Mythology* also represents his ability to unify Danes culturally and morally following a military defeat at the hands of a foreign power. He would have ample opportunity to continue this trend as Denmark had yet to suffer its most traumatic and decisive defeats.

Lorenz Rerup provides a summation of Danish views of mythology outside of a Grundtvigian context by stating that the agents of Danish identity had no political contentions, apart from wanting equal representation in the government. They were more focused on determining whether Nordic mythology was as relevant to artists and poets as the Greek/Roman tradition had been, and if the former could exemplify Danish cultural attributes. The difference between the notion of a Danish identity prior to 1800 and that of the later politically-driven nationalism is distinct: the principles of identity were not inclined towards a politically-motivated nation. Danish identity also did not have a system in place for assimilating the various ethnic groups of the larger nation. Military service, for example, was only mandatory for the peasant class. Danish identity was, therefore, a notion that was limited to a small sphere of urban dwellers in the capital and in the bigger population centers. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Danish patriotic poetry and literature depicted a literary development devoid of political or national goals, but in a manner that was nevertheless consistent with nationalism.[443]

Grundtvig expert and theological scholar K.E. Bugge echoes this belief by stating that: "In order to be 'folkelig,' in order to be truly pertaining to the people, in order to be in accordance with its particular identity, education must also therefore

442 Niels Lyhne Jensen, "Introduction," in *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the Writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)*, ed. Niels Lyhne Jensen, trans. Edward Broadbridge and Niels Lyhne Jensen (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1984), 17.

443 Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 237.

be mythological. It is no coincidence that the ancient Nordic myths have for generations been a favorite educational theme at the Danish Folk High Schools."[444]

When Grundtvig contrived of a second edition of *Norse Mythology* in 1832, Jensen describes how in the introduction of the completely altered book, he took the opportunity to present an overview of his overall perspective. In his discourse on universal-historical studies, he conveys his desire for a new motivational knowledge that would leave behind the disheartening classical knowledge of Roman and Italian learning. Grundtvig now wanted to stimulate a cultural education that utilizes the courageous character of Norse legends and the brilliance of Greek myths, and to unite them with a "Mosaic-Christian" perspective. Jensen stresses that it is essential to note the contrast that Grundtvig makes between the process of thought and faith.[445] The origins of promoting a Danish cultural nationalism are also inherent as Grundtvig speculates that in his contemporary age, the historical duty of the north, namely Scandinavia and Great Britain, will be to promote the ideal of the mother language, the liberty of thought, and people's right to use their mother language.[446] Rerup concurs on these points, adding that it is a certainty that Grundtvig and some other poets established a nationalistic Danish poetry that was influenced by Danish history and old Norse literature.[447]

Jensen presents an all-encompassing summary on Grundtvig's aesthetics regarding nationalism, culture, language, and discord with German ideals:

> Grundtvig is greatly indebted to the romantic movement, yet he is no romantic. He owes little or nothing to Schleiermacher's romantic theology and does not in his maturity share the romantics' idealist conception of man. Though no one has declared his love of his fatherland with greater warmth than Grundtvig, he is no traditional nationalist. He only recognized that man was necessarily born into a particular nation and to a particular language and would grasp and understand life in this mould [sic] and in this tongue. But love of the fatherland to Grundtvig certainly did not mean any aggressive or expansionist nationalism of the German type, which he rightly saw as a danger. Grundtvig greatly emphasized the cultural unity of the Scandinavian nations, but he would have no luck with the political Pan-Scandinavianism which was a strong movement among young

444 K.E. Bugge, "The School for Life: The Basic Ideas of Grundtvig's Educational Thinking," in *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World*, ed. A.M. Allchin, D. Jasper, J.H. Schjørring, and K. Stevenson (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993), 279.

445 Jensen, "Introduction," 22.

446 Ibid., 23.

447 Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 240.

> academic liberals in the Forties and Fifties. Nor had his enthusiasm for Scandinavian myths any similarity with the sinister Teutonic gibberish Wagner and others made of it in the second half of the century. Closely allied with Grundtvig's love of his fatherland is his deep interest in the traditional life and culture of the people. For the values he found here he uses the Danish word 'folkelig,' which is near impossible to translate into English. In some contexts, it is synonymous with national, but not in all. It may refer to folkways and narratives and poems handed down by oral tradition, but not exclusively. It certainly does not mean popular in the sense of vulgarized knowledge processed for mass consumption. 'Folkelig' refers to a cultural and social life which draws from the traditions and values shared by all the people, and in which they actively participate. The term might also be opposed to academia in the sense that Grundtvig wanted to give an education to the people based on Danish language, literature and history which would enrich the personal life of the individual, but also enable him to engage himself in public life with self-reliance and dignity. Finally, it must be mentioned that Grundtvig became a great champion of freedom. It meant to him spiritual freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. It is fine to see how as he grew older he attached greater and greater importance to the idea of liberty in public life.[448]

Jensen's labeling of Wagner's use of Scandinavian myths (which is a false attribute—they were Nordic and derived from Icelandic sagas and not purely Scandinavian) as "sinister Teutonic gibberish," is both simplistic and belies the historic, cultural, moral, and philosophical tenets of Wagner's appropriation of Norse mythology, which does not project German nationalism. And for this Danish scholar to erroneously simplify it in this way speaks more to the nationalistic projections of Wagner in the twentieth century than how nineteenth century Danes viewed him. Nevertheless, it is a curiosity to digress briefly in order to reiterate the hostility and ignorance directed at Wagner by Danes and others who perpetually fail to divorce Wagner's aesthetics from political climates that he had no control over—either during his lifetime or after. Yet, these views are necessary to acknowledge as they contribute to the overall paradigm of the Danish national reception of Wagner, even when seen by contemporary Danes who judge the past retroactively.

Returning back to Grundtvig's *Norse Mythology*, a final contextual note by Grundtvig scholar William Michelsen describes how the forthcoming section of the introduction could be seen as including Grundtvig's notions of culture. In the study, he treats Norse mythology as a figurative depiction of the Norse way of life as it

[448] Jensen, "Introduction," 28–29.

existed directly prior to its exposure to Christianity. In his version, Grundtvig includes Icelandic references, as well as the story of Beowulf and the Danish account of Bjarki, which only remained in a Latin translation in Saxo's history.[449] Once more, there is congruence here with Wagner regarding the composer's use of Icelandic sources. The distinction of this shared value should not be overlooked in the larger scheme of Wagner in Denmark.

Towards the beginning of his monograph, Grundtvig sets a somewhat accusatory tone that seemingly seeks to sow antagonism and dissent towards foreigners. He begins by describing an antiquarian solidarity between Norsemen, Germans, and the English, only to maintain in the present that "this time, however, it is the aboriginal Norsemen and not the emigrant ones who must be the spirit's main wheel or there will be no Scandinavian learning. For the emigrant kinsmen are either degenerate, or they have lost so much of their old Norse character that it is a question whether they will even join the movement; there is no question of them leading it, that would be quite impossible."[450] Grundtvig is stoking the fire of cultural nationalism by expressing a nostalgia of the past, and implying that circumstances have changed and become more unfavorable, and that that which is now foreign, compromises the former collective Norse character or spirit. In and of itself, the statement may seem like a historical reflection, but the undertones are clearly grooming the population to be weary of foreign influences. He continues:

> It is clear to any spirit, friendly or hostile, good or bad, that the learning that was most recently cultivated received its death-blow during the French Revolution and must either perish, like the learning of the Greeks, the Romans and the Norsemen, or be transfigured into a higher one that can revive it. I wish that I had a voice that could persuade all those in whom there still runs a drop of Norse blood, reflecting a spiritual life, in order to unite them and lay the foundation of a new Danish spiritual culture and learning, living, popular and all-embracing, while the ruins of the past might still be saved and used to advantage.[451]

449 William Michelsen, "From Grundtvig's Introduction to Norse Mythology, 1832," in *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the Writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)*, ed. Niels Lyhne Jensen, trans. Edward Broadbridge and Niels Lyhne Jensen (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1984), 33.

450 N.F.S. Grundtvig, "Universal Historical Learning," in *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the Writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)*, ed. Niels Lyhne Jensen, trans. Edward Broadbridge and Niels Lyhne Jensen (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1984), 36.

451 Ibid., 37–38.

These are explicit declarations of cultural nationalism as Grundtvig again cites paradigms of the past that should be revived and preserved in order to build a new Danish identity on the foundations of the old. These sentiments are brought to a head when he expands on his desire for a spiritual rebirth for the people:

> Finally, I maintain that when one regards the world of the spirit with Norse eyes in the light of Christianity, one gets the impression on an [sic] universal historical development of art and learning that embraces the whole life of man, with all its energies, conditions and achievements. This idea liberates, strengthens and delights all that is in harmony with the temporal welfare of the individual, the nations and the whole race of man, and which must of necessity lead to the most perfect explanation of life that is possible in this world. This Graeco-Norse or new-Danish way of life and culture is what gives the Norse myths, in which it is latent, their universal historical significance, and for us especially an inestimable worth. It is this learning I wanted to portray here, both in its nature and in its contrast to the Romano-Italian life curse and spiritual tedium.[452]

This passage exemplifies Grundtvig's Norse view of Christianity as it epitomizes the essence of life itself and how the new Danish morality embraces this representational Norse mythology. It is referential to Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk* to cite the Greeks as having symbolic kinship with Norse idioms. Of course, this was the basis of the social utopia that Wagner crusaded for when he was a left-wing revolutionary in Dresden, which was also the cosmopolitanism that Andersen sought to show the Danes through *Lykke Peer* that was inherent within Wagner's character. For Grundtvig to share this ideal is both significant and ironic, as it was a pretext for him to express anti-German perceptions. Nevertheless, by looking to the ancient Greeks so favorably, it conditions the Danes to consider these associations, which Andersen would later stylize literarily in his support of Wagner. The level of awareness that the Danes had for these converging points is debatable, but by virtue of their ties with Grundtvig, the possibility is more than plausible. The above passage also highlights Grundtvig's position against the Romans. He further adds: "It is also a historical fact that nearly all of Roman literature, particularly the poetry, is imitation work, and unlike the Greek and Old Norse, did not spring from the life of the people and has not been lovingly cultivated over the centuries."[453] This quote is interesting for two reasons: It clearly draws attention to Grundtvig's major cultural tenet of aesthetics being derived from the people and also for them. All of his future assertions of national identity and educational reform would stem from this concept

[452] Ibid., 38.
[453] Ibid., 39.

of national unity. The second point is that this quote has reverberations—albeit with less vitriol and controversy—with Wagner's *Judaism in Music*. In his prose work, Wagner blamed the Jews for being imitators of gentile culture, and also, as stated before, lifted the communal vales of the Greeks as a paradigm to be valued and recreated. Both Grundtvig and Wagner used their prose to assert their morality by degrading others. However, Grundtvig's timing and word choice made his message far easier to support. This is another example, though, of a type of cultural propaganda that the Danes were exposed to, which could have given them a unique experience in recognizing the subtext of purpose within these kinds of prose works. Therefore, it might have predisposed them further to judging Wagner in later decades based on certain indicators that they may have deduced in Grundtvig's writings as well.

Grundtvig reiterates his desire to see a new Danish identity derived from the fall of Rome by asking

> whether we are to have a neo-Franconian barbarism which will be the equivalent of the old-Franconian after the fall of Rome and the destruction of the Goths, or a new-Danish advance transfiguring the old-Danish that rose up on the ruins of Rome throughout the northern hemisphere. My vote goes to the latter; that is what I have been working for all my days. So when I now speak of a new-Danish development, I do not take the Word [sic] Danish in the restricted sense which I have often used before now and even more often used as a term of praise. I mean it in the old Norse sense, when Danish stretched not just from the Ejder to Tromsø, and from the North Sea to the Gulf of Finland, but also across the ocean to the Norse people on the remote Isle of Hercules. Similarly, when I speak of the rebirth of a Christian and old-Danish learning, I do not mean two things that only a poet can get into rhyme, nor do I mean something specifically Christian bound to the Christian faith. I mean rather a Graeco-Norse development which with the aid of the Mosaic-Christian way of thinking will be a living advance and a universal historical one.[454]

Grundtvig here is once again projecting cultural nationalism derived from a nostalgia of the past where he described the geographic expansiveness of the Danish language, and further associated it with the Greek-Norse solidarity, as well as with religious cohesion. By describing it all as a transfiguration, he is using religious imagery to preach for the new Denmark to constitute a rebirth of cultural antiquity. It is also

[454] Ibid., 40.

somewhat ironic as he derided the Romans for being imitators of the Greeks, while advocating for an imitation of values himself.

Grundtvig does warn, however, that the recognition of classical roots in the Danish language also has to have a practical application among the people:

> The educated must not merely be allowed to use a language that will give them an excellent acquaintance with ancient times, they must rather be made to use it. For it will only have the most beneficial consequences so long as it remains a real and a living language and young people are not tortured by it but rather guided and encouraged towards it. Nor can there be any doubt about this choice; for only one of the three major classical languages, Greek, is still a living language; and since it also gives access to the only ancient literature that can truly be called by that name, then everyone with spirit can only agree about this. At that point, the competitive spirit and even ambition itself will be beneficial to life and learning; in brief, the school will of its own accord get into its true historical and Nordic shape. Then scholars will use their language, in a different way from Latin, for the good it can promote: to penetrate deeper into the spirit of antiquity and to facilitate the exchange of ideas amongst scholars. But naturally not to disfigure the mother tongue or force it out of the class-room, which is precisely the place where it must be heard in all its power and fullness.[455]

In the passage above, Grundtvig is advancing the importance of the Danish language in the school system, as he feels that only Danish can bridge the cultural divide between the new Denmark and the values of classical antiquity. He said this at a time when Latin was the primary language of the educated class, which Grundtvig felt was prohibitive of a national solidarity where all people should be educated in the same language, and not only the wealthy elites. He further expands on his vision of a communal language by speaking of the propagation of a folk culture:

> The living key to Old Norse literature is the Icelandic language, so that needs to be learnt both for the sake of the ancient books and for the new literary language which will always need to borrow from it and be illuminated by it. What is required for this, however, is so little and so easy for us in Denmark that it will be a game, not a burden, at school. And in Scandinavia, furthermore, it will link the culture of the learned with that of the people in the most natural and best possible way. Indeed, popular knowledge or folk culture and education in the

[455] Ibid., 46–47.

> proper sense, is the second giant stride that simply must be made immediately wherever disintegration is to be prevented, folk-like to be saved, and scholarship to prosper. For education and fitness for life must always be suited to the folk-life of the present, whereas scholarship is for human life in general. So when scholarship is really genuine, it includes education and fitness for life, but these cannot include it except as a vague feeling that scholarship, particularly amongst the scholars proper (the schoolmasters), will lead us astray if there is no education of the people at hand forcing it to take the present life and the present moment into account, just as the folk-culture will deteriorate into a superficial gloss unless scholarship keeps it alive. Thus, all wise school systems must be based on progressive enlightenment and education.[456]

This passage importantly advances Grundtvig's desire to abolish the educational class system to merge the culture of the educated elites with, clearly, the peasants. This education of a unified folk culture would be a lifelong endeavor, and it must have this element of inclusivity, otherwise it will not be sustainable. Language, culture, and religion have now been presented by Grundtvig under the umbrella of a collective education taught in the vernacular, in order to revive and preserve a national identity based on the enlightenment of the entire population as they mutually embrace these ideals. Grundtvig scholar Hans Henningsen explains this linguistic imperative in context of its social meaning in Grundtvig's idealized Denmark when he describes how the concept of a legitimate and lifelong education can only happen in the native language, since Grundtvig attributed that a heartfelt mode of living is only possible through one's mother tongue. As such, only via this "language of the heart" can history be recounted in a more significant and personable way than just relaying cold facts. The native language inspires a living connection between the ages. When Grundtvig calls the native language a "word of power," it is to emphatically suggest that only the mother tongue can provide the means of understanding the roots of Danish life in ways that other languages and objective thought processes cannot. There are two primary reasons, then, why discussions at the Folk High School should not solely be general dialogues, but rather discourses in the native language. Firstly, the logic behind this is that the mother tongue is the language of the vernacular, which is the only spoken variant that can unify emotion and rationality, and secondly, due to its position of reflecting an understanding of Danish life. Grundtvig argues that the native language of the people has evolved

[456] Ibid., 48–49.

from their experiences of life, and has within itself the history and the essence of both country and people.[457]

Interestingly, at the end of his introduction to *Norse Mythology*, Grundtvig poetically equates the convergence of enlightenment as "Aladdin's palace," which is a clear allusion to the Oehlenschläger play and indirectly to the Wagnerian culmination of *Lykke Peer*. It is an amusing trend to notice how even Grundtvig's idealizations seek to define the crowning achievement of his philosophy with the same allegorical symbolism that Andersen used to define his in *Peer*.

Grundtvig wrote the text *The Danish Four-leaf Clover or A Partiality for Danishness* in 1836—four years after *Norse Mythology* and two years before *The School for Life*. The *Danish Four-leaf Clover* was his first extended portrayal of his vision for a Danish folk high school, and it both echoed and foreshadowed many salient themes of cultural nationalism and anti-German sentiments that were explicit in the aforementioned texts that came before and after it. Simply put, this prose work advocated for the Danish mother-tongue and the "spirit of the people" as the two most prominent features to be upheld in his crusade to educate the peasant class. Once more, through the use of his national-oriented rhetoric, Grundtvig presented the Danish four-leave clover of King, People, Fatherland, and Mother-tongue as the tenets of Danishness that must be upheld to combat the negativity of foreign influences.[458]

In his ceaseless support for the Danish monarchy, Grundtvig encapsulates his own values, which he encourages his countrymen to adopt as well. He states:

> When the questions arise: Whom should Danish people honor and obey? What should they look for and make sacrifices for? – if my prayers could achieve anything, I would ask on behalf of the mother-tongue and the fatherland all public speakers and writers never to mention what in this context is a mere abstraction or a monstrosity. Instead I would ask them now, as always, to say: the King and the Authorities, the Fatherland, the Interests of the Kingdom, and the Common Good – or 'the Danish state,' because one *knows* what that is, or at least has a fairly good idea of it.[459]

457 Hans Henningsen, "The Danish Folk High School," in *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World*, ed. A.M. Allchin, D. Jasper, J.H. Schjørring, and K. Stevenson (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993), 285–86.

458 N.F.S. Grundtvig, "The Danish Four-leaf Clover or a Partiality for Danishness," in *The School for Life: N.F.S. Grundtvig on Education for the People*, ed. Edward Broadbridge, Clay Warren, and Uffe Jonas, trans. Edward Broadbridge (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), 129.

459 Ibid., 131.

He continues:

> For in Denmark, as we know, the absolute monarchy is the gift of friendship from the people, and the people's freedom of speech is a gift of friendship from the king. This arrangement must be considered not only excellent but also a great blessing. Despite its brand-new and slightly disharmonious tone this genuine Danish people's voice is still the same ancient voice which the historian cannot mistake, and almost without exception measured for the fatherland and the mother-tongue and representing all that is decent, free, and natural. Such a people's voice, created freehand by noblemen, citizens, and farmers round and about on our islands, exceeding by far my notion of its possibilities, even though I regard myself as among the giants in my faith in Danish wonders. So it is only a question of the new way of living the old-fashioned way again, which of course means using the new mouth given to the old people's voice from the king's hand.[460]

Once again, Grundtvig is expressing his pure cultural nationalism through the display of his nostalgia for the past, and is advocating for the future by looking to recreate the past while maintaining gratitude and loyalty to the crown. Grundtvig continues to extol the virtues of Danishness while subtly disparaging German influence by stating:

> Turning now to the mother-tongue, here I have been a worker in the field for so long with 'mouth and pen' that I can hardly be denied the liberty to speak or vote. And even though in this regard I am of course highly partial and have taken great pains until 'past forty' to avoid being 'Germanized' myself, I still have the bad taste of the Latin poison in my mouth which I spat out a whole generation ago. Yet even if I have said too much here, beautiful Denmark and the lovely mother-tongue undoubtedly have the incomparable advantage for the Danish people that they are its *property*, so it would be a pity to blame them for much preferring them, like every other people, to anything else in the world with all its languages.[461]

Grundtvig increases the severity of his rhetoric by taking a more antagonistic tone against foreign influence, while further promoting nationalistic fervor when he states:

[460] Ibid., 138–39.
[461] Ibid., 145–46.

> So our patriotism – the soul in our people's life – also pervades all our organizations and is the common denominator in all our numbers. This will doubtless happen: Our watchword shall be 'Denmark above all!' Then come the foreigners, according to their behavior towards us! So far they have inflicted on old Denmark all the ills they could, and even at their angriest they cannot do us any more damage. Nor can it go [sic] worse than that we are overthrown, which is how it will end if we continue to indulge foreigners at the expense of the fatherland. But I think I know what the Danes still are and still can be despite six hundred years of slavery under the crushing yoke of Latin and the merciless lash of German.[462]

The remainder of this prose work continues along this sermon-like vein, reiterating the same general points with subtle variations.

In his prose work *The School for Life*, which came out in 1838, a few years after *Norse Mythology*, Grundtvig begins to take a more aggressive stance against what he perceived to be the growing threat of the Germans. He begins by discussing the vision for his folk high school system again, and by addressing the fact that it is still only an illusion, and that its inception must be treated almost as a rebirth following a death. He describes this phenomenon while simultaneously distancing himself from perceived German ideals by stating:

> This typical German fancy that life can and must be explained before it is lived, can and must be transformed by learned heads, this fancy, which must turn all the schools it establishes into workshops of decomposition and death where the worms live well at life's expense, this fancy I completely reject, and I maintain that if the school really is to be an educational institution for the benefit of life, it must first of all make neither education nor itself its goal but the requirements of life, and secondly it must take life as it really is and only strive to shed light on and promote its usefulness. For no school can create a new life in us, and it must therefore neither destroy the old one nor waste time developing rules which a different and better life would supposedly follow, if such were to be found.[463]

Here, Grundtvig is implying the sustainability of his school's proposal, which differs from the German model that already seems to divide people and does not prepare them to live life as useful citizens. In a further reiteration of his values from *Norse*

[462] Ibid., 147–48.

[463] N.F.S. Grundtvig, "The School for Life," in *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the Writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)*, ed. Niels Lyhne Jensen, trans. Edward Broadbridge and Niels Lyhne Jensen (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1984), 71.

Mythology, Grundtvig reasserts that “It is my firm conviction that all puerile learning is a monstrosity, and that bookwormery, segregation from the people, disregard of the mother tongue, and an idolization of Latin literature, which is inimical to all nations and kings and consists of eulogies over tyranny and rebellion, are the most inappropriate childhood learning for Royal Danish civil servants that I can imagine!”[464] Grundtvig expands on the above sentiment by stating that:

> It is nevertheless obviously not through Latin grammar, proses and going to school that one comes to love Denmark or becomes familiar with the people and its mother tongue, so there is at least one gap in our system for educating Danish civil servants who are to have an active influence on the life of the Danish society and people, as especially the church and judicial civil servants must. This gap could presumably not be filled by anything less than a high school for the Danish national and social life, where the mother tongue was sovereign and everything was concerned with the King, the nation, and the land of our fathers.[465]

This passage reaffirms Grundtvig’s position as a staunch monarchist with the now-familiar overtones of his cultural nationalism. He continues on the same premise of promoting the importance of an education in the vernacular by stating:

> If, therefore, a royal Danish high school should not be considered necessary for any other people in the kingdom it is nonetheless absolutely necessary for the time being for the Latinists born and bred, who, if the discharge of their office is to be beneficial, must both think and speak Danish, and love and know our native land and its constitution better than any, but for one thing they cannot do this unless they come into living contact and interaction at a high school with a number of their contemporaries who know only Danish but who from experience know a greater or smaller area of the fatherland, the national and social life far better than can be described in any book, least of all the Latinists’. Furthermore, future civil servants will have great need of such a living education in the mother tongue and of a living acquaintance with the people and the country, even when, as we hope will happen in the future, they have received an elementary education which was in no way hostile to the Danish way of life but in the kindest possible way related to it.[466]

[464] Ibid., 73.
[465] Ibid.
[466] Ibid., 74.

The rhetoric of the above passage regarding language gradually evolves to directly address the need of an education for the peasantry, and how this will put all Danes on a much-needed even social footing. Wåhlin described the divided linguistic nature of Denmark before the final Schleswigian war, which Grundtvig sought to overcome, by stating that common people neither spoke King's Danish nor High German, which was the linguistic practice of the wealthier classes, civil servants, scholars, some townspeople, and was the language of the church and royal court. This separation of linguistic disposition existed between town and countryside, between social groups, educated and uneducated people, and between various day-to-day activities and administrative duties.[467] Grundtvig peppers the sentiments of his previous passage with more discussion of a Nordic solidarity, and ultimately ends with another hostile and xenophobic diatribe against the threats of foreigners who would undermine these nation-building endeavors:

> But if a Danish folk high school as royal, free and popular as possible is necessary for the education of civil servants, can it be less so for the great majority of the people who neither will nor can become civil servants but who must support them as well as themselves? That the root and branch of the nation, its tenants and free-holders great and small, its artisans of all kinds, its sailors and businessmen, need no other enlightenment or education than what they can gain behind a plough, in the workshop, at the mast and in the grocer's shop, that may be what barbarians and tyrants believe, but it was never the Nordic way of thinking among the kings or the people and never could be, because it holds true here more than anywhere that we are all of 'one blood,' so that the same educational ability is to be found in the poor man's cabin as in the rich man's mansion. This natural equality, which is now to be found really only in the Nordic countries where no foreigner has forced his way in and enslaved the former inhabitants, we cannot cherish enough since it is capable of giving our love of the fatherland a greater depth and the education of the people a greater truth than would otherwise be possible.
>
> So if there were no other people under the sun who deserved a folk high school in their mother tongue there would still be the Danes, and if no other people could expect its government's solicitude for popular enlightenment and patriotic education, then the Danes would, whose paternal kings in this as in all solidarity with the people have long been the models that Europe wanted all kings to imitate. However, should there still exist the smallest doubt as to the Danish people being worthy of an education after its heart, or as to the Danish

[467] Wåhlin, "Denmark, Slesvig-Holstein and Grundtvig," 251.

> King's recognition of and paternal solicitude for this, then this doubt would be defeated if not gloriously then at least gladly by the free voice of the people that King Frederik the Blissful called forth in the ancient capitals of Zealand and Jutland. For it is as clear as daylight that a widespread patriotic enlightenment is needed in our day to make the voice of the people confident and civilized, and it goes without saying that there is no request to which His Majesty would rather lend his ear than to the request for a folk and civic high school for Life.[468]

Continuing on this vein, Grundtvig's nationalistic position and antipathy of German and Roman examples finds its mark again when he states that:

> Now education is never neglected in Denmark, comparatively speaking, but it has hitherto clearly been on the wrong track as it made the mistake of attempting to teach all of us every bit of German knowledge about the heavens and logic, and the civil servants also Roman knowledge of the world, but no common sense about what lies nearest to us: about our own nature, conditions in the fatherland, and what is best for the common interest, which, after all, not only what in social terms is the 'one needful thing,' but also probably the only thing the average Daneman [sic] is capable of understanding. However, it is only a little misery that such a wholly alien mode of thought about natural and social matters has created compared with what it would do and be bound to do from now on, misleading or defying the free voice of the people if a living, natural, and patriotic education does not soon banish the alien way of thoughts amongst the majority and leave it powerless amongst the rest, that is, harmless from a social point of view.[469]

These powerful and accusatory statements against the needs and threats of educating society find their culmination with Grundtvig's most pronounced display of cultural nationalism: advocacy for the Danish absolute monarchy. There is no factor more symbolic of the preservation of a specific Danish identity paradigm that is based on the nostalgic past than the iron grip of the monarchy. Grundtvig wrote the following words a mere decade before the abolition of the absolute monarchy, but these sentiments echo the aggressive rhetoric that all his prose has been delivering thus far in order to rally the people behind a nationalistic and unifying ideology:

> Where else in the world, I ask confidently, should this important truth, so generally misunderstood in our time as to bring misery to nations and sovereigns

[468] Grundtvig, "The School for Life," 75–76.
[469] Ibid., 77–78.

> alike, be more immediately recognized and more heartily agreed to than in the country where the people with keen awareness of its significance solemnly handled on to the King unlimited power for paternal use. And where else, I ask again, would it be more certain that an absolute monarch would take pride in using his absolute power in a paternal way by adapting all the laws and institutions according to the enlightened nature of the people and the general good; where more certain than in the very country where the people's nature is the life source of royal power and where the absolute monarch, after thousands of demonstrations of his paternal care, crowned the work by voluntarily electing the voice of the people to his council. Truly in Denmark, where the ear of the people was raised to the royal mouth and the royal ear was lowered to the mouth of the people, there are, with the one exception of a natural patriotic education, all the conditions necessary on earth for the greatest social happiness, so that such an enlightenment here must of necessity be to the honor and happiness of both the King and the people, provided Heaven adds its blessing.[470]

Rerup contextualizes Grundtvig's monarchist inclinations by stating that his influence on early Danish nationalism was more significant than his role in the formation of Danish identity. The Danish king was not an autocratic monarch, but the discussion of political matters was not permitted, nor was any expression of disapproval of the king or his government allowed. Nationalism publicized elements of identity by rendering them more overtly political. This form of publicizing would not be possible in an appeased society with an absolutist rule. Grundtvig was also a vocal supporter of the monarchy (supporting the absolutist government), which would prolong his path towards accepting democracy. This resulted in his advocacy for blending the authority of the king with the voice of the people. Despite the fact that Grundtvig was not attempting to politically sway the population, he would speak to their sense of morality and religious faith, suggesting that the country could never be made anew without religious faith. Grundtvig's endorsement of the people standing as the writers of history is an early representation of the shift from a firm national loyalty to the Danish crown in favor of a nationalism that is predicated upon a shared culture of people, language, and history. These elements would be developed in the ensuing decades.[471]

Wåhlin echoes these statements by presenting his interpretation of Grundtvig's approach. He states that Grundtvig believed that a society needs to have a righteous "inner" basis in its population and civil servants in order to encourage communal development and overall well-being, where this inner conviction is derived from love

[470] Ibid., 78.

[471] Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 241.

of the fatherland and national sentiments. It needs to be emphasized that despite courage being an element of national sentiments, the authentic virtue of this belief has no root in French *grandeur* or German imperialistic nationalism. Grundtvig viewed national sentiments as a person's ethical duty to live his life as a reflection of what was best for the general well-being of society. The path to this was through education, and specifically, a kind of education that worked less to prepare people for scholarly pursuits and more to imbue them with the knowledge of how to be conscientious members of society.[472] In context of all of these social and moral tenets, Henningsen presents his view on what the Folk High School system specifically chose to instill and what it wanted its students to project in society. He suggests that determining the description of "people's education" revolved around asking what affiliates of a people's presidium would require in order to carry out their responsibilities in an experienced and dependable way. These representatives needed to be members of their own constituency, and had to be familiar with the thoughts, behaviors, history, mother language, and poetry of their fellow citizens. All new expressions were first depicted in poetry, necessitating familiarity with this form of expression. They also need to be knowledgeable of the country's state of affairs, and be aware of needs beyond their own personal desires in order to properly provide for the well-being of the entire society.[473]

In the same year as he had written *The School for Life*, Grundtvig presented a series of lectures that were titled, *Within Living Memory*. He sought to discuss the history of what he had lived through up to that time with students at Copenhagen University who had invited him to speak to them. Perhaps he felt that in his desire to educate the population, directly addressing the nation's most educated youth would be an excellent platform for him to isolate and emphasize some of the most important themes that had come up in his prose over the years. One of the lectures (from 1838) was titled *On Germany and the German Spirit*, and it is arguably up to this point Grundtvig's most reactionary and detailed discussion of Germany's danger to Denmark. This time, however, he isolates the specific threat without conflating the German threat with tenets of the Romans, the Latin language, or any other external factors that he crusaded against in the past. Indeed, this discussion of the Germans has ideological implications that will almost assuredly bear influence on overall Danish receptions, especially in the aftermath of the Schleswigian Wars where one could argue the moral justifications of accepting Grundtvig's view. The contents of this lecture will constitute the culmination of Grundtvig's invective directed at the Germans prior to the first Schleswigian War. Grundtvig makes his views explicitly clear at the start of the lecture by stating:

472 Wåhlin, "Denmark, Slesvig-Holstein and Grundtvig," 260–61.
473 Henningsen, "The Danish Folk High School," 287–88.

> I have a reputation for being almost as bitter an enemy of the Germans as of the Romans, of the holy as of the unholy Roman Empire. Firstly, there is no question of my hating the Germans as people, but only of an incompatibility with the way of thinking which on the evidence of experience comes most naturally to the Germans. My whole quarrel with the Germans is really concerned with the fact that they are determined either to make me a German, or to regard me as a fool; and I give as good as I get and do not wish to be either. Instead I assert that Denmark is no more the tail of Germany than the Norse spirit is a sprite serving the Imperial German reason. On the contrary, it is a sovereign entity, which has performed a multitude of great deeds that German reason could not emulate, and which will continue to do so.
>
> Denmark's ancient quarrel with Germany is also purely a question of freedom and independence, which the Germans simply cannot accept since they have got it into their heads once and for all that Denmark does after all belong to the German empire, thinking and speaking Low German just like Holstein, and should therefore just like Holstein politely agree to think and speak High German; and it is to no avail what argument you draw from history or nature in our defense. Europe must be glad that since time immemorial Germany has been so chopped up that, however impressive it may be, it is still split downwards and across. For if you consider all the heads that think and speak German, all under one hat, all under a German Emperor Napoleon, then it would be a power far more fearful in human eyes than France in her most dangerous period, and they would be far harder taskmasters in consequence of the fact that, to my way of thinking, they are far more serious and thorough. And we poor Danes who have had enough trouble defending our little bit of individuality against a chopped-up Germany would as likely as not be swallowed whole when she is united.[474]

For the first time, Grundtvig spoke of the threat posed to Denmark by the German imperialistic mentality. The accuracy of his foresight is both astounding and frightening. Everything that Grundtvig expressed as a fear would ultimately come to pass, in both his century and in the next. If one considers that Grundtvig spoke these words in 1838 to young students, many of them could have lived to be veterans of both the first Schleswigian War of 1848–50, and the second one of 1864. If Grundtvig's sentiments were heard, internalized, and then lived by the same core group of Copenhagen's intellectuals who then lived to witness the arrival of Wagner

[474] N.F.S. Grundtvig, "On Germany and the German Spirit," from *Selections from Within Living Memory*, in *A Grundtvig Anthology: Selections from the Writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)*, ed. Niels Lyhne Jensen, trans. Edward Broadbridge and Niels Lyhne Jensen (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1984), 99–102.

and his German operas, what implications could these experiences and thoughts have had on the reception of the composer? After all, the first fully-staged Wagner opera in Denmark took place in 1870—32 years after Grundtvig's warnings, and only six years after the second Schleswigian War. Wåhlin adds to these sentiments by contextualizing the views of the time, noting that it was never a matter of converting common people from Holstein or Ditmarsken into Danes via cultural and political endeavors. Danish national groups rather sought to stop the "*Germanification*" of Schleswig and to possibly recover some of the territory's previous connection with a sense of Danishness. In addition, part of the undertaking was concerned with securing the right of common Danish speakers to retain their identification as Danes in Schleswig if they desired.[475] Grundtvig especially proposed that Danish individuality, or the sovereignty of their national identity, would be lost in the aftermath of German military aggression. This, thankfully, did not come to pass, but it very well could have. Grundtvig ended his lecture on Germany and Germans by mentioning a cultural paradigm that would, in under half a century, be forever primarily associated with Wagner above all other iterations: "And although I am far from idolizing Germany in the Middle Ages or extolling to the heavens as masterpieces of art the Lay of the Niebelungen, it is nonetheless a thousand times worthier of a nation to overdo its admiration for the pleasing expression and unique achievement of its spirit than to despise and deride it."[476] Wagner's *Ring* would not reach Denmark until years after Andersen's death, but the power that Grundtvig's polemics held over his own people would not preclude such a statement about the *Nibelung* Saga from stoking future anti-*Ring* sentiments. Rerup concludes his own views on Grundtvig by stating: "Grundtvig seems to be a kind of missing link between the complacent patriotic ideology of the 18th century and the much later nationalism which was eager to propagate its sentiments and ideas in order to collect the masses around the national cause."[477] In conclusion, Grundtvig's main prose works of the 1830s, presented in chronological order, depict his increasingly-hostile and accusatory nationalist rhetoric. As Denmark's political situation continued to march towards the Schleswigian Wars, Grundtvig's position never faltered and he only continued to preach to his people the brand of national unity that turned its back on all foreign entities.

At the end of the *Lykke Peer* section, we revisited Sarah Tracy's concept of narrative analysis with her focus on pinpointing stories that have plots and audiences, and are both told and untold. These chapters on Grundtvig presented a juxtaposition of this study's pro-German first half with these clear expressions here of a pro-

475 Wåhlin, "Denmark, Slesvig-Holstein and Grundtvig," 252.
476 Grundtvig, "On Germany and the German Spirit," 103.
477 Rerup, "Grundtvig's Position in Danish Nationalism," 242.

Danish position. As with Andersen, Grundtvig's audience was also the Danish people, but his plot was diametrically opposed through his advocacy of molding Denmark's identity in a display of cultural nationalism that simultaneously portrays Germany as a threat to his goals of preservation and promotion. As we will see, Wagner's narrative arc followed a similar procedural path to Grundtvig where the composer adopted a nationalist position to promote his own interests.

Section V: Opposing Ideologies and Nationalism

Andersen's Associations with Grundtvig

The cultural nationalism that Grundtvig cultivated in Denmark was based on promoting a nostalgia of the past where circumstances were overall better, and where foreign influence was to blame for weakening the Nordic character. The Schleswigian Wars were the perfect backdrop for emphasizing the necessity to forge a new national identity. In many ways, Andersen was for and against this restructuring. Although he did feel that the arts were in need of a revitalization that would chart the course of their future social viability, he also wished to retain the strong cultural ties that he felt Denmark and Germany naturally shared. Andersen's career was forged and nurtured in Germany, so it could not have been agreeable for him to presumably hear Grundtvig identify Germany as a threat to Danish cultural and national identity.

Andersen and Grundtvig had a long-standing relationship that was not particularly close, but that was based on decades of shared living in Copenhagen. They had also met a few times, but it was the opinion of the older man by the younger one that would fluctuate more drastically than the inverse reception of Grundtvig's feelings towards Andersen. Nevertheless, they were two titans of Danish society and culture, and exerted opposing styles of influence. In his book on Andersen and Grundtvig, Andersen scholar Hilding Ringblom notes that Grundtvig and Andersen had both distinctly presented their national views of Danish society to the Danish public: Grundtvig spoke of what Danish spiritualism was historically and culturally based on, while Andersen used his fairytales to present people's common, everyday practices and preoccupations in relatable ways. The great Norwegian writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson appreciated both Andersen and Grundtvig. He viewed Grundtvig as a virtual prophet who was well liked by both the Danish clergy and society, and Andersen as the unequalled storyteller of the lives of common people. Andersen quoted Bjørnson in his diary from 20 December 1867 stating that: "He

said that Grundtvig and I were the two real folk poets, penetrating the [understanding of the] people, while other poets could probably just sit and smell."[478]

The case of Wagner is a prime example of Andersen and Grundtvig's diverging morals: To the latter, he was a threat, and to the former, he was a savior. This moral dichotomy and microcosm would contribute to the overall moralistic climate in Denmark that would influence Wagnerian reception for the Danes. Therefore, it is now necessary to trace Andersen's personal connection with Grundtvig, as well as with some of the leading tenets of Grundtvigianism, in order to see how Wagner and Wagnerism fits into this polarizing Danish aesthetic and socio-political landscape.

Ringblom describes Andersen's earliest experiences with Grundtvig and how these views evolved over time and circumstance. Indeed, he discusses how in Andersen's youth, his opportunistic nature granted him the ability to establish friendships with many people who either did not agree with Grundtvig, or tried to separate themselves from his more divisive and hostile preachings.[479] Andersen was close to people such as Henriette Wulff, Henriette Hanck, and H.C. Ørsted, who had opposed Grundtvig, so to Ringblom, it becomes apparent how Andersen could have been swayed by their influence. However, many of these friends started dying by the early 1860s, and Andersen now began acquiring friends who were more sympathetic to Grundtvig. As a result, he gained more insight into the diversity of Grundtvig's endeavors and had come to be less dismissive of the older man. Furthermore, Andersen came to admire being described along with Grundtvig as "the two actual folk poets," and as both of them began to cultivate greater renown in Denmark, it became easier for Andersen to associate with Grundtvigian circles in ways that he had not before.[480]

Ringblom provides an example to demonstrate the polarization between Andersen and Grundtvig's convictions: the way they both categorize death. Ringblom states that Grundtvig continuously emphasized death as being wrathful, along with his subsequent warning neither to romanticize death poetically, nor to present is as something "friendly," like how death in literature is symbolized as "a good angel." This warning may have been directed towards Andersen, who often idealized and poeticized death in his stories with angels who escort those who have just died. Examples of this can be found in the poem "The Dying Child," the fairytale "The Angel," or in the guise of the deceased grandmother in "The Little Girl with the Matches."[481]

[478] Hilding Ringblom, *H.C. Andersen og trådene til Grundtvig* (Odense: H.C. Andersen Centret, 1986), 12.
[479] Ibid., 86.
[480] Ibid.
[481] Ibid., 130.

Ringblom claims that it is not comprehensively known how extensively Andersen was aware of Grundtvig's literary complaints, but that there was indeed some awareness. Andersen had quoted some of Grundtvig's songs in his "Dannevirke," and in 1857, quoted a poem about the first Schleswigian War in his novel *To Be, Or Not To Be?* He continues that Andersen was certainly aware of Grundtvig's poems when they appeared at social functions, such as Oehlenschläger's funeral and Thorvaldsen's homecoming celebration. He also asserts that Grundtvig's polemical writings were discussed in the circles that Andersen was a part of.[482] Using the concept of death to distinguish the aesthetic approaches of the two Danes is fascinating. It acts as an example of their fundamental moral discord: Andersen philosophized, idealized, and poeticized death, similarly to Wagner, while Grundtvig resisted such glorifications. Similarly to how Andersen sought to diffuse the more antagonistic and controversial elements of Wagnerism in *Lykke Peer*, by explicitly quoting Grundtvig in his fictitious literature, he could be exercising control over Grundtvig's aesthetics by re-contextualizing them in order to express a narrative that is, as Ringblom stated earlier, congruent with his own hopes. Whether this is shrewdly opportunistic or aesthetically idealistic, there is a symmetry to his stylization of opposing concepts in *Peer* with these earlier examples that directly incorporate Grundtvigian notions. By embedding these quotes in his writings, Andersen can be seen as attempting to sway public opinion just as cleverly as Grundtvig, especially if he is more aware of Grundtvig's reach of influence after having spent more time in the company of the theologian's supporters. The fate of Wagner's reception could, therefore, lie with how the two Danes presented their convictions literarily, and which one would yield a more compelling representation of the controversial matter of German art and ideology in Denmark following the Schleswigian Wars.

These notions are self-evident in *To Be, Or Not To Be?* where Andersen again makes his position subtly known. He states:

> National poetry will always be valued. Here in the north, this is especially seen in the case of Oehlenschläger, though he is not northern enough; Grundtvig is more so, but he wants Oehlenschläger's creative spirit. This last-named poet has not, however, molded all his characters out of the Sagas' marble blocks; had he done this, perhaps he would not either have made such a favorable impression upon the multitude, for whom freer times have greater charms. His tragedies are no more northern, than Orientalists would find his Aladdin oriental. 'Our present times demand another style of poetical composition, then the peculiarly

[482] Ibid.

> Northern,' replied Niels: 'the old Gods are dead; the heathen and the heroic ages are past; their times are not ours, and our poets should seek in their creations to paint for us with all the force of spirit and truth, the age in which we live.[483]

This passage is important for both its projection of Andersen's values and the subtle anti-Grundtvigian rhetoric. By rejecting the cultural aesthetics of the past as obsolete and not indicative of the present times, Andersen is disqualifying Grundtvig's policy of cultural nationalism derived from the past. By stating that Grundtvig wishes he had Oehlenschläger's creative spirit, he is implying that Grundtvig himself is perhaps aware of the inauthenticity of his position. This is also an important admission, because it questions the way in which Grundtvig had idealized Oehlenschläger as a proponent of Nordicness. Here, however, Andersen uses the central symbol of *Aladdin* to denote the foolishness of placing Oehlenschläger, with his Orientalist play, on the pedestal of Nordic authenticity. Andersen made the same point by noting how Oehlenschläger did not derive his work from the Nordic sagas, but rather appropriated foreign themes. It is perhaps a curious move for Andersen, who adored Oehlenschläger, but he was compelled to criticize Grundtvig by pointing out the lack of Nordic qualities in Oehlenschläger. Yet, the most important element of these quotes is to reiterate once again that through *To Be, Or Not To Be?*, Andersen projected his disapproval of Grundtvig's morality and extremist "orthodox" nationalism literarily through his author's voice. Lastly, Andersen may arguably be referencing himself by suggesting what a poet should project instead, and by naming spirit and truth, makes a veiled reference to the Ørsted fusion of art and science, which Grundtvig opposed. This was but the first salvo that Andersen launched at Grundtvig's expense in his novel, but it will not be the last nor the most stinging.

Ringblom addresses a few other key differences between Andersen and Grundtvig, starting with their religious beliefs. He quotes one of Andersen's diary entries that recounts an anxious encounter with a priest that contextualizes his position with religion:

> The priest Knudsen came to dinner with his wife. His entire discussion of religion was based on the Bible, as if it was infallible. He used science where it supported the word of the Bible, citing newer discoveries, where they suggested what pious men had said, but rejected what was not upheld in the Bible. He threw out a lot of Biblical language that became thorny and stood between God's love and I. I said that in God's nature, I could feel more emboldened than by a poor

483 Andersen, To Be, Or Not To Be?, 124.

> sermon. 'But nature does not preach Christianity,' he replied. I got nervous and did not feel happy or comfortable with this overbearing man![484]

Ringblom concluded that Andersen's "tolerance threshold" for such a discussion was not high. He further states that while Knudsen and Grundtvig differed theologically, Grundtvig was also a "zealous priest" and that Andersen could have viewed him in the same skeptical light as Knudsen.[485] Ringblom reminds the reader here of Grundtvig and Ørsted's opposing opinions, implying Andersen's strong association with Ørsted, thereby creating the logical assumption that Andersen would not agree with Grundtvig on religious matters. He also mentions that the term "orthodox" was often employed by Andersen to describe Grundtvigians, suggesting their dogmatic and literal interpretation of the Bible.[486]

A further connection with Ørsted is emphasized when Ringblom notes how Andersen's books *In Sweden* and *To Be, Or Not To Be?*, along with diary entries and letters, all contribute to the notion that Andersen's view of God and ecclesiastical spirituality concerning the essence of a spirit and soul was strongly influenced by Ørsted. Indeed, the latter

> believed that natural science, with its explanations and the search for the laws of nature, does not necessarily have to appear as the Bible's contradiction, but perhaps on the contrary, illuminates divine revelation, cf. Andersen's letter to Henriette Wulff of 27/12/1855, in which he states the following: 'There is—and to a high degree within us—a spirit of struggle between religion and science. Recently, Professor Nielsen (the prominent Grundtvigian Rasmus Nielsen) in his university program has stated clearly that it is either the Bible or science—the two must stand against each other! This is something that looks contradictory that you see in "My Life's Adventure." To me, science illuminates the divine revelation; I go with open eyes to the blind eye of others. Our Lord can speak with the sound sense he gave us. Peace and reconciliation between nature and the Bible!'[487]

After briefly describing the liberal manner in which Andersen views Biblical scripture, Ringblom notes how "it is not surprising that Andersen could be relatively relaxed among people of very different religions."[488] This is significant because it

[484] Ringblom, Andersen til Grundtvig, 134–35.
[485] Ibid., 135.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid., 42.
[488] Ibid., 43.

directly correlates to *Lykke Peer* and the projection of religious tolerance therein. The character of the singing master and the implicit refutation of Wagner's *Judaism in Music* are all reflected in Andersen's morality of religious tolerance. Furthermore, Ringblom notes that based on Andersen's comments in his corresponding letters and diaries to the writing of *To Be, Or Not To Be?*, it is evident that in that book he sought to expound on his personal religious views. Moreover, in his theological capacity, Grundtvig tried hard to portray the Bible's texts as precisely as he could, but he also advocated early on that the word of God for man must extend to those individuals who are not exposed to the Bible. In 1814, Grundtvig was critically engaged in an argument with an anonymous person in the magazine Athene, writing: "If what I seek in the Bible is so important to me that my temporal and eternal happiness depends on the proper understanding of its word, then I must despair if I do not realize that God cannot have given the world its word, and yet made it impossible for 99 out of 100 people to understand it for faith and bliss."[489] Due to his interpretation of the Bible here, Grundtvig attempted to find an alternate path on which to build his Christian faith on. Neither Andersen nor Grundtvig thought that a person should completely trust a theological explanation of the Bible, where Andersen believed that the Bible depicted, most simply, "what the wise man first comes to through strenuous study," while Grundtvig sought to remove the theologian's views from the basic structure of teaching the Bible to churchgoers.[490]

All of this religious flexibility on Andersen's part is reflected in the character of Peer. Indeed, Andersen describes him as both extremely pious and simple, but in terms of his spiritual freedom, and not implying that he is a simpleton. Once again, all that Andersen believes religion to serve is personified in his hero's character. Grundtvig also sought to promote a wider application of the Bible's meaning, demonstrating how both men desired to make the religious text more appealing to common people.

Returning back to Andersen's relationship with Ørsted, it is important to emphasize once again how this relationship stood to influence Andersen in ways that diverged from Grundtvig's aesthetics. These divergences most acutely stemmed from the notion of religion versus science.[491] Andersen is quoted as describing in *My Life's Adventure* what knowing Ørsted meant to him: "It was like a diving finger, pointing me to the best and noblest, whose significance I did not really know and appreciate at all. From the first moment, with every-growing participation that became true friendship in the last few years, Ørsted followed me to his death; on my spiritual development, he had a great impact and was the one who, throughout my

[489] Ibid., 44.
[490] Ibid.
[491] Ibid., 68.

poetic development, spiritually held me up, gave me courage, and predicted a future of recognition in my fatherland as well.”[492] This admission is crucial in many ways. First, it demonstrates that Ørsted was possibly the closest thing to a mentor that Andersen admitted to having, and attached both spiritual and national growth to Ørsted’s influence. It can therefore easily be seen how such devotion and loyalty would further compel Andersen to take Ørsted’s side against arguments with Grundtvig. The quote above is also important in a wider context that passively involves Wagner: Andersen wrote that admission in 1851, around the time that he also wrote the majority of his essays on the future of the arts. These essays were analyzed earlier in and of themselves, as well as for their theoretical congruence with Wagner’s notions on the same subject at roughly the same time. Therefore, in a fundamental way, Ørsted’s influence on Andersen allowed the poet to evolve his aesthetic perspective in a way that would ultimately yield the crowning achievement of this ethos and solidarity with Wagner: *Lykke Peer*.

One year earlier, in 1850, Andersen writes to Henriette Wulff a similar assessment of Ørsted:

> I have had great pleasure in the recent past to talk to Ørsted often about science and religion—his thoughts are so healthy and clear—we have in so many respects so many sympathies that I have my best hours there. Ørsted also thinks, like myself, that I am at a new spiritual point, and he congratulated me that such a thing can happen in my maturing age, while still maintaining a youthful mind. I do not know where it will lead, but I wait quietly for the flowers to bloom. I have written a dissertation: The Estimated Evidence of Immortality. Ørsted tells me that I have poetically stated what Kant has already said, but I do not know a word of Kant.[493]

Once more, the same influence is on display as in the quote from the following year, but it is also evident now that Andersen was preoccupied with notions of immortality, which was a central theme later in *Peer*. Ringblom states that the dissertation that Andersen mentions was included as Chapter 20 in his book *In Sweden*, titled: “Faith and Science (The Sermon in Nature).” Ringblom notes that the central idea is already evident in the first sentence where Andersen writes: “Truth can never conflict with truth, science never contradicts the faith, we naturally speak of both of them in their purity; they meet and reinforce the most glorious thought of man: Immortality.” Ringblom believes that here, Ørsted and Andersen clearly posit that “God reveals himself equally strongly through the Bible (faith), and the nature

[492] Ibid., 67.
[493] Ibid., 68.

he himself has created. Science and nature therefore become a contribution to the illumination of God's being and not an attack on the Bible."[494] Essentially, God is in nature, and nature preaches of the existence of God, according to Ringblom.[495] These notions are very clear in the narrative of *Peer*, as Peer's piousness is often symbolically juxtaposed with birds, trees, fruit, etc. There is an interconnectedness of spirituality, immortality (artistically figurative and actual), and faith—both in one's self and in God—that Andersen consistently projects through the values and moral evolution that Peer undergoes throughout the novella.

Circling back to Grundtvig, it becomes clear how his polemic on the juxtaposition of nature and religion had upset Ørsted. This altercation originated in 1812 when Grundtvig wrote in "Brief Conception of the World Chronicle in Context" that the natural science's attempts to describe nature steered man away from God. Grundtvig wrote: "By dissolving the bodies (chemically) into their invisible constituents, it is confirmed in the imagination that the whole of man is only a body dissolved in death; by calculating the course of the celestial bodies and investigating the immediate causes of everything reminiscent of God, one is helped to forget him; in the infinite infinity of mathematics, one discovers a welcoming image of the soul, with its infinite forwardness, and is freed from the notion of an eternity that horrifies all the enemies of God." As Ringblom states: "This irreconcilable tone from Grundtvig inspired Ørsted to resist, because he just could not accept that the natural sciences could alienate God in such a way."[496] Grundtvig was clearly fearful that science would remove man's fear of God, and thereby dissuade him from following a righteous path of religious conformity. Such a view is perfectly related to Grundtvig's cultural nationalism, where he consistently advocated for older paradigms that he was convinced was the only true path for Danes. Ørsted, Andersen, and also Wagner, all refute such dogma in favor of a more philosophical spirituality that is ultimately metaphysical in scope. Andersen's metaphysical depictions of Peer are more allied to Schopenhauer and Wagner, as they are aesthetics associated with the arts, which are closer themes to Andersen than religion or even science. The above quote demonstrates once again how Grundtvig's beliefs are fundamentally opposed to Ørsted/Andersen, but there is also an implication that Andersen/Wagner are beyond Andersen/Ørsted, in that Andersen's union with Wagnerian ideals elevated Ørsted's science to the arts, and it is the future of the arts that Andersen applies Ørsted's influence to when philosophizing about the future.

494 Ibid., 68–69.
495 Ibid., 69.
496 Ibid., 70.

Ringblom now astutely associates these ideas directly with *Lykke Peer* himself. He says that: "In the book *In Sweden*, Andersen, as Ørsted, thinks that man can recognize nature, precisely because man and nature have a common origin, namely God. As late as 1870, he compiles in his poem: 'Never is the time youth past' from section XV in the novel *Lykke Peer*, that man is again with God and nature, and attributes it to God—and nature in its ever-recurring splendor—eternal youth and thus the immortality that he so clearly pointed out in the earlier quote from the introduction to the chapter: 'Faith and Science' from the book *In Sweden*."[497] Ringblom quotes the last sentence from *In Sweden* thusly: "Never is the time of youth over! The earthly life is an entire magic, sunshine and stormy weather, joy and pain, there is a world laid in our hearts; it does not fade like a shot star. Man was created in the image of God. God and nature stand forever young. Wait, you teach us to sing, ever little bird says it: 'Never is youth past!'"[498] As Ringblom noted, this passage from *In Sweden* is indeed quite similar to the imagery later incorporated into *Lykke Peer*. Peer himself writes a poem of youth's everlasting quality as it is akin to immortality, which, as we learn at the end of the novel, is signified by Peer's death. All the dichotomies of sunshine and storm, and joy and pain, are juxtaposed within Peer's character, and the mention of the world laid in our heart is a direct allusion to Peer's heart, which is the source of his luck, his artistic talent, and ultimately his metaphysical transcendence of the empirical world, which is also referenced in the words "earthly life." The image of not fading like a shot star is also a focal point at the end of *Peer* in how Andersen sought to preserve his hero's immortality through his legacy so that he will never fade from the collective conscience. And even the closing echo of the bird is an important narrative device in *Peer*. Once more, these symmetries between *In Sweden* and *Lykke Peer* depict the way in which Andersen conflated the science of Ørsted with the metaphysics of Wagner to elevate the science of Ørsted found *In Sweden* to the artistic spirituality of religion, nature, and art in the Wagnerian *Lykke Peer*.

Importantly, in this entire above discussion, the theories of Grundtvig are nowhere to be found. Ringblom stated that "Grundtvig distanced himself from the mention of 'immortality' as something that one is unquestionably in possession of—partly because it reminded him too much of the rationalist-emphasized Christianity he had fought against in his youth—and partly because he feared that the atoning salvation of Christ could thus appear as something less central to the Christian life of a Christian."[499] He continues by noting that Andersen holds to a view of immortality that is consistent with Ørsted's concept of "God in nature," which argues

[497] Ibid.
[498] Ibid., 71.
[499] Ibid.

that immortality is the natural byproduct of our having been created in the likeness of God. Grundtvig's view of physical death, likewise, is not connected with non-existence of the body, but is rather a life that is not in harmony with God.[500]

These distinctions once again draw the line that separates Grundtvig's ecclesiastical religiosity and the more spiritually-inclined religiosity of Ørsted and Andersen, which Andersen will then philosophize with an aesthetic that resembles Wagner's metaphysics. It would therefore be impossible for Grundtvig to accept the notion of immortality that Andersen offers in *Peer*, as it is in no way associated with an absolution given by Christ. Indeed, Peer's final actions and motivations during the performance of *Aladdin* are not those of a man preparing to be one with Christ, but rather with an ideal—one that is entirely rooted in the negation of the empirical will.

Ringblom next isolates the political disparity of both Danes. He states that Grundtvig became much more politically involved after the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1848, and that he essentially maintained this involvement through issues regarding the church, the Danish school system, and national issues stemming from the Schleswigian Wars, all of which kept him politically active up to just a few years before his death. Andersen, conversely, stated in *My Life's Adventure* that "politics is not my cause, there is nothing I can do; God has given me another mission, I felt and feel it." Ringblom makes it clear that despite this claim, Andersen should not be seen as being oblivious to politics, only that he did not take an active political role like Grundtvig. The poet voices his political opinions in his fictional works.[501]

Furthermore, despite their contrasting approach in expressing their political views, Ringblom states that Andersen and Grundtvig were both keen on conveying their sense of Nordic solidarity. Certainly, both were involved with the Nordic student movement, where in 1837, Andersen wrote the song: "I am a Scandinavian," and wrote a song in 1840 for the Scandinavian Natural Scientists Meeting. Grundtvig was one of the primary figures of the Copenhagen student meeting in 1845, and wrote two songs himself, which emphasized common Nordic origins, cultural similarities, and stressed the importance of language providing food for thought. Nevertheless, their involvement was of vastly contrasting significance: Grundtvig took it upon himself to come up with a new Nordic cultural path, while Andersen sought to only emphasize his tacit support by being sympathetic with the cause and commemorating it with his poetry.[502] This is important to consider—that both Danes were known to have expressed levels of national pride regarding their culture and

[500] Ibid., 73.
[501] Ibid., 136.
[502] Ibid.

language. Andersen reflected on his linguistic use a few months before his death, writing to Jonas Collin on 6/6/1875: "'The naïve was only one part of the fairy tale—the humor, on the other hand, was salted in them, and that in my written language, I built on the vernacular that was my Danish.'"[503] However, Grundtvig sought to create an isolationist state by explicitly promoting and nationalizing these features, whereas Andersen only wished to make it be known that he supported the Danish cause, but also stood by a wider cultural cosmopolitanism that did not agree with Grundtvig's isolationist policy. Ringblom concurs by stating that: "With his fairytale style in mind, it could be said that the narrator Andersen linguistically moves towards the ordinary citizen. However, the scientist and preacher Grundtvig draws, in some sense, with his directly appealing and personally-powerful written language, the same citizen by the hair. Both—each in his own way—got the people to be decisive in speech and characterized the Danish language."[504]

Another example of Andersen's proud national voice making a more prominent appearance is through his poeticizing of the Danish language in his 1842 novel *A Poet's Bazaar*. In this book, Andersen writes:

> Do not say that Denmark has no mountains; its literature is a mountain high and wooded, as seen from neighboring countries blazing in the horizon. Welcome us, permeate our spiritual mountain nature, here stretches Oehlenschläger's mighty Urskov, Grundtvig's giant tomb, where the stones sound like the Memnon column; here lie the towns of Holberg with living people, as we know them yet, here the freshly mown hay on Christian Winther's clove field, -- Ingemann leads you by the moonlight through the fragrant beech forests; where the nightingale smites and the source speaks of ancient memories, Hertz and Heiberg would teach you that the Danish language has tone, that it can be forged into whistling arrows, into flaming swords.[505]

In this passage, Andersen extols the literary virtues of some of Denmark's greatest poets and writers, including Grundtvig, Oehlenschläger, Winther, and Ingemann. He further venerates the Danish language in how it can be masterfully used to describe people and places. The mention of the nightingale and ancient memories echoes a Grundtvig-like nostalgia for the past, implying that the contemporary writers that he named are connected with their nation's cultural past. It is fascinating to note how similar Andersen's prose reflects Grundtvig's ideals at this time. Yet, it would be only a few years later that Andersen would change his tone and concentrate his

503 Ibid., 14.
504 Ibid.
505 Ibid., 76.

efforts on extolling the virtues of Ørsted and his concept of nature-religion. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that Andersen simply evolved past the musings that he expressed in *A Poet's Bazaar* in favor of a more spiritual path that would ultimately bring him closer to Wagner as well. Andersen would always revere these individuals as his futuristic essays of the ensuing decades often name cultural luminaries of the past, yet he would come to recognize that the future of the arts required a different and newer aesthetic that reflected something spiritual and psychological. Indeed, these years constituted a crossroads for Andersen where he shed his more explicit Grundtvigian cultural nationalism in favor of Ørsted and Wagner, but would always retain the pride he felt in his cultural heritage, and would express this by making Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin* the vessel for his Wagnerian hero's metaphysical salvation, thereby traversing both epochs at once. This traversal may also be seen as reflecting Andersen's desire to consolidate the cultural solidarity he viewed as being fundamental between Denmark and Germany. Therefore, everything that Andersen projected in *Lykke Peer* can be seen as both an homage to the past and a treatise for the future. The aesthetic duality of Andersen's morality is a clear expression of his devotion to the arts. And it is precisely this loyalty, above all others, that solidifies his conceptual alliance with Wagner.

A discussion of the Nordic spirit invariably has associations with Oehlenschläger for both Grundtvig and Andersen. Ringblom notes that in the poem about Grundtvig from Andersen's 1832 collection of *Vignettes for Danish Poets*, he makes mention of an awareness of Grundtvig's poems from 1809–11 titled: *The Rise of the Great Life of the Nordic Countries*, where Grundtvig sought to depict a more authentic Nordic tone or spirit. Grundtvig also apparently believed that this authenticity was present in an Oehlenschläger poem about the ancient Nordic.[506] Ringblom continues that "in 'Man's Memory,' a lecture series Grundtvig held in 1838 over the past 50 year history, Grundtvig praised Oehlenschläger as poet to the clouds, mentioning, among other things, *Vavlundur* and *Aladdin* from 1805 [saying that] 'one would have been enough to made two poets immortal.'"[507] This is a thematically-significant observation, as it subtly ties Grundtvig, Andersen, Wagner, and *Lykke Peer* together over several decades. Certainly, although Grundtvig is projecting his idealization of cultural nationalism through Oehlenschläger, it is noteworthy for its mention of *Aladdin*, and also that Andersen was aware of this association. As was made explicit, Andersen depicted *Aladdin* as Peer's Wagnerian opera and culmination of his metaphysical journey. Therefore, *Aladdin*, and by extension Oehlenschläger, held an entirely different but equally important meaning to both Grundtvig and Andersen. It also signifies that *Aladdin* represented crucial national interests, so even though

[506] Ibid., 74.
[507] Ibid.

Andersen's use of it was of narrative importance to Peer, its meaning to the Danish people reading *Lykke Peer* could have instilled Grundtvigian notions of cultural nationalism and Nordicness within them. In this sense, both Grundtvig and Andersen idealized Oehlenschläger's epic Danish play for their own purposes, once again, illustrating their mutual ploy of literarily influencing (or manipulating) the Danish populace. Furthermore, by distinctly choosing to use an incredibly popular and culturally-esteemed play like *Aladdin* as his hero's Wagnerian opera, it may also be seen as a tactical attempt to further endear Wagner to Danish readers by promoting this symmetry between the German composer and Danish audiences.

In the previous section about Grundtvig's prose work *Nordic Mythology*, it was seen how Grundtvig harnessed the old mythologies to promote his brand of cultural nationalism. Ringblom states that Andersen was aware of Grundtvig's book on Norse mythology in the 1840s from the latter's lecture series. However, Ringblom also asserts that although Andersen had an interest in the subject, he very likely sensed even then how Grundtvig was presenting his theory as that of a Christian priest rather than a pagan representation. Once again, this assumption on Andersen's part is more directly depicted in his Grundtvig-laden novel *To Be, Or Not To Be?*, where he presents a caricature of Grundtvig who hijacks Nordic mythology to present his "fanatical orthodox" Christian dogma.[508] As it was stated earlier, Andersen referred to Grundtvigians as "orthodox" fundamentalists, so it is quite clear that this character depiction in *To Be, Or Not To Be?* is based on Grundtvig. It is yet another example of how Andersen steered further away from the Grundtvigian ethos and accepted what he himself believed to be a more authentic insight into the significance of Norse mythology. And if he did not express this boldly enough, he further implied it by branding the Christian appropriation of the mythology as orthodox.

Another example of the Andersen-Grundtvig polarity is again found in Andersen's novel *To Be, Or Not To Be?*, which was Andersen's commentary on the first Schleswigian War. He did, in fact, attempt to subtly emphasize unity with Germany through his prose, while also maintaining a clear favor for the Danish side: "Law and justice were on the side of the Danes; but sympathy is like a deep spring in the earth; where *it* bursts forth, the waters dash over our boundaries and limits. War broke out—a war so sad! Brother stood in the ranks against brother—kindred fought against kindred!"[509] In this context, the Danes and Germans are presumably those who are kindred. He continues in this vein, directly mentioning the war and its outcomes: "The whole of the Duchy of Sleswig lay open to the Danes. Fortune seemed to declare in favor of the Danes; they attacked the town of Sleswig; many a

[508] Ibid., 78.
[509] Andersen, To Be, Or Not To Be?, 234.

heartbeat heavily—brother fought against brother."[510] In the next passage, the Danish protagonist would encounter and converse with a German girl who hated the Danes. In her hostility, she would, ironically, incite tenets of cultural nationalism that were aligned with Grundtvig, thereby perhaps again demonstrating Andersen's antithetical stance to Grundtvig. The woman said:

> Copenhagen is altogether Scandinavian; it bows down before Norway and Sweden in order to form a part of a greater whole. Among them there are sympathy, nationality, similarity of language. But have we not the same rights? We bow before that great Fatherland, whose language we speak, from whence we derive our customs, and with which are our sympathies. It is now time that we should separate from your people, and unite ourselves to our own.[511]

This is an important passage because it not only depicts Andersen's distinct view, but uses Grundtvig's own policies to justify Germany's annexation of Schleswig. It becomes a heated debate where the Danish protagonist retorts by actually inciting Grundtvig's name in a semi-humorous manner that nevertheless addresses the values of the parties in question. Andersen continues the scene with the unhappy German girl. The character Niels Bryde says:

> Well, then, let them evacuate our Danish Sleswig. South of the town stands that ancient frontier wall, 'Thyras Vold,' once before a defense against foreign supremacy. Here formerly, in the olden time, the Danish language was the one spoken, though latterly only among the common people; because, if one pretended to gentility, it was necessary to learn German; thus it became the fashion to speak that language. I have an idea. The greatest champion with us for everything Danish, is old Grundtvig; with you, for everything German, old Arndt; these two are pretty much on par; both are poets, both carry their opinions to extremes. I should like that the contending powers should agree to select these two warriors, and send them forth; that they should meet, and, according to the most approved ancient fashion, should fight a duel at Sprongö, in the Great Belt, about the language and nationality, and, after the result was known, that we others should all fall upon each other's necks, and—all would go right![512]

This passage is vital for Andersen directly naming Grundtvig as the Nordic-centric crusader of Danishness, who is an extremist. The protagonist Bryde, through

[510] Ibid., 238.
[511] Ibid., 239–40.
[512] Ibid., 240–41.

Andersen, acknowledged that the war was fought over language as a pretext of nationalism. Andersen again labels Grundtvig as an extremist, and by jokingly calling him a warrior, subtly infers the inflammatory nature of his crusade. Furthermore, by suggesting a resolution of an "ancient fashion," Andersen is ridiculing Grundtvig again as a relic of the past, similarly to how he advocated that poets should reject archaic notions of the past in favor of a path that reflects contemporary values. Also, in a further joking manner, by saying that a duel between Grundtvig and Arndt should determine the outcome of the war, Andersen is arguably blaming the ethos of their convictions as the root source of the military conflict, thereby leaving it to them to fix the mess that they have caused. The actual situation is more complex than that, of course, but Andersen makes a clear assertion that he does not conform to the Grundtvigian ideology, and finds it to be both archaic and dangerous.

Ringblom believes that Andersen had less issue with Grundtvig as an author and cultural figure, but hated the side of him that was a theologian.[513] It is, therefore, understandable how Andersen would take the opportunity in his literary works to try to strip off the idealization of Grundtvig's propaganda in order to redirect the national narrative. Whether he did this altruistically is another matter. Andersen was clearly interested in nurturing a national-cultural awareness that would accept his own work, but likewise, it must not be forgotten that he also sought to foster solidarity with Germany. Needless to say, his motivations were multi-dimensional and desired many outcomes.

Ringblom concludes his assessment of Andersen and Grundtvig by drawing attention to their individualistic projections of their own Danishness, noting that despite Andersen and Grundtvig's considerable humanistic differences with little personal contact between them, they represented the new path of Denmark's accepted rhetoric, and were the two most socially-visible thinkers in their country. Both were inherently motivated by the Danish language, with Andersen focusing on common and practical articulation, while Grundtvig concentrated on its historical ties with old Danish. The two of them bore such an explicit influence on the use of the Danish language, that demonstrative qualities of the language would have been markedly different without their textual productions. Andersen's poetic reflection of his mother tongue can be seen in the following prose example: "You Danish language, you are my mother's voice, so sweetly you bless my heart." Grundtvig's expressive musings—always in the name of the people—is evidenced in this example from his prose: "The mother tongue is our language of the heart—loose is all foreign speech—it alone in mouth and book can awaken a people from

[513] Ringblom, Andersen til Grundtvig, 83.

hibernation." Andersen and Grundtvig's shared love of the Danish language defined a staunchness of interpretation that bordered on stubbornness, but which stemmed from the same admiration for this essential method of self-expression.[514]

This final view perfectly juxtaposes Andersen and Grundtvig's varied contributions to Danish cultural aesthetics. Ringblom described how they both used the Danish language to different ends, but with the intention to sway the general population. He adds that: "Grundtvig and Andersen were very dissimilar in the use of linguistic expressions, in spite of their shared interest in getting the uneducated to speak as well. Grundtvig did not particularly help this cause with his choice of words, whereas Andersen did, in fact, introduce a spoken, fluent, and written language in parts of Danish literature, and maintained his particular mode of expression despite harsh attacks and direct mockery from circles who took it upon themselves to determine what was in 'good taste.'"[515] Although Andersen projected a sense of national pride and loyalty, it can in no way compare to the cultural nationalism that Grundtvig advocated for. Certainly, Andersen did revere the culture of his nation, but he also felt the distinct need to look forward and innovate for the sake of the future, rather than look back like Grundtvig did and innovate for the sake of preserving past national paradigms. This is the arguably the greatest difference between them, and it becomes plain how the figure of Richard Wagner can be seen as the vessel for their arguments: Grundtvig attempting to consolidate a nationalistic fervor by polemicizing against foreign influence, and in particular Germany, and Andersen crusading to demonstrate Denmark's cultural kinship with Germany by extolling Wagner's aesthetic virtues and emphasizing their importance for creating a new and better future for the arts. It stands to reason, then, why Andersen was so skeptical of Grundtvig's philosophies and found his followers to be dogmatic and perhaps unreasonable. Nevertheless, both Danes exercised significant influence over their country's morality, and it is necessary to now survey Andersen's particular receptions to nationalist rhetoric in order to further understand the dimensions of this cultural climate where Wagner's art and ideology would experience and undergo Danish scrutiny.

Andersen's Changing Views of Danish Nationalism

As it was discussed, Andersen owed a great deal of his fame to the initial success and support that he found in Germany. This phenomenon, along with his firm friendship with hereditary Grand Duke Carl Alexander and his Weimar court, inspired Andersen to conceive of an artistic and aesthetic kinship between Denmark

514 Ibid., 138–39.
515 Ibid., 13.

and Germany. It was also around this time that Andersen had been exposed to Wagner for the first time, and in the immediately ensuing years, had, similarly to Wagner (but completely independently), devised his theories on the future existence of the arts and their place in society. For both men, these were idealizations that they both felt were plausible if fostered under the right leadership. Although Andersen began to feel increasingly alienated from the values that Liszt propagated as Weimar's Kapellmeister, the circumstances of the two Schleswigian Wars had also caused significant damage to his conviction of homogeneity between Denmark and Germany. Indeed, in the vicinity of the wars, and especially after the second war of 1864, Andersen had distinctly sought to make his support for his native country more explicit in his works. Anna Celenza notes that Andersen's "thoughts concerning nationalism and its effect on society as he witnessed it troubled him and consequently greatly influenced his creative output during the middle decades of the century. Andersen was a cosmopolitan at heart, and he viewed himself as both a loyal subject of Denmark's king and a citizen of Europe."[516] Many years after the war, Andersen reflected on the emotionally turbulent implications that these events had on his personal identity as a Dane and reception of Germany:

> I felt more than ever before how firmly I had grown to my native soil and how Danish my heart was. I could have taken my place in the soldiers' ranks, and I would have gladly given my life as an offering for victory and peace. But at the same time, it clearly occurred to me how much good I had enjoyed in Germany, the great acknowledgment my talent had received there, and the many individuals there I loved and to whom I was grateful. I suffered infinitely! And sometimes, when I came across an agitated individual who, in anger or bitterness, sought to destroy my feelings, then it was often more than I could bear![517]

As military historian Ole Hedegaard states, "two periods in Andersen's life caused him great suffering, and it was coincidentally just as serious for Denmark. It was the Three-Year War of 1848–50 and the war of 1864. Andersen had resisted to engage in war-related events since Germany was the first country that wholeheartedly recognized Andersen as a significant poet and where he had some of his best friends and admirers. It is understandable, therefore, that the wars felt doubly painful for him, though he did not admit his loyalty [to Germany] as the Danish hero that he

[516] Celenza, *Andersen and Music*, 149. Text adapted and translated by Anna Celenza.
[517] Ibid., 158.

was."[518] Hedegaard goes on to describe how in 1850, Andersen had written a moving poem in support of the soldiers, called "In Denmark I was Born," which became one of the country's most beloved national songs. Furthermore, one year after the outbreak of the First Schleswigian War in 1848, Andersen wrote a letter on 13 April to William Jerdan, which was summarily published in a newspaper. The letter demonstrates Andersen's dual admiration for both Denmark and Germany, which may at first bring his patriotism into question, yet for Andersen, the choice of picking a side upon necessity was never in doubt—he would side with his homeland. The letter states:

> In our time the storm of change passes through all lands; but there is One above all who changes not – it is the just God. He is from Denmark, which only demands its rights; and they will and must be acknowledged, for truth is the conquering power for all people and all nations. May every nationality obtain its rights, and all that truly is good have its progress! This is and ought to be Europe's watchword, and with this I look consolingly forward. The Germans are an honest, truth-loving people; they will get a clear view of the state of affairs here, and their exasperation will be transformed to esteem and friendship. May that hour soon arrive and may God let the light of his countenance shine on all lands.[519]

Andersen would spend time with the soldiers on the front and in the barracks, and (like Grundtvig), had greatly feared that Denmark would come under the rule of Germany. This latter notion was a particular fear in the aftermath of the 1864 war.[520] Celenza described this poem thusly: "The patriotism of 'In Denmark I was Born' is not abstract or markedly political. Looking at the poem, three themes stand out: the speaker's love of Denmark's landscape, the glory of its past, and the treasures found in its art. Compared to the poetry of Grundtvig, the historical/nationalistic elements in Andersen's poem play a subordinate role."[521] In the months immediately following Denmark's surrender to Bismarck's forces in early 1864, Andersen's disgust with Germany manifested itself in a few telling diary entries. On 14 April 1864, he reflected on a meeting that captured his state of mind at the time: "I had to speak English. Bulwer-Lytton speaks good German, but it was against my heart of

518 Ole A. Hedegaard, *H.C. Andersen 1848–50 og 1864* (Copenhagen: Bent Carlsens Forlag, 1980), 8.
519 Quoted in: Sven Hakon Rossel, "Hans Christian Andersen: The Great European Writer," 48–49.
520 Hedegaard, Andersen 1848–50 og 1864, 8.
521 Celenza, Andersen and Music, 165.

hearts to speak that language, found it unpatriotic. So I said in bad English: 'At present there is for me in that language the sound of cannons and the shouts of enemies; I would rather speak bad English.'"[522] A few days later on 16 April, he wrote:

> Today I've really been tormented by the pressure of political events that are carrying me along—I feel each kindness people in Germany have shown me, acknowledge friends there but I feel that I, as a Dane, must make a complete break with them all. They have been torn out of my heart; never will we meet again; a beautiful past cannot be renewed. My heart is breaking! I am in complete agreement with the basic thrust of the petition—that we have suffered a grievous injustice, that the war has been conducted without any humanitarian considerations.[523]

These diary entries depict the personal and ethical conflict that brewed within Andersen at the time and just how significantly the effects of the war had instilled doubt within him regarding Germany. These are not the reflections of an individual who was passively refusing to take a side. His gratitude for what Germany had done for his career would not transcend the love and loyalty he felt for his homeland or for his sense of justice.

During both wars, Andersen had produced multiple poems and texts of national support, yet his countrymen knew of his frequent travels abroad and his particular affinity for Germany, which sewed skepticism (and questioning accusations) regarding his loyalty to Denmark. Hedegaard emphasized that all these accusations were unfounded, and that despite not physically participating in the actual battles, Andersen, at great personal risk, distributed poems of support and motivation to the soldiers on the front.[524] Celenza noted that Andersen's patriotic poem, "Battle song for the Danes," "contains no talk of cultural divisions, no description of a specific Danish ethnicity. The Danes are simply described as an honorable people, united under the symbols of the monarch's coat-of-arms."[525]

Following the 1864 war, Andersen wrote "At the Soldier's Return in 1864," which included such lines as: "O Denmark, where you have bitterly suffered, blood has flowed, and blood is crying! In the last war, when the soldier came home, the cities held great celebrations, from the houses hung the Danebrog, stood with songs

522 Hans Christian Andersen, *The Diaries of Hans Christian Andersen*, trans. Patricia L. Conroy and Sven H. Rossel (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 307.
523 Ibid., 308.
524 Hedegaard, Andersen 1848–50 og 1864, 9.
525 Celenza, Andersen and Music, 154.

and glories. Now you have come home without Hurry and Song. And yet: You endured, suffered far more in the struggle of Denmark this time, than many people think and know."[526] As Hedegaard notes, Andersen also wrote stories that disparaged Bismarck's Germany, but overall, the "enthusiasm that had at times gripped him during the Three-Year War was now totally gone. It was only grief and self-surrender that characterized him and denied inspiration and renewed courage. He reached the bottom of his spiritual bankruptcy when he wrote the fairy tale that was based on the story of Holger Danske."[527] He goes on to say: "One of the most important consequences for him of the 1864 war was that, on his travels, he no longer sought out his German acquaintances, not even Carl Alexander, which must have been a tough decision to make. 'I can and will not be between the Germans!,' he wrote sadly, but resolutely. A curtain had gone down forever between him and Germany. The literary and poetic magic that Germany had exercised so strongly over him in the time before the Three Year War was lost."[528]

The repercussions of these revelations are extreme, but they were clearly not as conclusive as Hedegaard implied, as Andersen had later returned to his tacit support of German art through his explicit endorsement of Wagner in *Lykke Peer*. However, in context of the Schleswigian Wars, it is evident that Andersen's sensibilities were deeply tied with the implications that the war had on Denmark, and that it had, for a time, tainted his outward support for German culture. Indeed, his story based on the Holger Danske legend further exemplifies this shift in perception for Andersen.

As Andersen was wont to use his writing as both a creative vessel and commentary on the social issues around him, his 1865 short story, *Holger Danske*, reflected, as professor of English and cultural studies Trevor Elkington states, "a picture of Denmark and Danish history, with the Holger Danske legend serving as the frame. Andersen is clearly attempting to prove his own theory of national identity."[529] As Hedegaard implied earlier, Elkington suspects that Andersen wrote the short story to extinguish the accusations that he was not "Danish enough. Andersen uses the Holger Danske legend as a basis for an expanded lecture upon the important historical figures of Denmark's past, and this treatment of the Holger Danske legend both resembles and contrasts Ingemann's poem, *Holger Danske*, published in 1837. To Ingemann, Holger Danske was *the symbol* of Danish identity.

526 Hedegaard, Andersen 1848–50 og 1864, 241.
527 Ibid., 249–50.
528 Ibid., 254; 261.
529 Trevor G. Elkington, "Holger Danske as Literary Danish Identity in the Work of H.C. Andersen and B.S. Ingemann," in *Hans Christian Andersen: A Poet in Time*, ed. Johan de Mylius, Aage Jørgensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1999), 242.

It is therefore interesting that only eight years later, Andersen would choose the Holger Danske legend in what may be an attempt to defend himself from accusations of lacking Danish identity."[530] Andersen incorporated a similar ploy in his theoretical writings on the future of the arts by contextualizing a linear heritage of historical figures to express how the future is born out of the past. By presenting Danish historical figures in *Holger Danske*, Andersen is expressing similar values, but within a nationalist framework, thereby retaining an authenticity of conviction as well as maintaining an agenda of defending his personal interests. Celenza presents another example of this in Andersen's text "*Bulwark of the Arts*, [where] the poet, especially the 'poet of plays,' is deemed the most virtuous Danish soul since his power lies not just in his use of words, but his ability 'to reach an entire audience all at once.' Although Andersen never actually named himself in *Bulwark of the Arts*, audiences could not help but see the character of the poet as yet another example of Andersen's many self-portraits."[531]

Similarly to how Andersen was cognizant of Grundtvig's cultural nationalism and propagation of national identity through religion, so too was he presumably aware of paradigms of perception that Ingemann's *Holger Danske* had over the Danish population, as Elkington notes that the two Danish poets had corresponded in Andersen's youth. Elkington states that "Ingemann saw his task as one of focusing Danish identity and culture through Denmark's history, and when he was finished within the realm of historical fiction, he saw Holger Danske as the next logical step in heightening national identity."[532] Such a statement is very telling of Andersen's motivations to use the same legend decades later, but is also curious in how similar it is to using a protagonist to further an abstract cause by acting as an ideological hero. In this sense, it is not inadmissible to consider Ingemann's Holger Danske as an earlier prototype of Andersen's own Peer from *Lykke Peer*.

Through various symbolic allusions of Denmark's historical relationship with countries that have at times waged war with it, "Andersen uses the Holger Danske legend as a means to embrace all of Danish history, as symbolized by the ancient heroes of whom the old man [in the story] speaks. Andersen shows that there are many means by which one can be Danish; of the figures described, there are military figures, past royalty, artists, scientists, and of course, writers."[533] In his culturally subtle way—far less explicit and aggressive than Grundtvig's manner—Andersen depicts an image of what it means to be a Danish national, and shrewdly (as well as elegantly), ensures that he implicitly validates his own contributions to cultivating

[530] Ibid., 243–44.
[531] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 161.
[532] Elkington, "Holger Danske as Literary Danish Identity," 245.
[533] Ibid., 249.

Danish identity. To this end, as Elkington posits, "Holger Danske stands in the middle, or literally, lies beneath, the relationship between Denmark and the other European countries. Holger becomes a symbol of Denmark's political history *and* Danish identity, the symbol of the way in which Denmark faces the world around it. Andersen implies that Danish national identity stands firm in all relations between Denmark and other lands, and clear and certain as the sleeping Holger Danske stands in the thoughts of the old man and in the dreams of his grandson."[534] Elkington concludes his views of Andersen's motivations for writing his short story thusly:

> Andersen uses the Holger legend as a frame to his story, but he creates his own story of Danish national identity, one which deals with figures that not coincidentally lie a little closer to Andersen's own life and talents. Andersen argues that people like himself are just as important to Danish national identity as the great heroic figures such as Holger Danske. Andersen creates an identity for the individuals from Denmark's past, using figures that mirror his own life, as part of Danish identity. He depicts a peaceful existence between Denmark and the other European countries, in order to protect himself against accusations of lacking a Danish identity. Andersen uses the Holger legend to prove that there are many means to celebrate and encourage Danish national identity. It is his intent to create an identity for himself as an individual and as a Dane while continuing to write about countries and subjects that are not specifically Danish.[535]

The passage above is crucial for a variety of reasons. Firstly, as Elkington repeatedly emphasizes, it was meant to defend Andersen's image as a proud Danish national. But beyond that, it demonstrates that even if the short story was born from an anxiety regarding the recent second Schleswigian War and the personal accusations against him, Andersen still could not completely disavow the aesthetic and moral connections that have been a part of his own identity for so many decades. By saying that he wanted to continue writing about countries and subjects that are not specifically Danish, this should be inferred as an olive branch to Germany and their culture, which Andersen clearly was neither ready nor willing to abandon. In this context, Celenza described Andersen as the following: "A patriot who still held warm affections for his German neighbors, Andersen found no shame in embracing, once again, his cosmopolitan lifestyle now that the war was over."[536] Furthermore, there is a congruence with Grundtvigian cultural nationalism via Andersen's

[534] Ibid., 250–51.
[535] Ibid., 252–53.
[536] Celenza, Andersen and Music, 173.

promotion of a nostalgia for past cultural paradigms. There is certainly no ambiguity in the fact that Andersen was advocating for Danish nationalism, but unlike Grundtvig, he took care not to culturally insulate Denmark from the rest of the world. Whereas Grundtvig sought to promote nationalism through hostility against foreigners and those who are not practitioners of the Danish language, Andersen was never interested in this type of politicization. Celenza concurs, stating that "Andersen also cautiously avoided the wave of cultural nationalism initiated by the writings of Grundtvig, and it was this avoidance that eventually led some to question his loyalty to Denmark."[537] Even in his setting of *Holger Danske*, he still promoted the kind of cosmopolitanism that had brought his own national identity and loyalty into question. Therefore, his *Holger* should not be seen as solely a refutation, but rather as a reiteration of long-held values. It would certainly be plausible to consider that this short story had even reminded him of the aesthetic kinship with Germany that would ultimately bear fruit most profoundly in the solidarity between Denmark and Germany through the Wagnerian imagery of *Lykke Peer*.

This chapter sought to present an understanding of the diverging approach to nationalism that Andersen and Grundtvig represented, especially in context of the two Schleswigian Wars. Two such figures in history have rarely exercised such extensive influence over a nation's morality, and this phenomenon is even more pronounced taking into consideration Denmark's small size and fundamental need to forge a new national identity in the wake of so many drastic paradigm shifts decade after decade, essentially from the very start of the nineteenth century. This is the Denmark into which Wagner's art found itself, and it is in this Denmark, with the full weight of all of these experiences, that Wagner came to be judged when the curtain rose on *Lohengrin* in 1870. However, the discussion of nationalism is still applicable beyond the two polarizing figures of Andersen and Grundtvig, because Wagner himself had strongly expressed notions of nationalism both explicitly and implicitly through his writings and in his operas. What's more, these representations had generally preceded the arrival of his music to new destinations, and for a nation like Denmark that was highly attuned to this type of rhetoric, their disposition towards Wagner's brand of nationalism was anything but oblivious. As it will be seen, a person like August Bournonville took great offense to what he perceived as Wagner's outpouring of nationalistic zeal. An investigation, therefore, of Wagner's primary expressions of nationalism will now be considered to set the stage for an important element that informed, in part, his moralistic Danish reception after seeing how Denmark was conditioned to perceive such expressions from local sources through Grundtvig's aggressive and politicized cultural nationalism to Andersen's

[537] Ibid., 174.

more abstract, inclusive, and tolerant form of nationalism that sought to encourage pride rather than sew dissent.

Wagner and Nationalism

As discussed previously, the landscape of Danish ideological perception at the time when Wagner was becoming known in Denmark was primarily predicated on the influence of Grundtvig and Andersen's values. A discussion of Wagner's nationalism is more ideologically congruent with Grundtvig than Andersen, as the latter sought only to make tacit representations of such beliefs, or as we have seen, when he was defending himself against erroneous accusations of not being Danish enough. A brief summary, therefore, reiterating Grundtvig's primary ethics regarding nationalism will contribute to the discussion of Wagner's own nationalism, particularly drawing attention to similar notions that they held, in order to establish a wider understanding of Wagnerian ethics that ultimately contributed to his overall Danish reception.

To begin, it is important to remember that Grundtvig bore witness to both Schleswigian Wars as well as the abolition of absolutist rule of the Danish monarchy. He was privy to the tides of change in his country and wanted to contribute to changes himself. Furthermore, he had based his entire philosophy on the needs of the Danish people, creating the notion of *folkelighed*, which symbolized the equality of the people. This ideology existed to inform the populace of nationalistic ideals that were meant to edify the people as much as unify them as the nation moved away from absolutist rule, and most importantly, to instill a sense of "mutual obligation" and responsibility in the whole national community. This sense culminated in the formation of the Folk High School system, which sought a life-long education for the peasants that would eliminate any semblance of an educated elite. These ideas were integrated through a socialized application of cultural nationalism, which in turn, strove to promote the meaning of being a Danish citizen through a shared history, language, and culture. However, this sense of self was balanced by an equally domineering appeal to protect these paradigms of the new Danish national identity from foreign threat or influence. Following the loss of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein after the war of 1864 against a Bismarck-led German Confederation, Grundtvig's nationalistic and xenophobic rhetoric against Germany became even more pronounced after first publicizing similar ideals against Germany several years earlier in the wake of the first Schleswigian War. His primary fear was that Germany would culturally absorb Denmark and rob it of its national identity.

Andersen attempted a different approach by creating a national self-awareness through poeticizing and idealizing common people's daily lives in his fictional writing, while Grundtvig tried to appeal to the people's sense of their Danish identity

via cultural nationalism. Andersen projected his national pride in works like *Holger Danske* and was critical of Grundtvig's polemical beliefs, which he expressed in *To Be or Not to Be*? Wagner's nationalism was in many ways a conflation of both Andersen and Grundtvig's approach, as he sought to express a national ideology that was simultaneously beneficial for the arts, while also aggressively in support of Germany's own cultural nationalism.

Cultural nationalism was defined earlier in context of Grundtvigian nationalism in Denmark, but it should be reestablished now to orient the ideology towards Wagner's theories. Musicologist Michael Murphy discusses John Hutchinson's notion of the ideology in the following way:

> While carefully distinguishing between cultural and political nationalism, Hutchinson argues that cultural nationalism is itself a political movement that rejects the passive isolationism of traditionalism, and promotes the nation as a progressive and modern culture. He sees cultural nationalists as 'moral innovators' who establish 'ideological movements at times of social crisis in order to transform the belief systems of communities, and provide models of socio-political development that guide their modernizing strategies.' [Quoting Anthony Smith]: 'More than a style and doctrine of politics, nationalism is a *form of culture* – an ideology, a language, mythology, symbolism and consciousness.'[538]

These sentiments are certainly applicable to Wagner, who straddled the nexus between culture and politics, and nationalized them both for his agenda. Both Wagner and Grundtvig were clearly "moral innovators" who used the backdrop of war to justify their ideals and mold national perceptions. And lastly, the abstract tenets that Anthony Smith presented are signifiers that Wagner, Grundtvig, and Andersen all expounded their views in writing to influence the brand of narrative that they were endorsing.

A similar trait between Wagner's nationalistic texts and his earlier texts on the social function of the arts stems from their mutual futuristic outlook, which also bears resemblance to Andersen's perspective in his essays on the future of the arts. Hannu Salmi concurs, noting that "Wagner's national utopia appears at first as a utopia of the future; to Wagner, however, 'the future' meant above all a return to the past, to the lost harmony of German culture. Therefore, in Wagner's thinking, myth and utopia are molded onto one another; his utopia seems to exist outside the scope

[538] Harry White and Michael Murphy, eds., Musical Construction of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945 (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 4–5.

of history."[539] These are important sentiments, for they illustrate the idealistic nature of these ideas and place them firmly within the bounds of Grundtvigian cultural nationalism. These tenets, as well as the high worth placed on myths as subtle ideological reinforcements, bring Wagner, Andersen, and Grundtvig together in a structural framework for how they expressed their views. In order to understand these values, an analysis of Wagner's nationalistic prose will be carried out. In addition to this, Salmi adds: "Wagner's utopian, imagined Germany, myth and reality were entwined together in an inseparable whole: according to Wagner, in the course of time the Germans would discover a collective harmony, their true selves and a genuine national character."[540] The same ambition can easily be associated with Grundtvig and his desire for the Danish nation. Wagner's nationalistic texts were written in the decades following his prose on the future of the arts, as Wagner himself became swept up in the national fervor that was rising when it became clear that Germany was on the road to unification—a path that first started with the decimation of Denmark.

In 1864, the same year of the second and more disastrous Schleswigian War, Wagner was, for the first time, brought before King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who had sought Wagner out to become his patron and to help him create the type of living conditions necessary for him to create his works of art. Salmi comments on this, stating that "after receiving the invitation to Munich in the spring of 1864, Wagner apparently began to realize that the state was something that could benefit him, particularly, if the state and before all, those who wielded power in the state, felt sympathy for culture."[541] Wagner wrote his theoretical essay "On State and Religion" in 1864 at the request of Ludwig, and it contains his current views on society in general, but more subtly, one can perceive it as his commentary on his society's current receptiveness to the arts. Over the decades, Wagner had not stopped desiring a more favorable national atmosphere for the arts, but had lost hope in his ability to bring that about. As it will be made clear, both Ludwig's patronage and the path towards German unification rekindled Wagner's faith in the feasibility of establishing an art-centric German society, as well as his central role in possibly being the only artist who could bring it about. Salmi elaborates on Wagner's general perspective at the time, noting that "following the complete failure of his revolutionary activities, Wagner became increasingly oriented towards the state, particularly a unitarian German *Reich*. [Ronald] Gray's view turns out to be relevant only to the extent that in the early 1860s the state took on a more significant position

539 Hannu Salmi, *Imagined Germany: Richard Wagner's National Utopia* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1999), 15.

540 Ibid., 16.

541 Ibid., 46.

in Wagner's philosophy. He gradually started to see things from a different perspective, and to believe after all, in the birth of a state, the nucleus of which would be art and which would develop through natural growth."[542] Regardless of the ideological shift that took place in Wagner's mind, he was still idealizing the most advantageous way that art could become a more significant facet of society.

Unlike his earlier theoretical texts on the arts, the trio of essays that will now be analyzed have the benefit of being born after Wagner's discovery of Schopenhauer, which instilled these essays with metaphysical imagery that Wagner weaved into his discussions. At the start of "On State and Religion," Wagner makes a direct appeal to Ludwig, noting that what he is about to say is more of a reflection of an artist's sentiments on the state of matters, and should not be seen as any sort of a practical exercise. Herein comes the metaphysical imagery, as he states that an artist's inclinations are not to be deemed as anything more than mere expressions, as the artist is inclined to declare that "My kingdom is not of this world."[543] Wagner goes on to describe this kingdom as "beyond-the-worldly-realm" that is arrived at through "elevation."[544] This is a clear reference to Schopenhauer's renunciation and transcendence of the empirical will in order to exist in a metaphysical realm. The notion has become Wagner's primary aesthetic ethos, and is strongly suggested in Andersen's *Lykke Peer* as the protagonist's final living act.

Wagner's brief introduction to artists in this (ironically) self-deprecating way should not be dismissed too quickly. Although he presented his view in this essay in a philosophical tone, an artist's role in society had always been a central theme in Wagner's writings. Salmi describes the social connection in Wagner's thought thusly: "The link between the artist and the community was constituted through the fact that the artist did not express himself merely as an individual (his own uniqueness), but also simultaneously acted as an embodiment of the national spirit. The *Volksgeist* spoke through the artist."[545] Thematically, this concept is important to bear in mind because it informs the ultimate essence of Wagner's nationalistic writings, as well as his more famous treatises on the arts. Indeed, a similar ethos is expressed in *The Art-Work of the Future* where Wagner describes the poet as the leader of the new, idealized world order of art where the poet merges science and art to create pure drama. Wagner saw himself then as this poet-hero, and he sees himself now, decades later, as another art-savior figure, as he senses a conceptual revolution on the horizon; one that will stem from German unification, and a unilateral,

542 Ibid.
543 Richard Wagner, *Art and Politics*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 9.
544 Ibid.
545 Salmi, Imagined Germany, 53.

nationalistic mentality that will be shared by all Germans. The artist's utopia from *The Art-Work of the Future* is to finally find relevance in the new social utopia that Wagner is now nurturing into effect through the power of his prose. Again, just as these notions of the artist's utopia found a similar voice in Andersen's prose on the future of the arts, so too did the Dane dream of favorable social conditions in the form of a unity between Denmark and Germany that was based on mutual aesthetic values. The majority of Wagner's ideas found some level of congruence with Andersen and also Grundtvig, rendering them even more valuable for an ultimate portrayal of Wagner's reception in Denmark.

After introducing his view on the artist's character, Wagner then begins laying blame where he feels that society is at its weakest. He states that:

> We recognize that nothing really happens but what has issued from this not far-seeing Will, from this Will that answers merely to the momentarily-experienced need; and thus we see that practical success, throughout all time, has attended only those politicians who took account of nothing but the momentary need, neglecting all remoter, general needs, all needs as yet unfelt to-day, and which therefore appeal so little to the mass of mankind that it is impossible to count on its assistance in their ministration. These diverse fellowships of individuals equally-entitled in their groups make up the parties in the State, the larger owners striving for a state of permanence, the less favoured for its alteration. But even the party of alteration desires nothing beyond the bringing about a state of matters in which it, too, would wish no further change; and thus the State's main object is upheld from first to last by those whose profit lies in permanence. Stability is therefore the intrinsic tendence [sic] of the State.[546]

This passage illustrates how the will, to Wagner, induces politicians to only care about momentary needs for practical success, thereby prohibiting the kind of foresight that would be most beneficial for the masses and their needs. This portion of the text could easily be read in hindsight as the criticism of Bismarck that Wagner would later accuse him of, for his utter indifference to the needs and requirements of the arts once he had unified Germany and established his personal apparatus of power. The second portion of the passage blames the state for being greedy, self-indulgent, and enslaved to the will, which is further aligned with Schopenhauer as Wagner deems it a representation of "basic human nature." The state is essentially divided into two factions that feel equally entitled: Those who want "permanence" or to sustain the status quo, and those who want "alteration" or just enough change

546 Wagner, *Art and Politics*, 10–11.

to enact a self-serving paradigm shift that will then become a new, permanent, and more-favorable status quo. Wagner once again equates these needs as "primal" and "human," ergo, indicative of the weak and corrupting empirical will.

Wagner continues by noting that no single faction within the state should have the responsibility of helping society overcome its own empirical limitations. A law must be enacted, Wagner believes, that would alleviate the "suffering interests" of the less fortunate, with minor adjustments made in order to promote stability. The pursuit of stability is the primary objective, and the only power that can bring about such a law is the monarch. Wagner essentially suggests that the monarch is, in fact, the state itself:

> It therefore is established as the most essential principle of the State; and as in it resides the warrant of stability, so in the person of the King the State attains its true *ideal*. For, as the King on one hand gives assurance of the State's solidarity, on the other his loftiest interest soars higher beyond the State. Personally he has naught in common with the interests of parties, but his sole concern is that the conflict of these interests should be adjusted, precisely for the safety of the whole.[547]

Wagner here advocates for the monarchy (much like Grundtvig), noting that it is the most stabilizing feature of the state, because only the monarch holds everyone's interests in mind. Wagner's essay, so far, was shrewdly written to emphasize Ludwig's moral duty to all of his citizens beyond the self-serving nature of politicians. It becomes clear that Wagner sought to drive a wedge between the monarch and the politicians, sensing his own influence over the impressionable young king, with the ultimate purpose being to induce Ludwig to align his morality with Wagner's so that he can ultimately advocate the needs of artists, and in turn, Wagner himself. This was to prove risky, as Wagner's social idealization came to be seen as running counter to the interests of the political state, which the latter came to view as distracting Ludwig from his true role as king. Salmi concurs with this line of thinking, noting that "In summoning the German monarchs to participate in the national-awakening, Wagner was obviously also acting as an advocate for his own art. He saw himself as one of the German masters, who understood the meaning of the Germanic ideal. Through this literary activity, Wagner was aiming at the construction of a national self-consciousness conducive to unification."[548] Wagner ironically begins his essay by stating that they are just an artist's musings and are not

[547] Ibid., 12.
[548] Salmi, Imagined Germany, 133.

to be taken too seriously, yet, as he continues, it becomes clear that he is proposing nothing less than a new method of governance by the king.

Wagner's idealized manipulation in this regard can be equated to Grundtvig's formation of the Folk High School system. Whereas Wagner sought to steer the king into advocating for everyone's interests as a socialist utopia, Grundtvig sought the same with his educational system: To promote unprejudiced interests of all people, while simultaneously establishing within them a strong sense of Danish national identity. This latter conviction is also one that Wagner drifted towards in the next section of "On State and Religion."

Wagner continues his trend of morally empowering the king by inserting a discussion of patriotism. So far, the essay has discussed the needs of the people in a domestic context, but now, he raises the stakes to subtly include the first nationalistic overtones. He states: "The patriot subordinates himself to his State in order to raise it above all other States, and thus, as it were, to find his personal sacrifice repaid with ample interest through the might and greatness of his fatherland. Injustice and violence toward other States and peoples have therefore been the true dynamic law of Patriotism throughout all time."[549] Within the essay, this text constitutes an aggressive increase in tone—one which will gain further traction and vehement zeal in future related essays. When Wagner speaks of the state rising above other states, he most assuredly means Bavaria above the other divided German states. He is instilling a forcefulness of will in the king to be firm for the fatherland, which has a veiled undertone of suggesting that one must stand firm against one's enemies. This is rendered even more plausible through his direct sanction of injustice and violence in the name of patriotism. In other words, justifiable war. Salmi expands on this notion, stating that "war could provide a means of allowing the German people to discover their real identity. This impending war would really mean a fight for 'holy German art,' for Wagner saw his own art essentially connected with the German national identity. In Wagner's view, the French had always hated both German art and the German national spirit: therefore, a war with France would mean a victory for both Wagner and the German people."[550] Wagner was indeed quite enthusiastic in these years about the prospects of a unifying war, and as it will be seen later, these sentiments will directly translate into the disdain that he directed specifically against France. These are the seeds of those future aggressive remarks. Furthermore, by suggesting that the patriot elevates his state, there is another commonality with Grundtvig's method of instilling a sense of Danish patriotism in his own country by promoting a unified moral imperative. For both Wagner and Grundtvig, national solidarity under a common morality was the only way forward.

[549] Wagner, Art and Politics, 16.
[550] Salmi, Imagined Germany, 131.

Interestingly, while extolling the virtues of patriotism, Wagner is careful to point out the untrustworthiness of public opinion, stating that:

> Public opinion, and—what adds to the hatefulness of the thing forever—with a passionateness [sic] that masquerades as the warmth of genuine patriotism, but has its true and constant origin in the most self-seeking of all human motives. Matters strictly pertaining to the interest of the King, which in truth can only be that of purest patriotism, are cut and dried by his unworthy substitute, this Public Opinion, in the interest of the vulgar egoism of the mass; and the necessitation to yield to its requirements, notwithstanding, becomes the earliest source of that higher form of suffering which the King alone can personally experience as his own.[551]

Wagner's distrust of public opinion is a curious sentiment in context of his desire to uplift society via cultural and aesthetic solidarity. Once again, he is propping up the monarchy as the arbiter of authentic patriotism, which can be seen as another attempt to protect himself. Public opinion had judged Wagner harshly in the past for his role in the Dresden uprising, and it was the same public opinion that would shortly compel Ludwig to ask Wagner to leave Bavaria due to his controversial social standings and accusations of trying to influence the king. One can abstractly take a different approach to Wagner's words and imagine that instead of writing this essay to Ludwig with the latter as the presumptive monarch of the narrative, Wagner is in truth describing himself as the monarch, since he later deems himself as the sole defender of the German identity. Even when he was writing his texts on opera's reform, there was always an underlying disdain for the degeneration of society as he saw it. At the time, he had constantly promoted ancient Greece as the model to which all societies should aspire, and one can draw a corollary between Wagner's social aversions of the 1840s and early 50s with the social distrust that he now expresses in "On State and Religion." As he saw it, the masses failed to appreciate his genius, so they cannot be trusted to themselves embody the ideology that he has within him that was dismissed in favor of lesser, corrupting people, practices, and sentiments. Furthermore, Wagner again employs that recognizable Schopenhauerian maxim of suffering by saying that that is what the King must feel as his burden of responsibility. Such a statement almost seems to stem from personal experience, and Wagner ensured that everyone knew how mightily he had suffered as the misunderstood and neglected genius. One must remember that egoists often find

551 Wagner, Art and Politics, 21.

ways of twisting the narrative to be about them, which renders the hypothesis of Wagner being the king of his essay as abstractly plausible.

Wagner next brings religion into the fold (as the title of his essay inevitably suggested), by describing its alliance with the state. He writes that:

> Religion, of its very essence, is radically divergent from the State. The religions that have come into the world have been high and pure in direct ratio as they seceded from the State, and in themselves entirely upheaved it. We find State and Religion in complete alliance only where each still stands upon its lowest step of evolution and significance. Only in the wholly adult State, where these religions have paled before the full-fledged patriotic duty, and are sinking into inessential forms and ceremonies; only where 'Fate' has shewn [sic] itself to be Political Necessity—could true Religion step into the world.[552]

Wagner's promotion of a secular separation of church and state is reminiscent of Grundtvig's policy as well in Denmark. As we have seen, religion was naturally important to Grundtvig, but it was not associated with the parameters of the new secular Danish identity that he promoted through a conflation of culture, language, and nationalism, thus establishing a Grundtvigian paradigm of cultural nationalism. Wagner holds religion as a lesser entity than the state, and relegates it to a mere ceremonial status of inconsequential importance. Patriotism, he feels, demands this distinction. Wagner next takes the above discussion and puts it through a Schopenhauerian prism by delving deeper into the state's inability to overcome the empirical will:

> Its inmost kernel is denial of the world—i.e. recognition of the world as a fleeting and dreamlike state [of mind] reposing merely on illusion—and struggle for Redemption from it, prepared for by renunciation, attained by Faith. To the religious eye the truth grows plain that there must be another world than this, because the inextinguishable bent-to-happiness cannot be stilled within this world, and hence requires another world for its redemption. What, now, is that other world? Since this world is the source of our unhappiness, that other world, of redemption from it, must be precisely as different from this present world as the mode of cognisance [sic] whereby we are to perceive that other world must be different from the mode which shews [sic] us nothing but this present world of suffering and illusion.[553]

[552] Ibid., 23.
[553] Ibid., 23–24.

This passage's pure Schopenhauerian imagery is profound and telling of the values that Wagner wishes to instill into his concept of a national utopia. He believes that the religious perspective has the ability to recognize the metaphysical realm that must be reached through the denial of the empirical will. Such a view can be seen as another example of Wagner's distrust for the masses of the state who are neither authentically patriotic nor capable of seeing the metaphysical redemption, as they are too enslaved in the real world. The pessimistic view of empirical existence as being one of pain and suffering is the cornerstone of Schopenhauerian philosophy, and is synonymous with the conceptual underpinnings of the metaphysical values that Andersen imbued Peer with at the end of *Lykke Peer* where the protagonist finally transcends the empirical world through his denial of the will. It is interesting that Wagner would divert his discussion so acutely to the most pessimistic element of Schopenhauer's thought, yet its meaning is evident in his desire to bolster his views of religion as having qualities that the state is less receptive towards.

Near the end of his essay, Wagner brings his views of religion to a climactic summary by stating "This is the essence of true Religion: that, away from the cheating show of the day-tide world, it shines in the night of man's inmost heart, with a light quite other than the world-sun's light, and visible now hence save from out that depth."[554] This final display of Schopenhauerian imagery is significant for being intrinsically associated with Wagner's own *Tristan und Isolde*. In that drama, the lovers scorn the empirical world, which is symbolized by the light of day, and wish to exist in their metaphysical night realm where their love transcends all worldly limitations. Therefore, religion to Wagner, in this context, symbolizes the kind of metaphysical awareness that he wishes was more evident to society at large. The essay "On State and Religion" can be seen as Wagner's criticism and solution for society's weaknesses as an ultimate outlet for art, and more specifically, Wagner's art. However, the important element is the nationalistic fervor that Wagner employed that would be expanded in his other forthcoming essays of this period. The rhetoric that he used in his attempt to unify Germany culturally and under one identity is crucial for being a variation of Grundtvig and Andersen's own attempts at establishing similar outcomes, but through different methods. If Wagner will be viewed within Danish society as an extension of his nationalistic rhetoric, as certain Danes have made him appear (cf. Bournonville for one), then it becomes crucial to continue contextualizing him within these parameters, because Danish society was exposed to similar frameworks of suggestion (or manipulation) from Grundtvig and Andersen. It can be surmised then that the Danish view of Wagner can ultimately be

[554] Ibid., 29–30.

seen as a conflating reflection of Grundtvig and Andersen's own views of culture and national identity.

Wagner's next essay, "German Art and German Policy," dates from 1867, and constitutes an aggressive expansion, of sorts, from "On State and Religion." Dieter Borchmeyer says that this essay ("German Art and German Policy"), "is as fanciful as it is ingenious in combining the erstwhile anarchist's revolutionary convictions with his later Utopian vision of a monarchical aristocracy."[555] The rhetoric of this essay is highly indicative of an "us versus them" attitude, where Wagner seems to have been stoking the imagination of his German readers to provoke or enhance their fervor for Bismarck's wars of German unification. Wagner's willingness to lay blame on foreigners was as much a reflection of the general climate as his own personal pivoting to ultimately establish himself and his art at the center of a newly-revived and unified German realm where he envisioned having far-reaching cultural and possibly political influence.

Early on in his discussion, Wagner expressed an ethos of German cultural nationalism in a xenophobic way by presenting the French (more sternly this time), as the rivals of the German spirit. Salmi agrees, noting that "for Wagner, national thinking was a means to comprehend German identity, and a weapon against other nationalities."[556] This is reminiscent of Grundtvig, who sought to morally unify Denmark by painting Germany as the threat, which Wagner now does with France. Wagner begins by noting that:

> The resurrection of the German Folk itself has emanated from the German Spirit, in fullest contrast to the 'Renaissance' of the remaining culture-folks of newer Europe. At the very time when the most gifted German ruler could not look beyond the horizon of that French civilization without a shudder, this rebirth of the German Folk from its own spirit, a phenomenon unparalleled in history, was already taking place. When we talk of the rebirth of German art, we are speaking of a time at which, on the other hand, the German Folk was scarcely recognizable outside its royal families. If we arise from that meditation with a feeling of pride in the German spirit's indomitable force; and if, encouraged by this feeling, we may dare assume that even now, despite the well-nigh unbroken influence of French civilization upon the public spirit of European peoples, this German spirit stands facing it as a rival equally-endowed at bottom then, to mark the situation's political significance withal, we might frame the following brief antithesis: -- *French Civilization arose without the people, German Art without the princes; the first could arrive at no depth of spirit because it merely laid a garment on*

555 Dieter Borchmeyer, Wagner: Theory and Theatre, 8.
556 Salmi, Imagined Germany, 134.

> *the nation, but never thrust into its heart; the second has fallen short of power and patrician finish because it could not reach as yet the courts of princes, not open yet the hearts of rulers to the German Spirit*. The continued sovereignty of French civilization would therefore mean the continuance of a veritable estrangement between the spirit of the German Folk and the spirit of its Princes.[557]

The above statement reads like a statement of political agitation as much as a theoretical text describing the nature and history of the German spirit. Wagner now makes plain the consequences to that same spirit if an alliance with (or moral capitulation to) France were to happen:

> Clearly, then, it is worthwhile to inspect the closer relations of this German Spirit with the Princes of the German people: it well might give us serious pause. For we are bound someday to reach a point, in the contest between French civilization and the German spirit, where it will become a question of the continuance of the German Princes. If the German Princes are not the faithful guardians of the German spirit; if, consciously or unconsciously, they help French civilization to triumph over that German spirit, so woefully misprized and disregarded by them: then their days are numbered, let the fiat come from here of there. Thus we are fronted with an earnest question, of world-historical moment: its more minute examination will plainly teach us whether we err when, from our standpoint, that of German Art, we assign to it so great and grave a meaning.[558]

As was his wont, Wagner's statement above could be seen as a direct appeal to Ludwig to reinforce Bismarck's ambition of assembling a unified German army of various kingdoms in the upcoming war with France from 1870–71. Wagner circles his argument back to German culture and the spirit by stating that:

> It is good and most encouraging for us, to find that the German Spirit, when with the second half of last century it raised itself from its deepest decay, did not require a new birth, but merely a resurrection. Then we found, that it had not been drowsiness that plunged the German Folk into its misery; it had fought its war of thirty years for its spiritual freedom; that was won, and though the body was faint with wounds and loss of blood, the mind stayed free, even beneath French full-bottomed wings. Hail Winckelmann and Lessing. Hail to thee,

[557] Wagner, *Art and Politics*, 40–41.
[558] Ibid., 42.

> Goethe, though who hadst power to wed Helena to our Faust, the Greek ideal to the German spirit! Hail to thee, Schiller.[559]

The above passage is important for multiple reasons. Wagner's advocacy to resurrect the past instead of to create anew, and where he expresses his nostalgia by naming the four German artists of the past—Winckelmann, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller—once again advances his Grundtvig-adjacent cultural nationalism by looking to the past, both for inspiration and guidance. His mention of a Greek ideal is an echo of his pre-Schopenhauerian values. By naming these luminaries and defenders of the German spirit, Wagner is also reminding his readers what is at stake in the forthcoming battle. Salmi also recognized the importance of this psychological ploy that Wagner was implementing, noting that "the orientation of history, the relationship with the past, is often considered one of the characteristics of nationalist thinking. The vision of the past is important also for the scrutiny of Wagner, since in his nationalist texts he combined the contrasts 'German/un-German' and 'past/present;' that is, the dimension of time had significance in relation to the definition of *Deutschtum*. All German cultures were to define themselves in relation to the past. Wagner's national utopia also needed a tradition, a certain natural continuation."[560] The proverbial finger shake of blame returns when Wagner criticizes the German princes for fostering a separatist mentality from a unified German spirit by allowing an inclusivity of other nations and races, giving the example of the Kaiser's sons needing to speak four different languages to communicate with their subjects. He states:

> How was it possible that the Princes should have passes in total silence the incomparably glorious resurrection of the German Spirit? The reason of the German heart's perversity in these highest regions of the German nation, of all places, lies certainly both deep and far away; in part, perchance, in just the universal scope of German nature. The German *Reich* was no narrow national State, and far as heaven from what hovers nowadays before the longing fancy of the weaker, downtrod and dissevered races of the nation. The sons of the German Kaiser had to learn no less than four distinct European languages, to fit them for due converse with the members of the *Reich*.[561]

[559] Ibid., 43.
[560] Salmi, Imagined Germany, 23.
[561] Wagner, Art and Politics, 44.

The above passage reiterates Wagner's xenophobic position, yet there are exceptions to other nations that he felt were racially aligned with German. To this effect, he stated:

> We may conclude that it is a simple feeling of decency on the part of those peoples who were erewhile influenced by the German spirit, that now has turned them quite away from us and thrown them wholly into the arms of French civilization: the Swedes, Danes, Dutch, our blood-related neighbors, who once had stood in innermost spiritual communion with us, now draw their requirements in the way of art and intellect direct from Paris, as they very properly prefer at least the genuine articles to the counterfeits.[562]

It is fascinating how Wagner viewed Danes as German blood relatives, but who have now (seemingly) warmed up to French influence. It is also interesting to hear Wagner speak so acceptingly of Denmark—a nation brought to its knees by Bismarck's war machine—and to consider if the further disparagement of France in this context had possibly reached Bournonville's ears, as the Danish ballet master had a French father and promoted the French school of dance in Denmark. An investigation of Bournonville's harsh criticism of Wagner's nationalist outlook will be made in the final section of this study. Furthermore, Wagner's support of Danish relations could have been influenced by or at the very least understood, by the positive reception that he had in his sole meeting with Andersen in 1855. That experience had certainly solidified Andersen's lifelong admiration for Wagner, and from the statement above, it seems that Wagner as well may have had a positive lasting impression from the meeting. Or, perhaps it was all simply ammunition to weaken the French imperative, as he saw it. Regardless, it all adds curious subtext to polarizing discussions that could ultimately find relevance in Wagner's reception in Denmark.

Subsequently in his essay, Wagner mentions important solutions to the issues he has been discussing. He states:

> Universal as the mission of the German Folk is seen to have been, since its entrance into history, equally universal are the German spirit's aptitudes for Art; the Rebirth of the German Spirit, which happened in the second half of the preceding century, has shewn [sic] us an example of the activation of this universality in the weightiest domains of art: the example of that Rebirth's evaluation to the end of ennobling the public spiritual life of the German Folk, as also to the end of founding a new and truly German civilization, extending its

[562] Ibid., 57.

> blessings even beyond our frontiers, must be set by those in whose hands repose the political fortunes of the German people: for this it needs nothing but that the German Princes should themselves be given that right example from their own midst.[563]

In the above passage, Wagner suggests the kind of artist needed to instigate a rebirth of the German spirit, which is a subtle indication or validation that he will personally fulfill this role if required. Although he claims that this type of rebirth is in the hands of the German monarchs, it is another pivoting ploy to place himself and his art at the cultural center of the new Germany. While Wagner attempted to maintain some wider objectivity in his published prose in regard to not naming himself as the savior of German culture, in his private diaries, he had no issue with doing just this. At Cosima's behest, Wagner kept a diary that was not intended for publication while he was away from his future wife, so that she could later read all that he had thought. This diary came to be known as *The Brown Book*, in which he wrote from 1865–82. In 1865, one year after writing "On State and Religion," and the same year in which he wrote his aggressively nationalistic "What is German," Wagner recorded the following entry on 11 September 1865, which perfectly crystalizes his superior view of himself, making explicit that which he only subtly implied in his prose:

> Now it is me no one grasps: I am the most German being, I am the German spirit. Question the incomparable magic of my works, compare them with the rest: and you can, for the present, say no differently than that—it is German. But what is this German? It must be something wonderful, mustn't it, for it is humanly finer than all else? –Oh heavens! It should have a soil, this German! I should be able to find my people! What a glorious people it ought to become. But to this people only could I belong.[564]

Just like he referenced the artist's utopia from *The Art-Work of the Future* in "On State and Religion," Borchmeyer astutely points out that in "German Art and German Policy," there was discussion of "Wagner's politico-cultural critique, which still contained clear signs of his revolutionary stance of 1848 alongside his remarkable vision of a new social élite."[565] All of this demonstrates Wagner's aesthetic adaptability and time-sensitive appropriation as a variant of older beliefs rather than unprecedented novelties. Wagner also spoke here about the German

563 Ibid., 63.
564 Joachim Bergfeld, ed., George Bird, trans., *The Diaries of Richard Wagner 1865–1882: The Brown Book* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1980), 73.
565 Borchmeyer, Wagner: Theory and Theatre, 13.

people and public life. Borchmeyer addresses and expands on this element in Wagner's text, stating that "Wagner had rethought the function of the aristocracy, no longer seeing them as a barrier between the monarch and his people, and, instead of insisting upon their extinction, allowing them an aesthetic role. The ideal of a popular monarchy remained untouched. Together with the king, the newly exempted class would follow up the abolition of the commercial workaday theater by superintending the rebirth of drama 'out of the spirit of the actual people.'"[566] The above statement can also be read as Andersen's procedural guidelines for his protagonist Peer in *Lykke Peer*, as he is given the moral responsibility to bring about a rebirth of sorts himself. In this sense, Wagner and Andersen share a common idealization about the artist of the future, which they both expressed in theoretical essays that were addressed in previous chapters. Andersen sought to find the artist of the future, and made Peer that individual, who can also be seen as the literary embodiment of what Wagner wrote above.

Interestingly, Wagner wrote an essay on Beethoven, where he presented himself as the continuation of the lineage that included both Bach and Beethoven before him. Wagner's Beethoven essay discusses German culture nationalistically, and, as Salmi suggests, there was a "hidden agenda running through the entire text. He stressed Beethoven's significance for German identity—and simultaneously he made it clear that he himself was Beethoven's successor. Wagner believed that his art and Germany's destiny went hand in hand."[567] This mention of Wagner's Beethoven essay and its subtle agenda are relevant to the mention of *Lykke Peer* due to the symmetry of how Wagner proclaimed for himself what Andersen did of him through the character of Peer in his novella. Wagner was Beethoven's heir; Peer was Wagner's heir; and both texts were written in 1870, demonstrating a congruent fixation between Wagner and Andersen on an aesthetic lineage that constituted a new paradigm for the future of the arts. Yet, importantly for both men, this future did not simply appear with no precedence, but was rather a natural evolutionary step from past cultural epochs.

In regard to the German spirit, Salmi addresses Wagner's ideas from a different angle, stating that "It is important to differentiate between cosmopolitanism and universality. The concept 'universality' means something that is relevant to all people and nations, something generally human, whereas 'cosmopolitanism' represents an artificial non-nationalism which has nothing to offer mankind. The cornerstones of romantic thinking were the People and the Nation. In Wagner's view, 'cosmopolitanism' (lacking a home and nation) meant a rejection of the People's

566 Ibid., 12.
567 Salmi, Imagined Germany, 148.

own origin, and a sign of the inability to establish a true culture."[568] Salmi wrote this passage in reference to an anti-Semitic implication that Wagner made in his divisive rhetoric that sought to distance Germans from all perceived threats by foreigners or those who did not belong. It was clearly more pandering of nationalistic zeal, yet with a hint of the imperialistic speech that will become more explicit and aggressive in his subsequent essay.

Wagner ends his essay by recapitulating his most important themes: France is the enemy of the German spirit, and that Prussia and Bavaria must ultimately unite to help bring about Germany's cultural rebirth by newly reestablishing German art of the past as a paradigm of future cultural solidarity. He states:

> Even Prussia must, and will, perceive that it was the German Spirit, in its rebound against French despotism, that gave her once the power she now directs by nothing but utilitarianism: here, then, will be the right point at which—for the wealth of all—a happy guidance of the Bavarian State may bring the two together. But, this point alone: there is no other prospering. And this is the *German Spirit*: about which it is easy to talk and boast in nothing-saying phrases; but which is visible to our sight, and sensible to our feeling, only in the ideal uprise of the great authors of German Rebirth in the past century. And to give this Spirit a fitting habitation in the system of the German State, so that in free self-knowledge it may manifest itself to all the world, is tantamount to establishing the best and only lasting Constitution.[569]

Expanding on the ideas in Wagner's passage above, Salmi adds: "The concept of the past is a significant factor in his attempts to define *Deutschtum*. Wagner's central standpoint in his definition of *Deutschtum* was a binary contrast 'past/present', which he combined with the oppositions 'interpretation/imitation', 'true/false' and 'noble/decadent.' The Germans had to find their true selves, their noble nature, by recovering their past. The German of the past was to be the German of the future."[570] Salmi concludes his remarks on "Germany art and Germany Policy" by stating that in it:

> Wagner's belief that German art could have something universal to say could be seen as his most extreme statement in this respect. He concluded that German culture was like a refreshing spring, to which the peoples of the world gathered for a rebirth. All human culture, for Wagner, had been corrupted by French-

568 Ibid., 59.
569 Wagner, *Art and Politics*, 135.
570 Salmi, Imagined Germany, 33.

> oriented epigonic culture, from the grasp of which only German culture could save mankind. The message of German culture should therefore spread beyond all borders, for the prosperity of all mankind.[571]

In 1871, Wagner was overcome by nationalistic fervor with the German coalition army's victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71. Wagner wrote a patriotic poem to the German army, and the "Imperial song" was written to be sung in accompaniment of the *Kaiser March* for German Emperor Wilhelm I. Wagner conducted the march at a performance and in the presence of the Emperor. He wrote a draft of the "Imperial song" in his diary on 16 March 1871, which echoes the nationalistic stance against France that he exhibited in "German Art and German Policy," thereby drawing a parallel between his prose and the musical expression that depicted it. The text reads:

> Hail! Hail to the Emperor!
> King Wilhelm!
> Shield and bulwark of all Germans' freedom!
> Loftiest of crowns,
> how augustly it adorns your brow!
> Gloriously won,
> peace shall be your reward.
> Like the newly verdant oak,
> through you has risen up the German Reich:
> Hail to its forebears,
> to its banners
> bearing your device, which we carried
> when with you we defeated France!
> Defiance to the foe,
> protection for the friend,
> The German Reich for all peoples'
> advantage and salvation![572]

Wagner's final essay related to nationalism that will be discussed is titled "What is German?" and dates from 1865. It was published, however, in 1878, and for that purpose, Wagner added a short preface to the text. In it, he stated that he believed he addressed many salient points in this essay in his previous text "German Art and German Policy," and therefore finds both texts to be related, with "What is German?" acting as a final testament to these notions. This latter essay certainly does continue ideas that Wagner established in the former, but it also goes a step further by

[571] Ibid., 56–57.
[572] Bergfeld, The Diaries of Richard Wagner, 188–89.

explicitly arguing for Germany's supremacy rather than solely its potential. It renders this final essay to be his most aggressively nationalistic.

Wagner begins his argument by addressing notions of what it means to be German. Here, he echoes Grundtvig by stating that "'deutsche' means nothing more than what is homelike to ourselves, 'ourselves' being those who parley in a language mutually intelligible."[573] This was precisely the same point that Grundtvig had made when he said that the Danish border extends as far as the Danish language is the dominant tongue. After further describing the etymology of the word "German" and the various historical peoples that constituted its meaning, he adds: "Consequently it denotes those peoples who, remaining in their ancestral seat, continued to speak their ure-mother-tongue, whereas the races ruling in Romantic lands gave up that mother-tongue. It is to the speech and the ure-homeland, then, that the idea of '*deutsch*' is knit."[574] Wagner here establishes the tone of his essay as one that once again seeks to promote cultural nationalism by extolling the virtues of Germanic origins, and how such origins remain more intact for Germans than they do for other countries who have abandoned their mother language. This is likely a subtle suggestion of the influx of foreigners who dilute the indigenous language wherever they settle and reproduce.

From homelands, Wagner next shifts to kingdoms in his historical contextualization, and makes his advocacy for nostalgic-based cultural nationalism clear. He states:

> Finally, upon this glorious memory we could feed the pride that bade us look into the Past for consolation, amid the ruins of the Present. No great culture-Folk has fallen into the plight of building for itself a fanciful renown, as the Germans. What profit the obligation to build such a fantastic edifice from relics of the Past might happily bring us, will perchance grow clear if first we try to realize its drawbacks, free from prejudice.[575]

These sentiments reflect ideals of both Grundtvig's same cultural nationalism, and also Andersen's values of looking back to go forward, as expressed in his own futuristic essays on the arts. Wagner names some of the drawbacks as political manifestations of foreign influence, especially in context of foreign, royal hereditary lines that Wagner believes are "responsible for the constant powerlessness of so-called German Glory."[576]

[573] Wagner, *Art and Politics*, 152.
[574] Ibid.
[575] Ibid., 153.
[576] Ibid.

He continues by portraying Germans as victims in foreign lands, because they never felt at home when abroad, and that Germans were even hated in Italy and the Slavic lands and deemed as "foreigners and oppressors."[577] Wagner's ironic and rather hypocritical depiction of German foreigners abroad illustrates a clear double-standard: Germans abroad are oppressed for their Germanness, while foreigners in Germany weaken the integrity and culture of the homeland. Regardless of this, Wagner uses these claims to justify more aggressive positions:

> After the complete downfall of the German nature, after the well-nigh total extinction of the German nation in consequence of the indescribable devastations of the Thirty Years' War, it was this inmost world of Home from whence the German spirit was reborn. German poetry, German music, German philosophy, are nowadays esteemed and honored by every nation in the world: but in his yearning after 'German glory' the German, as a rule, can dream of nothing but a sort of resurrection of the Romish Kaiser-Reich, and the thought inspires the most good-tempered German with an unmistakable lust of mastery, a longing for the upper hand over other nations.[578]

The above passage is important for many reasons. Firstly, it romanticizes how the German spirit endured after bitter defeat in war, which is a clear ploy to rouse nationalist fervor. Secondly, he justifies the natural desire for supremacy with the widespread support and esteem in which German culture is held. Wagner states that the imperialistic nature of Germans is rather innate due to the influence of their culture. As in his previous essays, this must be seen as entirely self-serving, and further indication of Wagner's desire to place himself and his art at the center of the aesthetic resurrection that he poeticized.

Wagner continues on the vein of propagating Germany's justified supremacy by describing how through crisis, the German national identity was established. Wagner wrote this sentiment about a year after Bismarck thoroughly defeated Denmark, in a move that helped usher in the modern Danish identity—in the same crucible of crisis that Wagner mentioned. He states:

> Let us somewhat more closely consider one of the weightiest epochs in the German people's evolution, that extraordinarily agitated crisis which it had to pass through at time of the so-called Reformation. A people can make nothing fully its own but what becomes possible for it to grasp with its inborn feeling, and to grasp in such a fashion that in the New it finds its own familiar self again.

[577] Ibid., 154.
[578] Ibid.

> Upon the realm of Aesthetics and philosophic Criticism in may be demonstrated, almost palpably, that it was predestined for the German spirit to seize and assimilate the Foreign, the primarily remote from it, in utmost purity and objectivity of intuition. Through its inmost understanding of the Antique, the German spirit arrived at the capability of restoring the Purely-human itself to its pristine freedom; not employing the antique form to display a certain given 'stuff,' but molding the necessary new form itself through an employment of the antique conception of the world.[579]

Time and again, Wagner returns to the same arguments of cultural nationalism via nostalgia for the past, which is this time associated with the antique, as Wagner went as far back as the Reformation to stake his claim for the German spirit's resolve in the face of crisis, and how that same resolve is now unmistakable in the endeavor to conquer foreigners. This is precisely the kind of rhetoric out of Germany that both Grundtvig and Andersen feared, leading to a multi-faceted takeover that would wipe out any semblance of Danishness. It is doubtful that Andersen was familiar with this essay, or he might have thought twice before making Wagner and Wagnerian ideology the center of *Lykke Peer*. Nevertheless, Andersen shared at least a portion of Wagner's thought regarding the assimilation of past culture for idealized purposes of enacting future values. Wagner kept this element of his thought more central to his core beliefs, which could be why Andersen so admired the German aesthetic of the arts and culture, which he had Wagner embody in *Peer* about as much as Wagner hoped he himself would do literally in his own country.

As a final sentiment of his essay, if Wagner's thoughts of encouragement to the German people were to be excised of their intended audience (and to have "German" supplanted by "Danish," as well as a few other historical exchanges), then the following words could have come directly from the pen of Grundtvig in terms of the uncanny similarity of rhetoric:

> The outcome of the Thirty Years' War destroyed the German nation; yet, that a German Folk could rise again, is due to nothing but that outcome. The nation was annihilated, but the German spirit had passed through. It is a wonderful trait of the German spirit's, that whereas in its earlier period of evolution it had most intimately assimilated the influences coming from without, now, when it quite had lost the vantage-ground of outward political power, it bore itself anew from out its own most inward store. —Recollection now became for it in truth self-

[579] Ibid., 155–56.

> collection; for upon its deepest inner self it drew, to ward itself from the now immoderate outer influences.[580]

In context of what these three essays by Wagner served, and for whom they were written—as well as the personal ulterior motive behind their meaning—these texts can clearly be interpreted as a form of blatant propaganda. There is a forcefulness of will and ambiguity of insight that reconciles these texts with the rest of Wagner's prose, but these three in particular were written for near-immediate consumption rather than for the more abstract notion of posterity, as the essays of his Swiss exile are more geared towards. Most of Wagner's ideas demonstrate a continuous idealization that is predicated on a derision of the present, which helps necessitate terms for the future. Much like Grundtvig, Wagner sought to hijack history to promote cultural nationalism in order to steer society into directions that they both desired. Salmi echoes these reflections, noting that "the consciousness of history was linked to political action. In the period of romanticism and nationalism, this had evident consequences. Historical knowledge was instrumentalized, and could now be used for the legitimation of actions performed in the present. It is easy to recognize this aspect of legitimation in the writings of many cultural nationalists, including Wagner, whose relationship to history clearly had this character. Wagner was more interested in the way the past explained the present: in this way, the historical tradition could be used as a kind of obligation which could lead to the future which was desired."[581]

The concept of myths (and history more generally) as tools of cultural nationalism should briefly be reiterated first in context of Grundtvig, who spoke at length about the Nordic spirit in a nearly identical manner to the way that Wagner spoke of the German spirit. Grundtvig's mythological sentiments were expressed in his most famous work, *Nordic Mythology*, which sought to establish a new social paradigm that was based on the essence of Danishness, and built on the foundation of a shared history and language instead of upon religion. These were the ideas that helped bring about the Folk High School system. Wagner also appropriated myths to further his ideology, which Salmi describes thusly in a passage that could just as easily be attributed to Grundtvig's ideas:

> Wagner saw no incongruity between myth and history: a myth was not to be equated with fiction, and history could not be equated to fact. In principle, the opposite could be valid. A myth was generated by the collective will of a people, and was therefore true, whereas (written) history had been formulated by

[580] Ibid., 161.
[581] Salmi, *Imagined Germany*, 26–27.

> individuals in their writing, apart from the tradition which had been preserved unbroken at the level of myths. In combining mythical and historical elements, Wagner, typically for the Romantic period, believed in the self-mobility of the spirit. In this situation, myth and history would amalgamate in society into a resplendent whole. Wagner could have repeated Hegel's words: 'The German spirit is the spirit of the new world.'[582]

An entirely different interpretation of Wagner's theoretical expressions of nationalism was made by the novelist Thomas Mann, who was somewhat of a Wagner apologist, yet astute in contextualizing many themes beyond solely Wagner's association to them. In discussing Wagner as a politician, Mann claimed that he was:

> More a socialist and cultural utopian working for a classless…society, founded on love…than a patriot believing in an authoritarian state. Wagner was enough of a politician to link his own cause with that of Bismarck's Reich: he saw an incomparable success and harnessed his own to it…Wagner's work was installed as a national institution, had the official stamp of the Reich and has in a sense remained associated with the imperial colors – *little though it has to do, in its innermost essence or in the manner of its Germanness, with any form of authoritarian or militaristic empire*.[583]

Mann often spoke about Wagner from a position of his music, so his above admission may stem from the writer's own aesthetic idealization of attempting to separate the artist from his ideology, especially by claiming that Wagner was driven by notions of love. Nevertheless, he accurately presents Wagner as an opportunist, but distances him from any semblance of imperialistic rhetoric. It is a curious position to take in light of Wagner's clear antipathy of the French and advocacy for the superiority of the German spirit. There is, of course, a danger in taking Wagner's public words as expressions of his literal, personal, and private convictions, as he was a clever manipulator, so Mann's belief is a necessary consideration in the interest of playing devil's advocate with these complex and provocative ideological themes. Conversely, though, Wagner did present a private admission in *The Brown Book* journal that bore congruence with his public prose, which inspires some skepticism of Mann's position.

[582] Ibid., 32–33.

[583] Robert Vilain, "Wagner's Children: Incest and *Bruderzwist*" in *Musical Construction of Nationalism*, 245.

Others have viewed Wagner in closer alignment with his prose. Musicologists Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter write that "Wagner defined himself in relation to his nationality; he expressed his ambitions explicitly in terms of the national past and national future; he lobbied for the imprimatur of national leaders; he sought sources from his operas in both the legendary and the historical past of a cultural Germany; he impugned the Germanness of possible rivals. In all these ways, Wagner presumably overwhelmed any would-be competitors for the title of Most German Composer."[584] In context of Wagner's essay "What is German," musicologist and German studies scholar Thomas S. Grey notes that Wagner believed "that it was the failure of the new German Reich to adopt him more wholeheartedly as its official cultural standard-bearer that disillusioned him on the subject of national identity. But, along with the original text, the afterword also reminds us that the status of Wagner and his works as symbols of a consciously *national* German culture has never been quite as straightforward as we tend to suppose."[585] Nevertheless, regardless of what Wagner actually believed, the association of thought with Grundtvig and to a lesser extent Andersen, is the crucial element in this discussion, as it depicts a cross-national similarity in approach.

Musicologist Carl Dahlhaus puts nationalism in an evolutionary context in terms of how it developed in the nineteenth century. The way in which he describes the changing phenomenon is precisely how Andersen and Grundtvig came to defend different representations of nationalism, and how this polarity in Denmark could be ascribed to a divergence in how Wagner is received there. Dahlhaus states that "nationalism in fact underwent a profound alteration during the nineteenth century. In the first half of the century the 'nationalist' was also, perhaps paradoxically, a 'cosmopolitan,' a 'citizen of the world.' But after 1849 nationalism adopted a haughtily exclusive or even aggressive stance."[586] This statement is exactly why Andersen viewed Wagner as the artist of the future, whom he had pinned his hopes onto: Wagner was originally a left-wing revolutionary, who was exiled for his political agitation. To Andersen, this made Wagner a cosmopolitan, and Andersen, it will be remembered, also believed himself to be a citizen of the world and dreamed of instigating a similar belief that would solidify Denmark and Germany culturally. The shift in nationalist perception that Dahlhaus mentioned came after 1849 and is

584 Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, "Germans as the 'People of Music': Genealogy of an Identity" in *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 11–12.

585 Thomas S. Grey, "Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* as National Opera (1868–1945)" in *Music and German National Identity*, 78.

586 Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 82.

more aligned with Grundtvig's approach: "In its later guise, nationalism was introverted and xenophobic, and fostered policies favoring national aggrandizement—policies that were regarded as 'realistic' by comparison with the 'idealistic' fancies of 'cosmopolitanism.' In the second half of the nineteenth century nationalism did not draw support and encouragement from the development of other nations, but regarded it as a threat."[587] Both Grundtvig and Wagner adopted these parameters—especially Wagner in his nationalistic texts above. Yet, Andersen never conformed to the paradigm shift, and sought to pull Wagner's "realistic" expressions back to a more "cosmopolitan" inclusivity in *Lykke Peer*. Andersen sought to dissuade presenting minorities as a threat in *Peer*, rendering his position as idealistic.

Wagner's expression of nationalism further conformed to the relevant expressions of Grundtvig and Andersen in that his aggressive cultural nationalism at the expense of foreigners echoed Grundtvig's method of national solidarity against a common enemy. However, Wagner also frequently derived his theories of nationalism from Schopenhauerian metaphysics by using those ideals to express why and how spiritual transcendence is necessary. This latter view is more aligned with Andersen, who also idealized abstract concepts, especially as they were related to the arts. His own inclinations towards Wagnerian and Schopenhauerian metaphysics is clearly illustrated in *Lykke Peer* with Peer's final death-yielding denial of the empirical will during the performance of his own Wagner-styled opera. The concept of nationalism, in context of Wagner and the two Danes, takes on a breadth of social and moral tenets that continuously informed all associated discussions. For all three, the discussion of nationalism was used as a means of manipulating public appeal, and the political landscape in both Denmark and Germany was ripe for this kind of agenda. Salmi concurs here, stating that "it seems to be apparent that Wagner exploited the past as material for the construction of his concept of national identity. In this respect, he was certainly no exception among nineteenth-century nationalists."[588] With the partial exception of Grundtvig, none of them were career politicians, yet they all wielded immense social influence through their careers as artists and thinkers, and had no qualms about using their influence to steer national perceptions in ways that suited them all. The morality of any of this is incidental. What matters is that there were clear national divisions that incorporated similar methods to obtain success. The scrutiny of Wagner's public opinion in both Denmark and Germany hinges on the type of propaganda that the most like-minded individuals expressed, because they were all interconnected by virtue of a shared history and lifetime, thus rendering Wagner, Andersen, and Grundtvig as imperative characters in the narrative of Wagner's Danish reception.

[587] Ibid., 83.
[588] Salmi, Imagined Germany, 34.

Furthermore, we encounter the final pillar of Sarah Tracy's theory of narrative analysis that determines the presence of story, plot, and audience. Each structural component of Tracy's theory is retroactively discernible in the manner in which both Andersen and Grundtvig expressed themselves, where Wagner also conformed to this distinct trajectory. His audience was the German people, and his plot consisted of advocating for Germany's socio-cultural stimulation to form a mythologized and idealized national utopia of Germanness. The textual narratives that all three men employed stand as another example of how similarly-inclined all of them were regarding the nature of their interests and methods of distributing their ideas.

Section VI: Wagner in the Danish Press

Public Reviews and Analyses of Wagner's Theories and Music

In the previous sections, historical and ideological contexts were established that traced the evolution of perceptions in Denmark, as well as for H.C. Andersen, as he adapted his world outlook to fit his changing awareness of art and society. It was demonstrated how intrinsically Andersen's life and experience found abstract representation in his literary works—from the people around him to the political upheavals of war and the subsequent cultivation of a new national identity. Yet, throughout all of these challenges, Andersen maintained an idealistic view of the significance of art and how it can be used to foster solidarity even in times when differences vastly outweighed similarities in the minds of average people. Many of these ideals and Andersen's own close proximity to the world of music, coalesced in the fruition of his final novel: *Lykke Peer*. The profound indebtedness to and similarities of Richard Wagner's ideology and personal history, respectively, to the narrative of Andersen's story is unequivocal and explicit. In this context, it must be reiterated briefly how perceptive and sensitive Andersen was to the views and tastes of his time (as depicted by the tone of his diaries and autobiographical texts), and that he drew inspiration from seemingly any exposure that he found to be compelling and worthy of inclusion in his own pantheon of perception.

When Wagner's music began being heard in Danish concert halls, a broader interest in the German composer ensued, and public texts began appearing that delved into the nature of the composer's mind as much as into his music. Indeed, scholars and critics alike were fascinated by the theoretical outlook that Wagner projected in his prose works, and these commentators sought to draw a parallel between Wagner's words and his music. This phenomenon was also evident in Italy, for example, as Wagner's name in that country was also first associated with his theoretical texts, while his music remained relatively unknown. Articles in Italy on Wagner's theories first appeared in 1855 (with more following in 1856), and

depicted awareness of *Oper und Drama* and other works.[589] In Russia, however, Wagner first appeared in local newspapers as early as 1841, and then more significantly in 1842 when the world premiere of *Rienzi* in Dresden was reviewed. But like in Denmark, Russians first heard Wagner in their concert halls, years before any of his operas would be staged there.[590]

Returning to Denmark, the analysis of public periodical texts that were written about Wagner in Andersen's time will be seen as a representation of both Danish perceptions of the composer, and as a symmetrical echo of Andersen's future literary projection of Wagner and his ideologies in *Lykke Peer*, thereby exemplifying a cyclical phenomenon of information presented to the Danish public, which was synthesized creatively to take those Danish views and appropriate them abstractly, as Andersen had done in *Peer*. In a way, then, these articles could be seen as Andersen's research on Wagner, in addition to the abundance of material that he had absorbed on the composer in previous years. The crucial point being that the Danish commentators and Andersen saw similar values in Wagner and focused on directly depicting these elements to their respective readers.

Moreover, the conclusions drawn from the kinds of analyses described above are indicative of this study's overall approach to cultural reception as a method of inquiry, where a broad set of sources are utilized to comprehend Wagner's early theoretical and musical reception from the personal socio-cultural perspectives of those who are judging these aspects of Wagner's work. Andersen's outlook constitutes a specific cultural reception of Wagner, whereas what will be presented now is imbedded in a different experiential scope, despite stemming from the same set of historical experiences that Andersen was exposed to in terms of Denmark's political history. Andersen had a longer personal history with Wagner's work than the critics who published the forthcoming public reviews did, so this dichotomous interpretation will result in a richer layering of Wagner's early cultural reception in Denmark.

In a coincidental twist of fate, as far as it is known, Wagner's orchestral music was first heard publicly in Denmark at a concert performance in 1857, which was the same year in which the Copenhagen-based music journal *Tidsskrift for Musik* was established. The journal would remain in print until 1859 when its editor, Immanuel Rée, would die. Nevertheless, during its short tenure, the journal had published extensively on Wagner on a range of subjects, from concert announcements all over Europe, to the composer's present endeavors, and then most

589 Marion S. Miller, "Wagnerism, Wagnerians, and Italian Identity" in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, 170.

590 Rosamund Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.

significantly, in articles that analyzed his theoretical texts. Whether short or long, superficial or profound, these accounts showed how attuned Danish audiences were to Wagner's exploits at the time. In many ways, this could be seen as Denmark's desire to remain informed about cultural matters in Germany, but it also emphasized an implicit desire to import those current trends to Denmark in order to avoid cultural stagnation, which was a detail that Andersen was particularly keen on sensing from his decades of perpetual travel around the continent. Hannu Salmi, in reference to the practice at the time of distributing information on Wagner in the Sweden, Finland, and Baltic provinces, suggests that newspapers were also used to circulate discussions of Wagner's theories and political activities;[591] and so it was also in Denmark.

In the fourth issue of 1857, Rée mentioned Wagner's work on the *Ring* and its intended performance at a "makeshift theater" in Zürich, and that the piece "could not be expected to be completed before the summer of 1859."[592] Later on, Rée wrote that:

> A major German opera in 5 acts by H. Dorn, 'Die Niebelungen,' [sic] has been performed in Vienna, Berlin, Breslau and Szczecin. The Szczecin correspondent for 'Berl. Musikzeitung' praises it as highly valuable and bestows on the composer the predicate of being excellently gifted, whereas the editor of 'Blätter f. Musik' strongly opposes this composition. The Viennese magazines have at all waged a fierce struggle over the same worth or non-worth, and loosened in this struggle has been "Wagner or non-Wagner." (It will be recalled that Richard Wagner's efforts as a composer merely involve a transformation of the opera into its present state, and that on this occasion there has long been a fierce contention between those who realize that the opera needs to be purified, and those who find pleasure in German and especially in Italian opera as it is.)[593]

The above discussion is important because, as stated in the analysis of Andersen's correspondence, the poet had discussed these same matters with Grand Duke Carl Alexander in 1854, when the latter wrote to Andersen, informing him that Dorn's *Nibelungen* libretto has virtues, and that Wagner is dealing with the same subject matter, where his libretto has caused a sensation among the small group of private readers who have had access to it. Andersen was therefore aware of these distinctions between the two *Nibelung* composers at least three years before the Danish public

[591] Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism, 8.
[592] Immanuel Rée, *Tidsskrift for Musik,* 4/1857, 3.
[593] Ibid., 4.

was appraised of similar facts. This short report not only speaks of facts, but also of the controversy that existed between the realizations of the subject matter.

In the very next issue (No.5/1857), music critic H.H. Nyegaard presented the first installment of his three-issue segment titled: "About the Wagnerian Music Drama." He begins his essay with the following introduction: "The individual epochs in art history arose from the fact that a single genius has put himself in opposition to time and the prevailing taste, so that he has either known himself to create a whole new era, or at least given a clear hint of a coming time in art development in a particular direction. Gluck and Mozart belong to the first class; Richard Wagner to the other."[594] This dichotomy of eras is precisely what Andersen projected in *Lykke Peer* when distinguishing between the values of the singing master and Peer. Furthermore, he used the exact same composers—Gluck and Mozart, among others—to accentuate this distinction. Both Nyegaard and Andersen, therefore, present their images of Wagner not in and of themselves, but firstly in context of a wider aesthetic epoch that is now finding a new path away from the established past. This is one of the most contentious elements of Andersen's novella, where he continuously incites the kind of resistance between his characters that he felt in reality when people are hesitant or downright unwilling to accept the currents of change. Nyegaard addresses this resistance when he writes:

> But then surely this second class is superfluous and stands opposite from the first class masterpieces? Should we not have enough of what our ancestors have done before us, namely, to rejoice in the ancient unsurpassed works, of *Don Juan* and *Figaro*? Mozart is incomparable; what were we going to do with Wagner!? … It is the old trivial reasoning, which is adopted by very many musically-rigid men, who are star-blind to the movements of the time. It does not help, however; time will move forward with unceasing speed! It overthrows all crass conservatives - yes, even the theater directors who would not keep up with the progressive movement, but would only leave it to depend on enthusiasm for the old, which has now been adjusted on the scales of the past to be good, where enthusiasm for the theater run no risks.[595]

Nyegaard made a bold stand with this declaration, attacking the conservative values of his country, and blaming them for being complacent by not taking risks with modern works, and only maintaining the safe status-quo of art that would not risk controversy. Andersen rebelled against these very same established ideals, as did the characters of his novella. Nevertheless, Nyegaard poetically speaks of the movement

[594] H.H. Nyegaard, "Om det Wagnerske Musikdrama I," *Tidsskrift for Musik*, 5/1857, 1.
[595] Ibid.

of time and progressiveness, which is a foresight that he shared with both Andersen and Wagner who expressed similar notions in their prose texts on the future of the arts.

In the next section, Nyegaard starts off by saying: "Nor is there any real genius without the awareness that it is the new and peculiar development of form on which it depends and which one must strive for."[596] He supports this claim by quoting a letter by Gluck, where the composer discusses his desire to change his operatic style to reflect a new path that would essentially revolutionize the genre by allowing the music to gain independence from the demands of the singers, and to represent the text without the common interruptions to the action on stage. He stated that Guck sought to create a type of "unity" that would constitute something entirely new.[597] Mozart too, he stated, sought to progress this initiative but died too young. Weber made the same efforts, but he too died in relative youth before he could fully blossom. Lastly, Meyerbeer is mentioned, but as a composer who stands antithetical to Wagner, because he "speculates with his talent in economic time calculations that are irrelevant to art," whereas Wagner's "enthusiasm stems from a moral conviction of the truth of his musical-dramatic principle."[598]

The above notions are astoundingly perceptive in their ability to draw a specific lineage of progressiveness between Gluck and Wagner with all the relevant points in between. Nyegaard depicted how Gluck sought to instigate operatic reforms that would constitute a unity between the text and the music in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* ploys of Wagner's future music dramas. Nyegaard recognized the synthesis that Gluck desired and that Wagner later refined. Meyerbeer is accordingly denounced in a curiously Wagnerian way by being more interested in composing operas that would be popular and profitable, whereas Wagner was driven by his more virtuous convictions of aesthetic value. Although Andersen was not quite so aggressive in defending Wagner, his abstract literary subtlety essentially developed the same perception in portraying the Wagnerian imperative as an idealized truth of art. One element, however, that is explicitly evident between Nyegaard's descriptions in this section and *Lykke Peer* is, once again, the exact mention of Mozart and Weber in the narrative, where both writers play upon their early deaths. Indeed, Andersen's narration brought attention to busts of Mozart and Weber that the singing master had on display, which Frank Hugus claimed earlier represented a foreshadowing of Peer's own youthful demise. And since Peer was the literary allusion of Wagner himself, it is significant that Andersen singled out the same composers that Nyegaard presented, thereby exemplifying that both writers sought to address the musical

[596] Ibid.
[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid., 1–2.

legacy that Wagner inherited and progressed beyond in his efforts of establishing the music of the future.

After these initial and contextual sentiments of the first issue's installment, Nyegaard introduces Wagner more directly in the next issue's installment. He presents a concise overview of Wagner's compositional career, and importantly names *The Art-Work of the Future* and *Opera and Drama*. Despite admitting that his operas can be polarizing, he says that "one must admit that they in themselves contain something completely new in form and structure. Therefore, these poems have also gripped the imagination to such an extent that their enthusiasm on the one hand and stubborn resistance on the other hand have been almost unprecedented."[599] It is a crucial detail to recognize Nyegaard's emphasis on Wagner's theoretical texts, as well as his belief that a resistance of their meaning is essentially wrong. He goes on to describe the association that Wagner had with Liszt, and in particular, the latter's performance of Wagner's operas in Weimar. Once again, a significant span of time in Andersen's own life is reflected in this recounting of Wagner's career. Nyegaard's next notion, however, is vital:

> The enormous effect that the Wagnerian theories have produced cannot be due to any petty coincidence, but to the primitiveness of a peculiar genius. Here, too, the strangeness is present that we are not dealing with a philosophical theorist who teaches impractical principles; Wagner first appears practical with his ideas; then he lets the theory emerge. And if these theories appear in a very sharp form that, like everything truly new, seems incredible and impossible, then much of this sharpness is a consequence of the contradiction, struggle, and persecution for which Wagner has been the subject. He goes so far as to make the claim that the reciting drama, as well as all other special art forms, architecture and plastics, would eventually cease to be special art industries and eventually completely dissolve into a single, large, common work of art. This 'Art-Work of the Future' was to become the opera. This claim about the art form, which we call opera, at least at our royal national theater, staggered and was treated like a stepmother, astonished many, and perhaps infuriated some.[600]

Nyegaard's advocacy for Wagner's method and thinking is palpable in the above statement. He states that a misunderstanding of the composer's intentions is a consequence of the sheer novelty of his ideas, coupled with his persecution. This is most assuredly in reference to Wagner's political exile in Switzerland after the 1849 Dresden uprising, which, as stated earlier, had presented Wagner as a cosmopolitan

[599] H.H. Nyegaard, "Om det Wagnerske Musikdrama II," *Tidsskrift for Musik*, 6/1857, 1.
[600] Ibid.

revolutionary who was a victim of his own country's machinations. An example of the kind of misunderstanding of Wagner's theories and intentions that Nyegaard described is evident in how Wagner was written about in the Russian press in the early 1860s when concert performances of his music began to increase. The critics there erroneously attached the designation of "future music" to everything by Wagner, and judged all of his music from this perspective, which instigated widespread divisiveness in the Russian press. Russian literature scholar Rosamund Bartlett notes that these first analytical texts on Wagner were written by amateur laymen, as musical criticism in Russia was not written by experts until later in the century.[601]

It is relevant to reiterate how the Danes related to this oppressive phenomenon, especially after the second Schleswigian War. Yet, Nyegaard wrote this essay seven years prior to that event. Nevertheless, it is evident that he sympathizes with Wagner's humanity as much as with his art, and that he seeks to conflate the two in his portrayal of the composer. Historically, when writers have done this, it was in context of Wagner's vitriolic nature. But as Celenza stated before, Wagner's image in Andersen's time was not attached to the sentiments that followed the composer more in the twentieth century. Again, he was seen, as Nyegaard clearly saw him, as a revolutionary artist who was ostracized for his courage to be progressive and different. The latter elements of the passage reflect a circling back to the Gluck quote from the previous issue where Nyegaard presented the historical context for *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which he now clearly associates with Wagner both musically and theoretically by citing it as a byproduct of the theories contained in *Art-Work of the Future*. The last point of intrigue is associated with the veiled criticism of the Danish Royal Theater, returning his argument to the idea that the essence of opera, and what it could be in the future, was a divisive subject for many people. As it will be evident in a subsequent chapter, Bournonville's hostile reception to Wagner the man expresses a knowledge of the very sentiments that Nyegaard writes about here. It can surely be seen as a testament of how much this periodical presumably permeated the social awareness of Copenhageners, to where they cite theoretical ideas in conjunction with their own opinions. Such is not the practice of a culturally indifferent society.

Nyegaard concludes this issue's discussion of Wagner with a curious presentation. He begins this section with his views on theatrical comedy, comic opera, and the vaudeville. To him, these styles occupy a place that he feels the music drama could logically overtake. He states that "The more the comedy rises to free humor and leaves characters and the narrow boundaries of the plot, in order to

[601] Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, 14.

indulge in the production of a beautiful and cheerful picture of life, it becomes a greater and indisputable necessity for it to absorb music as an organic element." Furthermore, only the music is left to "embrace and permeate with elementary effect the whole of human nature and dissolve it into emotional pleasure." He continues that comic opera has evolved into romantic opera, where it expresses a wider array of emotions, and that crucially, this is transmitted more so by the music than the text. The point being that "music and drama approach each other to an astonishing degree at the comic gesture, and for the reasonable logic that they would soon merge into inseparable union. It is also a fact that this union of words and tones has appealed to the audience and filled the theaters. Why should one not imagine a similarly intimate connection between music and tragedy, or the serious drama that Wagner has almost envisioned?"[602]

Nyegaard cleverly posits above how the Wagnerian music drama could logically become accepted in Denmark due to its intrinsic association with the growing seriousness of comic opera. The more that music overtakes the text in its ability to project emotions and further the plot, the more viable Wagner's music drama becomes in the wake of this paradigm shift. Crucially, if these changes within the structure of comic opera have been socially accepted, Nyegaard asks, then what would prohibit Wagner's dramas from being equally accepted, understood, and even enjoyed? Nyegaard's shrewd logic of enticement is simple yet powerful. Instead of focusing on how Wagner is different, he chooses to present how he is similar, albeit in a naturally progressive way that already appears seamless in context of the evolution of comic opera on the Danish stage. His efforts to convince are elegant and compelling, and the question he poses at the end sets up the third and final installment on Wagner to be concluded in the forthcoming issue.

In the last installment of Nyegaard's Wagner essay in the 7/1857 issue, the author starts by reiterating a crucial point from the previous issue:

> The realization that the drama had to develop into a new form has become more and more widespread and thus does not in itself contain anything new. But that music should be a medium for the modern, for the drama of the future—it is a view of which many have had a kind of feeling, but of which no one, neither theoretically nor practically, has spoken to the extent that is the case with Richard Wagner. When one now asks whether Wagner makes use of the available forms of dramatic music, the answer is that his emancipation is complete.[603]

[602] Nyegaard, "Om det Wagnerske Musikdrama II," 1.
[603] H.H. Nyegaard, "Om det Wagnerske Musikdrama III," *Tidsskrift for Musik*, 7/1857, 1.

The key element, once again, is that Wagner was the only individual to have theorized about the drama of the future and put those theories into practical use. To describe what Wagner achieved as an emancipation is to suggest that he brought a level of authentic realness to the drama that had prior only been a shadow of its true potential. It rather makes Wagner's works appear as an inevitable duty to the craft, rather than an aesthetic impulse that the artist simply felt was representational of his personal expressive will. Furthermore, by calling it a complete emancipation, it leads one to imagine that Nyegaard considers the Wagnerian imperative to be the last evolutionary incarnation of drama from where it could not possibly progress any further. This last notion, though, is incidental to the overall argument—it only serves as a plausible assumption. Nyegaard continued by stating that there are two separate musical distinctions in an opera that must be considered: One that accompanies the plot, and one that precedes and proceeds it. Essentially, the accompanying music is contingent upon real-time necessities, while the flanking music is more akin to the spirit and disposition of the plot as a comment on what had just happened or a foreshadowing/prelude to what is about to happen. The application of these insights is predicated on what Nyegaard deems "The unity of form, [which] must be applied to both text and music as an organism. But such an organic doctrine of dramatic music has not been respected so far."[604] He claims that Wagner had seen the way in which the dramatic core of opera had degenerated (he names Rossini and the general style of Italian libretti as an example), leading Wagner to recognize that he has no peers that can enact his ideology for the future of opera. His only recourse, therefore, was to "realize these himself as a writer and composer of text and music, and thereby gain the power to connect these two conflicting constituents into organic unity. For this he has not considered the old forms appropriate."[605] Nyegaard gives examples from *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* as instances of how Wagner generally avoided the formal trappings of opera in general up to that time.

He concludes his essay on Wagner by describing the way in which Hegel interpreted melody: "Hegel notes that the melodic task is that the melody truly achieves its concrete expression by becoming both declamatory and melodic. In this way, the declamatory does not stand in isolation either, but evens out its own one-sidedness in the form of the melodic expression. This creates the necessity of the concrete unit. Hegel thus suggests the connection between the melodic and the declamatory."[606] He associates this with Wagner by stating:

[604] Ibid.
[605] Ibid.
[606] Ibid.

> Here Wagner has gone further, and he is not far from confessing to a kind of alliteration poetry, after which a musical grammar was completed, which contained a certain typical-musical emphasis for the individual words. This and many more one-sided details have been taken for granted by his enemies, who in part have themselves invoked them [the details], and thereby contributed to maintaining the opposition to a man who, in any case, wants to be honest with the art of what his whole appearance has adequately proven, and whose artistic energy of will is almost unprecedented in these times.[607]

Nyegaard here states that Wagner's music is derived in such a complementary way to the text that he wrote, that they invariably constitute the organic harmony that he has been describing throughout. The constituent parts inform one another in ways that the author claims are used against Wagner by his enemies, who perpetuated an incomplete view of the Wagnerian form in order to oppose the new path that he promoted. Nyegaard certainly presents himself as a Wagner devotee, but also objectively presents the context and value of Wagner's achievements in ways that Andersen did likewise in *Lykke Peer*. Both writers address the resistance that Wagner's art faces, but endeavor to dispel those dubious attitudes by continuously striving to emphasize the importance of embracing the art of the future. For Andersen, this was associated with a desire to see art culturally unify Denmark and Germany in ways that he felt only a novel path could bring about. For Nyegaard, it was more about embracing the theatrical trends of the day; modernizing the Danish stage; and raising the awareness of drama in the sophisticated manner that Wagner had introduced, and then recognizing that as logical, necessary, and just as enjoyable as anything that had gained popularity on the national stages to that point. But in context of *Lykke Peer*, the evolution of skill and insight that Andersen had his protagonist progress through in the chronological stages of the narrative, followed a similar outline that Nyegaard had presented of an historical narrative, where for both writers, the crowning achievement was the full expression of the Wagnerian ideology, and the arrival of a new and undisputed aesthetic paradigm.

Later in the same year that Nyegaard had published his Wagner essay, Immanuel Rée had written an article in the 11/1857 issue titled: "Wagner's Music in Vienna and Copenhagen." He opens his article with this statement:

> Although the epoch-making composer Rudolph [sic] Wagner is still almost exclusively known solely by name in Copenhagen, whoever has followed the time and its development, will probably know that the upheavals of the last

[607] Ibid.

> decade have not only taken place in the political states in Europe, but also in the spiritual condition of the states, which includes the musical realm. One will not be unaware that it is the genius Wagner who has not only preached revolution and put himself at the forefront of the 'Future Musicians' (Die Zukunftsmusiker), but who also instigated a war by creating some works built on new principles, for which he himself has written both text and music, and of which especially the operas 'Tannhäuser' and 'Lohengrin' have astonished audiences.[608]

In this opening statement, Rée echoes Nyegaard's conviction that Wagner incites polarizing viewpoints, but that he is a genius who constitutes the future of music as an opera composer who writes his own text and music. He makes it clear that Wagner is still musically unknown in Copenhagen, but that his reputation and theories precede him. Most importantly, his two most popular operas at the time are causing quite the stir among audiences. Some more conservative circles have yet to fully embrace Wagner, Rée notes, citing Vienna as a powerful musical center that has refused to stage *Tannhäuser*. Smaller provincial theaters in Austria and Germany have staged the opera, though.[609]

The author next brings the argument back to Copenhagen, where he expresses doubt that *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin* could be mounted on the stage of the Royal Theater. Nevertheless, he states that Wagner's operas must be staged, and that "for the sake of art, we would hope that it happens—if it can happen—so that in musical terms, what has happened in so many other important places can be avoided, where the newest works only reach Denmark after other countries have long since brought them in."[610] Rée urges those who have the ability to import Wagner to Denmark to do so in order to enhance the Danes' knowledge of new trends in music, which are on the cusp of emerging more strongly. He presents a platitude of how art blooms and then recedes in every era, and that the present era is on the verge of something new, where "the abolition of the formerly sharp separation of the arts yields to the rise of a great common work of art! From this point of view, we must consider an artist who can be considered the future pioneering genius, namely Richard Wagner."[611]

The author's advocacy for Wagner being staged in Denmark is admirable, but also acts as an excellent foundation and recognition of foresight a full 13 years before

608 Immanuel Rée, "Wagners Musik i Wien og Kjøbenhavn," *Tidsskrift for Musik*, 11/1857, 2.
609 Ibid.
610 Ibid.
611 Ibid.

Lohengrin was staged in 1870 as the first Wagner opera in Denmark to receive that distinction. It also means that the discussion of staging Wagner's operas existed from virtually the very beginning when his music was first heard in Denmark. Unfortunately, the phenomenon of lateness that Rée advocated against was perpetuated in the amount of time it took between expressing this desire and seeing it carried out in 1870. Rée's article does not add any more insight to what Nyegaard presented, but by keeping Danish audiences aware of Wagner and the significance of his operatic innovation, he maintained awareness of the importance of embracing this composer, which presumably contributed to the reception of Wagner's music in hindsight by preparing (or conditioning) an historically fickle society for what to expect and how to interpret their experience in a wider context of history and artistic epochs.

A similar phenomenon happened in Sweden at around the same time regarding the lead-up to their own first Wagner staging. Indeed, as Hannu Salmi writes, Wagner was only musically present in Sweden in their concert halls until 1865, when the first Wagner opera, *Rienzi*, was staged in Stockholm.[612] Similarly to Denmark, Sweden was already publicly exposed to Wagner's prose works in the 1850s, but required several more years before the full staging of an opera.[613] Salmi writes that the choice of *Rienzi* was logical, as the Swedish opera was particularly oriented to the aesthetics of French grand opera, which the early *Rienzi* tried to stylistically imitate.[614] Denmark mirrored this practice of first staging an early opera by Wagner rather than one of his more advanced music dramas. Although Wagner was to later disavow *Rienzi* from his Bayreuth canon, the older and more conservative French style of this opera would not place strains of modernity upon the inexperienced Swedish audience of 1865. Furthermore, as the critical reception discussed in Salmi's study shows, Swedish critics reporting on the 1865 premiere had completely misinterpreted the Wagnerian ideology of *Rienzi*, calling it a proponent of "the music of the future," and the representation "of a new, reshaped music,"[615] when it demonstrated no such qualities in any larger context. This was an example of a critic attempting to embolden his audience, much like Rée did, in order to stimulate public receptiveness to Wagner and his innovations. Presumably, the Swedes conflated Wagner's theories with all of his operas in order to draw a parallel between the theoretical texts that preceded the staged premiere and whatever would be chosen as the first opera. Also, unlike the Danish practice, Salmi suggested that the Swedes chose to present Wagner's operas in chronological order, believing that the musical

612 Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism, 1.
613 Ibid., 7.
614 Ibid., 124.
615 Ibid., 127–128.

development that ensued with subsequent works would be reflected in Wagner's theoretical texts, thereby making it easier for the audience to understand the progression of style.[616]

In the twelfth issue of 1857, Immanuel Rée once more writes about Wagner, this time reviewing a concert performance of the *Tannhäuser* overture. The review is short and significant for a number of details that are now becoming thematic in this journal's presentation of Wagner and his music. He began by saying:

> The overture to "Tannhäuser" by Richard Wagner appealed immensely; but however interesting it may be, especially in the absence of anything more—to hear a single one of Wagner's compositions, although the overture, by the way, forms the introduction to a larger work—does not serve as a measure for an assessment of this composer's worth; for that which is uncommon in him is not attributed precisely to the peculiarity of musical thought or in a peculiar instrumentation. In this respect, he relies in part on Weber, Mendelssohn, and in the "Tannhäuser" Overture (where the other beautiful main motif is a song sung, as far as we remember, by Tannhäuser in the last act), resembles Meyerbeer most of all.[617]

The beginning of this review perpetuates what is by now a common thread in Danish analysis of Wagner: He is compared and contrasted to composers of the past. This is quite common, and it was established that both Nyegaard and Andersen explicitly invoked Weber, Mendelssohn, and Meyerbeer, among others, in the context of weighing Wagner's meaning in their current time. Rée himself, like Andersen in his diaries/prose, was astute in pointing out that contemporary cultural trends arrived in Denmark generally later than in other countries. So by associating elements of similarities with composers of the past, Rée perhaps shrewdly did so in order to subtly convince readers that there is something in Wagner that is reminiscent of older music that they already enjoy. There is nothing particularly Danish about this, but it is a relevant observation due to the fact that advocates of Wagner in Denmark were still, at the time, trying to allow Wagner to stand on his own merit, and until that could happen, buttressed him with established names that could aid in providing a more seamless transition from old to new. Again, Andersen did this in *Lykke Peer* to prove an aesthetic point more than to provide a crutch for justifying his Wagnerian climax in the narrative. Nevertheless, that was 13 years after these articles were

[616] Ibid., 148.

[617] Immanuel Rée, "Hr. Linckes koncert i Casinos mindre Sal.," *Tidsskrift for Musik*, 12/1857, 1.

published in *Tidsskrift for Musik*, and Wagner's music had enjoyed greater exposure in Denmark in the intervening years.

Rée goes on to devote a few sentences of review of the actual music. He uses words like "beautiful, swirling, variegated, pleasant, shadowy, overloaded, exaggerated, occasionally crass and unsightly [in reference to the harmony], and greater longing [than what Meyerbeer invoked]."[618] These were powerful sentiments, but also depict—even for a devotee—perhaps a hint of displeasure or unease, not dissimilarly to the way in which Andersen first reacted to the *Tannhäuser* overture decades prior when he heard Mendelssohn conduct it in Leipzig. Rée's assessment attests to perhaps a similar kind of Danish ear that has been conditioned on older music, but despite that, one who also has a keen sense of recognizing value in that which is new and unprecedented. Likewise, it may have been suspicious for him to not include a few dubious barbs, or else risk being categorized as an obsequious acolyte of the composer. Regardless, the review served to punctuate the ultimate message with which Rée closed his review: To echo the belief that he openly expressed in the previous issue that to really know the totality of Wagner's art, a full opera by him must be mounted on a Danish stage, and that the articles written by Nyegaard in the fifth, sixth, and seventh issues will also confirm this sentiment. In a final reference to Denmark's tardiness with acquiring new works, he added that *Tannhäuser* must not be considered a new work, as it was first performed 12 years ago in Dresden, and that *Lohengrin* is both newer and a stronger example of Wagner's talent.[619] Once more, we see in this article a familiar resurgence of ideas that are meant to entice the Danish audiences to accept Wagner and his music of the future. What Andersen provided literarily on Wagner's behalf, so too did these critics with their direct advocacy, which bordered on imploring.

The following year, in the joint first and second issue of 1858, Rée wrote an article titled: "Poet-Composer Richard Wagner and His Works." From the beginning, the author reiterates some thematic points that have been made to the Danish readership, in context of a few recent concert acknowledgments of Wagner's music, before delving again into a summation of Wagner's career to date. He wrote: "Richard Wagner - of whose compositions the overture to 'Tannhäuser,' played at Hr. Lincke's concert, and fragments of 'Lohengrin,' performed at the music association, but to whose entire epoch-making activities only a few initiated members of the Danish audience have been able to gain any knowledge through the piano excerpts and Wagner's literary works, while the greater part may hardly know

[618] Ibid.
[619] Ibid.

the existence of this peculiar personality."[620] The message was clear, once more, that the general Danish public was significantly lacking exposure to Wagner's music, and that he was generally known from piano transcriptions and his theoretical texts. Incidentally, Salmi also reports that Wagner's music at this time was broadly sold most conspicuously in the form of piano solos, duets, and arrangements, to be played privately in homes and salons, and that this was the primary mode of distributing his music in the Nordics in the years before his operas were staged there.[621] After the initial statements of the composer's biography, linking him again with composers of the past who were valued by Danish audiences, Rée mentioned Wagner's current exile in Switzerland due to his politically revolutionary views associated with the 1849 Dresden uprising, and how in this exile, he wrote the prose works *Art and Revolution*, *Opera and Drama*, *The Art-Work of the Future*, "Three Opera Poems," and instigated the plan for his tetralogy, the *Ring*, which he is currently still working on.[622] Furthermore, he states:

> Wagner's operas initially did not succeed outside Dresden until he had published the above-mentioned literary works and demonstrated in them what he really wants. It is now seen that it was something completely new, that is, something that could not be introduced with a single stroke, but over which the future would first pass the decisive verdict, and the whole German art world was therefore divided into two warring armies, which began a struggle, in turn resulting in the bitterness, passion, and the less permissible means by which it was conducted, and sought its equal in art history. One of its least interesting results is, as you know, the nickname 'Future Musician,' with which the opposite party has completely ascended in its own blissful musical faith, calls Wagner and his followers. However, the gratifying result of this bitter struggle for Wagner was that his operas were performed everywhere (except Denmark!) And brought good luck.[623]

The above passage demonstrates how intrinsically Rée associates an understanding of Wagner's music with an understanding of his theoretical texts. In the entire discussion on Wagner that *Tidsskrift for Musik* has compiled so far, absolutely no mention has once been made of any actual plot details of the operas. The entire focus has been on historical context of the sound, and the intellectual meaning of what the

620 Immanuel Rée, "Digter-Komponisten Richard Wagner og hans Arbejder," *Tidsskrift for Musik*, 1–2/1858, 4.
621 Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism, 8.
622 Rée, "Digter-Komponisten Richard Wagner og hans Arbejder," 4.
623 Ibid., 4–5.

operas represent. This phenomenon could stem from no Wagner opera being staged thus far in Denmark; the audience already being familiar with the narratives, thereby invalidating their reiteration in these analyses; or the belief that the Danish audience would be more interested in these explanations rather than superficial summaries. Indeed, it demonstrates where value is placed in relation to what Danes wish to know. In all of this, the essential emphasis is on Wagner's quality of revolutionizing opera, which has the underlying implication that Danes wish their cultural awareness to be equally cognizant with the rest of Europe. Arguably, this reflects an insecurity as much as a curiosity. This sentiment is most plausible in view of Rée's final sentence where he emphatically stresses that Wagner's operas are performed everywhere except in Denmark. It can also stand to reason, therefore, that if Denmark cannot yet stage the operas themselves, they can at least delve into the symbolic meaning behind the pieces in a way that may rival other such analyses to demonstrate some essence of self-worth. Clearly, this type of expression was not an influential factor for Andersen when writing *Lykke Peer*, yet his literary subtlety of appropriated Wagnerism, as stated earlier, is on par with the explicit interpretation of the Wagnerian ideology as it has been analyzed in this periodical.

Returning to Rée's statement above, it is interesting that he chooses to address a division into factions in Germany as a result of the Wagnerian phenomenon. He presumably means the Wagner-Liszt-Berlioz trifecta that would in the ensuing years stand opposite of the Brahms-Schumann faction (despite Schumann's death in 1856), and would create quite the public stir among critics in particular. Rée clearly positions himself in the Wagner camp, attributing a blissful state (possibly of an ignorant persuasion), to those who stand in opposition of Wagner. Ironically, he attributes the term "Future musician" pejoratively, yet he has done nothing but support the concept as progressive and necessary. The true nature of Rée's meaning is incidental to his closing remark that widespread performances of Wagner's operas speak for themselves, and that it is seemingly Denmark's turn to adapt the trend and stage them as well. Subsequently, Rée echoes previous claims by stating:

> Anyone who thus goes through opera's entire art-historical development process will know that, both aesthetically and musically, there has been a standstill where essentially nothing new has been done since the time of Weber, Rossini, Auber, and Meyerbeer. As a result, audiences and critics have had to consider the production capacity of the three countries mentioned in this representation exhausted, until finally Richard Wagner acted against the inefficiency that has undeniably infiltrated newer opera, and fought it by his own talent and its scientific formation in conjunction with the musical, practical, as well as theoretical desire to prove the possibility of the existence of a larger and more beautiful unity between drama and music than has been thus far presented. What

> his reformatory efforts, therefore, mainly involve, is the possibility of a complete merging of all art forms into one another so that they form a single great work of art, in which no art form is the dominant one, and in which no single one is to be oppressed at the expense of the other.[624]

Rée does not state anything here that he has not addressed in the past, and takes a stand once again to emphasize the creative stagnation that accompanies the most popular operas of the time, and how the newest operas of the day, excluding Wagner, are ineffective derivatives of earlier models, as exemplified by the listed composers. Wagner's theory of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is again presented as an answer to the operatic inertness. What is important, though, is the next admission, where Rée states that Danish critics are nevertheless not experts on Wagner, as to be so would necessitate a familiarity with Wagner's music as complete stage works, instead of via orchestral excerpts, piano reductions, and his prose works. Yet, that which is available, allows Danish critics to at least recognize that within "these works rests a spirit, a genius, and a creative power that has the ability to penetrate and, viewed from a straightforward musical standpoint, without regard to the poet-composer's main principle—Wagner writes his own libretti—it really cannot be denied that these compositions satisfy most of the beauty that the soul demands, and that they could scarcely fail in the effect that they have also evoked everywhere. However, the fact that they also have their shortcomings in this respect should of course not be denied either."[625] Rée then adds that the recourse for this is clearly to stage the operas in Denmark, and that despite the difficulties, it would be possible if the necessary effort was made.

The final section of the article is devoted to a superficial musical analysis that associates Wagner's practice with his theories. The author notes that *Rienzi* and *Der fliegende Holländer* were not representational of Wagner's reformist theories, and that only first with *Tannhäuser* and more explicitly with *Lohengrin* did his theories find apt musical characterization. He closes by saying: "The whole new Wagnerian art direction suggests how much and how little weight it is given, at least to the fact that the history of opera is still far from over, and that the future can still expect much from this art form."[626] It is curious to consider that Rée's depiction of *Lohengrin* as Wagner's strongest and most advanced opera in terms of reflecting his prose theories, incited the decision to have that opera be the very first one staged in Denmark in 1870.

[624] Ibid., 5.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid.

Wagner's Prose in Danish

Apart from these analytical sentiments, it is interesting to remember the central role of the poet that both Wagner and Andersen projected in their texts on the future of the arts. Rée called Wagner a poet-composer, and indeed, Andersen also stylized his protagonist Peer as just that. Wagner also elevated the poet in his own prose as the leader of the future world order of the arts. This parallel between Wagner, Andersen, and Rée demonstrates an ideological awareness that distinguishes and elevates the role of the poet, all of which is plainly directed to the Danish audience, who experience Wagnerism from these three individuals who make their claims literarily known in addition to Wagner also doing so musically.

Approximately one decade after these initial analyses on Wagner's operatic theories, and with the second Schleswigian War now in the past as well, the Danish music writer Adolph Hertz translated sections of Wagner's *Opera and Drama* into Danish under the name *Music and Opera* in 1867. In the foreword, he explains Wagner's theories, defends some dubious attacks made by Wagner against other composers, and generally endorses the theories that Wagner presents, but without the ingratiating and direct tone with which Rée and Nyegaard had written about Wagner in the late 1850s. Hertz's account is important because it discusses the Wagnerian adulation in a more objective tone, uses Wagner's own words to support assumptions, and does not use the translation as a platform for trying to convince his readership of the necessity for staging Wagner's operas in Denmark. As Hertz makes clear, he is writing for an audience that is already familiar with who Wagner is, and can therefore dispel with the pandering rhetoric of Wagner's genius and seminal qualities that Hertz's colleagues readily employed in the near past. He begins the foreword to his translation with the following:

> For some years now, the publisher's intention has been to present the Danish audience with an excerpt from one of the works in which Richard Wagner, the well-known reformer of opera, has mainly abandoned his new artistic views. Our music lovers generally know Wagner from publicity, but we hardly fail to assume that very few of them know anything about the radical attempts at upheaval that have divided the musical world in other places into two hostile camps, which has led to rumors coming to attention. But under the growing musical intelligentsia in this country, we think it's worthwhile to seek further insight into the matter.[627]

[627] Richard Wagner, *Musik og Opera efter Richard Wagner*, trans. Adolph Hertz (Copenhagen: C.C. Lose, 1867), 1.

This first paragraph denotes a great deal in regard to what the translation is, and more importantly, the social function it serves for its Danish audience. It is unclear what Hertz means by Wagner having abandoned his new artistic views, but it may be a reference to the diametric shift in perspective that Wagner made after his discovery of Schopenhauer's philosophy. *Opera and Drama* was written before this shift, so that is most likely the reason for the mention of the composer's artistic abandonment. The key to this opening, though, is the expression of familiarity of Wagner to the Danes: They only know of him superficially through analytical and prose texts, and that the polarity surrounding Wagner leads to obfuscations. Without directly mentioning the need to hear the operas staged, the only logical recourse of expanding familiarity of the composer is to become directly acquainted with his unfiltered writer's voice in the form of the first Danish translation of any of his extant prose. Also, by noting the upheaval surrounding Wagner, Hertz importantly implies that it will be up to the Danes to decide how to judge Wagner based on his own expression of his ideas, suggesting, again, that his opinion as translator will remain as objective as possible. Once more, this is a slightly different approach of presenting Wagner than Rée and Nyegaard, but variety of method is what Hertz seems to think the Danish audience now needs with their understanding of Wagner and his ideology.

Hertz also expands on this notion of separation from Wagnerian critics who have amassed in quantity to oppose him solely on the grounds of his attempts to direct a path for the future of the arts. Indeed, Hertz writes,

> 'Future musician' and 'Future music' are words that are generally considered to characterize the author and his system in such a way that there is, as it were, a sufficient excuse in it for anyone who saves himself the trouble of further examining the nature of his opinions. However, the artists and the part of the audience that find it authentically related to the art must put aside all vague sympathies and antipathies and wish that naturalness and truth must permeate all its conditions. Anyone who has neither been versed in scholarly studies by obsolete, exhausted forms, or in blatant denial of the natural development of all spiritual activity will, after reading these texts, at least admit that there is seriousness in the author's endeavors, even if one does not turn a blind eye to the fact that the same extravagance sometimes applies in his direction, which seems almost inseparable from reformative efforts in general.[628]

Hertz says here—perhaps also subtly criticizing his own Danish critic colleagues—that too much judgment and personal projection is made from superficial

[628] Ibid., 2.

implications regarding the terms "Future musician" and "Future music." Hertz believes that these judgments come at the expense of familiarizing oneself with Wagner's actual prose writings. So instead of telling his readers how to interpret Wagner, he is first presuming to tell them how to separate fact from fiction, as it were, and to draw an opinion straight from the original source. Such a practice will, Hertz offers, allow the reader to ascertain the gravity of Wagner's theories. He notes the extravagance of the venture, but correlates it to the significance of reform rhetoric, which is, in this sense, equally expansive. Hertz describes the constituent parts of the texts thusly:

> The work from which this writing is extracted is one of the most significant in the series of art-critical works that Wagner published at very short intervals some years ago. Its full title is "Opera und Drama;" but it consists of three parts with distinct titles, the last two of which have chiefly an abstract, theorizing content, and are thus in general less apt to captivate the interest of the greater audience. In these parts of his work, the author seeks to manage his point of view in a broad, general way, and in his critique, to a large extent, to introduce his meaning, whereby his style sometimes becomes mysterious and far-reaching. Thus, as a precondition for his musical drama at its further stage of development, he even seems to demand completely changed living and world conditions, a human race regenerated both politically and religiously. In the first part of the work, on the other hand, he links the production to a rich diversity that is, for the most part, also in this country related to commonly known works of art. This part of the book is thus to be regarded as a cycle of historical-critical assessments of older and newer composers and their works, through which the author seeks in a more mediocre way to clarify his view.[629]

The above statement is significant because it is presumably the first time in Danish that mention has been made of Wagner's socio-political implications, and how the discussion of his prose is as much about music and the arts as about the society that represents them, and more importantly, the strengths and weaknesses of said society as a satisfactory vessel for the broad ideology, or not. For the first time, Danes are reading about Wagner, in their own language, related to ideas that have nothing to do with *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin*, which has permeated every previous discussion of Wagner. This wider social context is finally broaching the cultural gamut of the arts that Andersen was also preoccupied with. It was made clear earlier that Andersen and Wagner both sought to expound upon the social necessities that future arts were

[629] Ibid., 2–3.

contingent upon. Wagner's concept of social utopia changed throughout his career, but he always maintained some idealization of such a phenomenon, and this is an important association for the Danish audience to make, especially in the future context of *Lykke Peer*, where Andersen's narrative also seeks to represent how society interprets and accepts future art. Therefore, in a fundamental way, the Danish audience's absorption of Hertz's translation of *Opera and Drama* is directly beneficial to their understanding of Andersen's final novella that would be published three years later. In relation to the style of Wagner's prose, Hertz states:

> Incidentally, we hope that the author's rare richness of thought, his irony, and wit in connection with a great diversity of images of a sublime and often striking effect, will captivate all readers with an ordinary aesthetic formation, even those who may stand outside of the special circle of music. Such readers would surely, notwithstanding their lack of professional interest, receive the impression of a witty writer who, with an unusual eloquence, manages to lay out a peculiar enterprise according to its origin and development so as to constantly catch the eye of its general interest.[630]

This is an interesting and necessary admission of hope that is directed at the general Danish reader that is not necessarily a musician. More importantly, it suggests that Wagner's message can have value to virtually anyone who reads his book. The description of Wagner as a witty writer is a classification that is rarely, if ever, associated with his prose, so for a Danish translator to make such a claim, it speaks to the underlying cultural familiarity that may exist between Denmark and Germany, which Andersen so passionately believed in and sought to preserve. Hertz's statement is simultaneously objective in its assessment of Wagner's tone, yet also conveys the translator's view and continued endorsement of the content and style of writing.

In the next instance, Hertz curiously discusses the *Tannhäuser* fiasco in Paris that occurred in 1861. This event had nothing to do with *Opera and Drama*, but since Wagner attacked Meyerbeer in his prose text, Hertz presumably felt compelled to cite the Parisian event in order to retroactively defend Wagner's hostility, and display how the composer was vindicated later by having astutely judged his enemies. In a further defense of Wagner's attacking rhetoric, Hertz attempts to placate judgment by noting how conflicted Wagner was with including this inflammatory text. He quotes Wagner's misgivings as a justification of his moral reputability.[631] This apologetic position is curious in context of Wagner's general character, which Hertz

[630] Ibid., 4.
[631] Ibid., 5–6.

is clearly in agreement with. As noted earlier, Wagner was a left-wing revolutionary who was exiled for his attempt at creating a better environment for the arts. This made him a cosmopolitan and righteous revolutionary, and the Danes certainly beheld him in this way. Hertz is also clearly attempting to set the record straight with some of the more public altercations that Wagner has encountered, which he seems to feel would negatively inform the reception of his prose work if erroneous elements of his character where not rectified first. As such, this foreword to Wagner's text serves a greater purpose of enriching the Danish audience's grasp of the "truth," which Hertz made explicitly known was the entire purpose of providing an unfiltered connection to Wagner using the Danish language. It is as surely a propaganda ploy as Andersen and Grundtvig used to influence Danish morality to fit their individual agendas. The benefit of catering to such a small country is that one voice, with the right sources and methods, can reach virtually anyone, hence why all these individuals in Denmark who have an agenda to purport, do so on a national level, with the desire and intention of swaying a significant portion of the population.

The next section is quite novel in the whole of Danish Wagnerian criticism, in that Hertz asserts that Wagner's reform is not as unprecedented as has been surmised. He begins by stating: "Many are of the opinion that the Wagnerian reform effort is limited solely to the music. But the artistic position to which he directs the special musical factors of the whole arrangement is not substantially different from the perception of former serious artists."[632] Hertz presumes to describe notions of Wagner's treatment of choirs, the orchestra, and his (Hertz's) convoluted implication of recapitulation—as well as the use of certain common vocal forms—to depict how "all this, which many regard as the sum of Wagnerian teachings, he has in common with others, and the difference lies in the fact that these features of Wagner are accentuated a tone more strongly. The new thing in his direction, which he in any case exclusively employs, and which is then, admittedly, subject to important doubts as to the question of its correctness, consists of the fact that music as an independent art ceases."[633] As far as some of these formal features of the music are concerned, both Rée and Nyegaard were keen on recognizing them as staples of Wagner's style, but they both stopped short of saying that Wagner had presented nothing new, apart from the notion that constitutes *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Nevertheless, there is symmetry with Nyegaard's mention of Gluck having set the foundation for operatic reform that Wagner later realized. However, Hertz was far more direct in openly stating that Wagner was, in fact, conforming in many ways to established trends. By saying that Wagner simply presented some features more prominently than his predecessors, yet giving him the credit of unifying the constituent art forms of the drama most

[632] Ibid., 6–7.
[633] Ibid., 7–8.

uniquely, Hertz is perhaps shrewdly arguing to present Wagner as a formal creator of music that is already accepted, whereby Danish audiences have only to recognize the commonalities of the style to embrace the whole and be more willing to accept that which is new. If that latter notion is to be believed, then Hertz is subtly adapting a similar tactic of his Danish Wagnerian colleagues of the previous decade to dilute some of the fear that comes with experiencing new art. In any case, the translator took the opportunity to again present his opinion, but this time, with more direction and risk.

Hertz quickly reverted back to expounding the unique virtues of Wagner—as if to satiate any shocked readers from his previous assessment with glorifying rhetoric—and focuses on the composer's unification of the arts with his most endorsing declarations yet:

> The Wagnerian music drama will be the result of a collaboration of all art forms, so that the one-sided advantage that previously became part of the music will provide space for a harmonious production of words, sounds, and production, where a separation of the artistic elements, in particular a detachment of the music, is no longer conceivable at all. Poetry, music, and dance will unite in it; all the other fine arts will bring their best jewelry to the glorification of the ideal; drama, opera, and ballet will merge into one unit; the artist will be a poet, musician—in short everything; which will appear like a new grace, though fundamentally different from the one-sided, sensuous direction of the old.[634]

The rhetoric of this passage is reminiscent of Rée and Nyegaard's zeal, and it more explicitly endorses the Wagnerian ideal by echoing Wagner's stylistic sentimentality as he, Hertz, sets to distance Wagner more from his predecessors by perhaps pejoratively referring to composers from the latter faction as one-sided, sensuous, and old. In this context, sensuous could be implied as being passé or farcically simplistic in light of the sophistication of Wagner's new drama. The words "glorification of the ideal" certainly depicts a Wagnerian connotation, but also seems to be an authentic disposition of Hertz as well.

The translator ends his foreword by describing Wagner's vision of the poet of the future as the culminating force behind the drama's truest representation. He then quotes Wagner to assert that the composer perhaps paradoxically does not see himself as the aesthetic savior who will fulfill his own theories, but notes that no other composer conforms to the professed ideology either.[635] By ending the foreword with Wagner's own words, Hertz once again allows the composer to have the final

[634] Ibid., 8.
[635] Ibid., 11–13.

word before the book itself begins, thereby ultimately leaving judgment to the reader to make of the theories what he or she will. Of course, after Wagner's confidence was restored following King Ludwig II's patronage, his self-aggrandizement reached its ultimate apex, and he made his belief crystal clear (at least in his *Brown Book* diaries), that he was truly the only individual capable of revolutionizing opera. But in the prose works that he wrote during his Swiss exile—the only ones that informed Danish audiences and Andersen alike—there was a more ambiguous tone, which Hertz may have attributed to humility in the composer. Whatever the case may be, Hertz presented as well-rounded a view of Wagner as could be expected, and one that can certainly preemptively reflect the elevated stature of the composer that found literary allusion in Andersen's *Lykke Peer*. In this regard, all three Danish Wagner critics essentially agree that absorbing Wagner's theories is not just crucial for understanding the meaning of the operas, but for recognizing them also as ideological staples that pave the way for the future of the arts in general. This is what Andersen sought to do when he made his hero Peer into a Wagnerian, and this is what the critics wanted their Danish audience to comprehend as they await the actual operas to reach their stages.

Interestingly, an analysis of *Opera and Drama* already existed elsewhere in the Nordics, as the Swedish critic Carl Alt presented an overview of the Wagner text for Swedish readers already in 1853. Unlike Hertz's approach, Alt was more direct in writing how *Opera and Drama* should be read and then applied to the understanding of Wagner's operas. In particular, Alt steered his analysis to suggesting that Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was applicable to the theories in *Opera and Drama*, and that it is essential to comprehend that text in order to understand the opera.[636] It is interesting to consider the differences in critical approach taken between the Danish and Swedish insights, particularly as one is a public review and the other a translation of Wagner's book. Both insights predate their country's stage premieres of a Wagner opera, but were written for didactic purposes in order to prepare their respective readerships for the eventual operatic arrival. As Salmi also reflects, Wagner himself was keenly aware that his theories would impact the acceptance of his operas, and also noted that print media would have a significant influence over the distribution of Wagner's ideas and how they would be received.[637]

Bournonville and Wagner

The famed ballet master of the Royal Danish Ballet, August Bournonville, was responsible for the first productions of Wagner's operas in Denmark in the 1870s.

[636] Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism, 65–66.
[637] Ibid., 68.

He was also a close collaborator and confidante of Andersen's, and it is through Bournonville's influence that Wagner's reception took an explicitly musical dimension, complementary to the one that Andersen was forging literarily and aesthetically. Bournonville had some keen and often polemical insights into Wagner and his art, and his autobiographical recollections are an important testament to Danish views of Wagner around the time of his opera's premieres in Denmark and the publication of *Lykke Peer*.

Bournonville starts by noting his dual duties to both the ballet and the opera. He discussed the challenges that lay ahead and how "Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* was readied for performance,"[638] in preparation for its 1870 premiere. He described this process concerning Wagner as follows:

> The attention this eccentric composer has aroused in the world of music, by both his compositions and his polemical writings, allows no lyric stage to ignore his works. Therefore, the Theatre administration, zealously urged on by our most respected musicians, decided to offer the Danish public a taste of this so-called 'Music of the Future.' Since *Lohengrin* seemed to be the work most suitable for introducing us to this genre, it was chosen in preference to *Tannhäuser*, which demanded greater ostentation and whose action, while as static as that of the former, had less romantic body.[639]

What is most fascinating in this account is Bournonville's awareness of Wagner's theoretical texts and their controversies. The notion that he also associates Wagner with the idea of *music of the future*, is also an important corollary to Andersen's advocacy of Wagner in general, and specifically in *Lykke Peer*. Bournonville next explains how he and the opera's conductor Paulli had sought to attend a foreign performance of *Lohengrin* in order to become better acquainted with the work and its performance elements. To this effect, he states that he established correspondences with the Berlin Opera and Wagner himself in Lucerne. Wagner had notified him that a performance was scheduled in Munich on 28 May 1869, and that he and Paulli would be taken care of by the administrators there.[640] This was precisely the same procedure that the first Russian staging of a Wagner opera had undergone as well: The principal conductor of the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg had heard a performance of *Lohengrin* in Berlin in 1865. The experience prompted him to immediately lobby to have the work performed in Russia, but any

638 August Bournonville, *My Theatre Life*, trans. Patricia N. McAndrew (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), 360.

639 Ibid.

640 Ibid.

repertoire had to first be authorized by the Czar, and *Lohengrin* was rejected at the first time of asking in 1866. Consent was finally given for the opera in 1868, resulting in Wagner's staged premiere taking place that year[641]—just two years before the same opera would represent Wagner's staged premiere in Denmark. Russian composer and member of *The Mighty Five* group of composers, César Cui, was staunchly anti-Wagner, and wrote one of the first reviews following the Russian *Lohengrin* premiere, citing grievances that will be, in part, echoed in variation in two years' time by some of the more reactionary Danish music critics. Cui wrote about the opera's prelude: "I cannot understand why the public should like this prelude. There are no musical ideas in it, the endless unhealthy screeching of the violins is unbearable and is made all the more unpleasant by the fact that we are just hearing one sound the whole time, devoid of any content or musical idea, and it is all so incredibly long."[642]

When Bournonville and Paulli had arrived in Munich, the former elaborated on his experiences there in his travel memoirs. After introducing King Ludwig II in his memoir, and noting his patronage to Wagner, Bournonville demonstrated his knowledge of the Wagnerian repertoire:

> Under the Royal patronage *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Tristan und Isolde* were produced and performed at the Court Opera Theatre. For *Das Rheingold*, the first act of which takes place beneath the billowing surface of the Rhine, fantastic settings were painted, while the floor of the theatre and all of the machinery underwent a magnificent transformation. All of this was but a prelude to the colossal Bayreuth performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which was some years later to astonish, if not exactly satisfy, all the lovers of 'the prodigy of the music of the future.'
>
> We were taken up to one of the *premières loges*, from which we could see and hear everything, unnoticed. The first impression was striking, aye, almost decisive; for we entered the loge as the first strains of the Bridal Chorus sounded at the beginning of Act III; and when this was immediately followed by the graceful duet between Elsa and Lohengrin, we were enraptured by the melodic atmosphere![643]

[641] Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, 36.
[642] Quoted by Bartlett, Ibid., 37.
[643] Bournonville, *My Theatre Life*, 566.

The above passage was from Bournonville's recollections of the rehearsal they had witnessed upon arrival. He had this to say about the Munich performance of *Lohengrin*:

> The long-awaited performance of *Lohengrin* took place on the appointed day and lasted for almost five hours. All the same, this did not seem long to us, partly because our anxious attention to every detail, musical as well as scenic, and partly because the performance was altogether most exemplary. Vogel and Fraulein Mallinger were superb in the principal roles. Frau Vogel's Ortrud and, as stated, Kindermann's treacherous Friedrich formed a talented quartet with the two singers mentioned above. The chorus distinguished itself by fullness and harmony.
>
> The scenery, all of the sketches for which were kindly turned over to me by the *regisseur*, Herr Siegel, was entirely according to Wagner's own precepts. The orchestra, which possibly plays too prominent a part in all his operas, was conducted with great skill and fine attention to detail by von Bülow, who, as already remarked, has not only devoted his entire existence to the glorification of Wagner but also shares his every opinion and speaks of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer with pity and scorn!
>
> This cult, however, is not universal, either in Munich or throughout greater Germany. Especially in his brochure 'Das Judenthum in der Musik,' Wagner succeeded in alienating the music-loving Jewish community and received an embittered response in another pamphlet entitled 'Wagner der Judenfresser.' However that may be, Wagner, in spite of his eccentric ideas, has contempt for the accepted forms, and his passionate and unfair judgments, must nevertheless be recognized as a musical magnitude of uncommon importance. And as for *Lohengrin*, Paulli agreed with me that, with the necessary abridgment and careful rehearsal, this opera must surely create an epoch on our lyric stage and assume a place which might be unique, but, at any rate, eminent in our repertoire.[644]

This admission is fascinating because Bournonville acknowledges knowledge of Wagner's *Judaism in Music*, yet chooses to disregard the controversy of that text on whole, despite further acknowledging its erroneous claims, and his own implicit disagreement with the theories. Although Andersen never explicitly cited this Wagnerian text, his close friendship with Copenhagen's Jewish elite, and portrayal of Peer's acceptance of his singing master's Judaism in *Lykke Peer*, imply that he

[644] Ibid., 568.

very well could have, like Bournonville, been aware of this text and tried to passively rebuke its theories by the example of his Wagnerian narrative. The comment on the orchestra playing too prominent of a role is an example of how Johan Mylius described the Danish operatic penchant for older styles like vaudeville and singspiel that are more emphatic of vocal prominence, including Bel Canto (which Andersen helped to popularize in Denmark through *The Improvisatore)*. These were all operatic forms that Wagner sought to leave in the past, which Bournonville seemingly retained nostalgia for. When *Lohengrin* had its Danish premiere the following year, Bournonville reflected:

> At last, toward the season's end, Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* appeared and succeeded beyond expectations. The performance was altogether as respectable and the scenic equipment as splendid as that at any major theatre in Germany. It was therefore a genuine pleasure for me to inform Wagner of this fact, and he replied that he was delighted to know that in Denmark people had now become acquainted with German art and German music. I could not stomach this dose of arrogant ignorance, but answered—in French, of course—that while German *politics* were certainly not welcome in Denmark, we had been raised on German music; for Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Weber, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn had taught us to love it, and these great masters were chiefly responsible for the whole direction our music had taken. With this, our correspondence ceased forever.[645]

It has generally been surmised that Bournonville misunderstood Wagner's comment on German art and took unnecessary offense to it. Bournonville's scornful reaction should be juxtaposed with Wagner's full letter to him:

> Dear sir! I would be remiss to not express my best thanks for your kind comments on the good fortune that my *Lohengrin* has found with you. Obviously, I am very much obliged to you, and all the honored contributors, and it is important to me that this feeling be kindly communicated to all of them. If I ask you at the same time, also the deserved intendant of the royal theater, Mr. Berner, in response to his well-intentioned greetings addressed to you by me, to extend my sincerest thanks, I hope that this will not impose any real annoyance on you.

[645] Ibid., 364.

> I am pleased to hear that you are thinking of presenting my *Tannhäuser* to the audience of the Danish capital as well, and I am very grateful to you for launching this work of mine.
>
> It is time for the German name in the field of art to regain its noble character among the nations that are close to us. I therefore welcome the success of my work in Copenhagen with particular satisfaction. Respectfully, I remain your very devoted Richard Wagner, Lucerne 24 May 1870.[646]

The historian Ea Dal goes on to say that Wagner's letter is quite standard and unprovocative, but that Bournonville was rather national-minded, and that Wagner's letter came a mere six years after the second Schleswigian War. He implies that Bournonville detected arrogance where there was none.[647]

When describing the details of the 1871–72 season, Bournonville discussed what he came to believe as a dysfunctional view of the concert-going public, where people were more in favor of "big voices" over "beauty."[648] Like most Danes at the time, including Andersen for a long time, Bournonville expresses his aesthetic preference for classicism and overall older structures pertaining to music. In this vein, he brings Wagner back into the fold:

> Partly for the above mentioned reasons and partly as a result of illness, during this season, more than ever before, the opera failed to win the sympathy of the public. We shall see whether the efforts expanded on *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* will produce a more favorable result. *Lohengrin* had already given us a glimpse of the system Richard Wagner wishes to introduce into opera and upon which he bases his supposed mission. One can only be astounded at his audacious harmonies and, above all, the great skill with which he handles the orchestra. But on the whole (so as not to say that he finds them burdensome and detestable), he seems to be indifferent to melody and the actual art of singing. Only as a rare exception does singing appear as more than a mere accompaniment to a brilliant orchestration, which frequently drowns out the voice and crushes the text.
>
> In his *Oper und Drama* Wagner has, with more or less indulgence, denounced all hitherto accepted operatic forms of *Unsinn* [nonsense] and *Blödsinn* [idiocy]. With a passion that exceeds the bounds of all *sound* criticism,

646 Ea Dal, "Danske Wagner-tilløb," i *Hvad Fatter gjør…Boghistoriske, litterære og musikalske essays tilegnet Erik Dal* (Herning, Denmark: Poul Kristensen, 1982), 137–38.

647 Ibid.

648 Bournonville, *My Theatre Life*, 370.

> he takes the field against all modern composers and lyric poets and sets himself up as the man who will show the world how a libretto should be written and set to music. But as for his own texts: they often suffer from considerable diffuseness and, despite the use of enormous stage apparatus, from a childish pursuit of effect and a scenic awkwardness that allows the leading characters to stand idle for long periods while the action drags on in endless recitatives which, *reasonable* as they might be, do not appeal to the emotions and are, on the whole, far less interesting than the arias, duets, and quintets that he scorns and rejects in his famous predecessors.
>
> As far as Wagner's actual originality is concerned, it consists, for the most part (especially in his latest works), in a craving for eccentric effects, which his admirers unanimously call 'The Music of the Future,' and which, because of their difficulty in being grasped and understood, seem certain to drive both singers and listeners to despair. On the other hand, when from time to time he condescends to be melodious, he must find it remarkable that his audience follows along with him when he allows his genius to travel the old beaten path.
>
> It is even harder for us older folk who were nursed on Mozart, Méhul, Weber, and Boïeldieu; rocked to the melodies of Weyse and Kuhlau; contemporaries of Rossini, Bellini, Meyerbeer, Spontini, Halévy, Auber, and Gounod; and, lastly, musically trained by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Hartmann, and Gade—hard for us, I say, to be able to imagine a future like that which Wagner sets up for us and wherewith he, in his arrogance, would storm Olympus and dethrone the gods. Organized as we are, we can only go so far as to find Wagner's compositions *remarkable*, but not refreshing; *astounding* but not convincing. In short, if, in the future, poetry and music are to be clothed in such forms, or more properly speaking, formlessness, we must feel sorry for our successors.[649]

Bournonville took great care to describe in full his beliefs on Wagner, and one can easily detect the musings of a bruised ego in his sarcastic vitriol. He is clearly projecting the bitterness that he still retained following his interpreted insult from Wagner's last letter. However, he seemed to only have positive remarks to make of *Lohengrin* following his visit to Munich in 1869, and the Danish premiere, and only took a diametrically opposed position after reading Wagner's letter. Indeed, the travel memoir from Munich depicts both a theatrical and musical acceptance of the opera, which was earnestly rescinded after the letter debacle. Similarly, Andersen had projected a cool reception towards Wagner until he met the composer in 1855,

[649] Ibid., 370–71.

was delighted by him, and for the rest of his life, had nothing but praise for Wagner and his art. The volatile emotionality of these artists, therefore, cannot be divorced from their opinions. Furthermore, when one reads Bournonville's above diatribe, and in conjunction with the composers of the past that he lists, one is instantly reminded of the singing master in *Lykke Peer* who also resisted the Wagnerian *music of the future* concept. Before his ego was bruised, Bournonville spoke of Wagner's universal appeal, but now, only of how he has diminished the art of opera and compromised the dignity of the great composers of the past. The sarcastic ad hominems further attest to this personal qualm that demonstrates what could arguably be seen as Bournonville's short sightedness and lack of vision regarding aesthetic innovation, which Andersen detected in the general Danish outlook concerning Germans, and took particular care to guard Peer from feeling likewise in his narrative. However, the fact remains that Bournonville cited both *Opera and Drama* and *the music of the future* in his reflections, which implies that Wagner's theoretical prose indeed had agency in Denmark beyond just Andersen's literary assimilations of them. There is a framework, therefore, for more multi-faceted receptions of Wagner within Danish society beyond solely musical ones.

Following the actual Danish premiere of *Meistersinger* in 1872, Bournonville essentially justified his assessments of Wagner in his overview of the music drama:

> *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, by Richard Wagner, an opera which had taken half a year of strenuous rehearsal, won only highly conditional applause. In *Lohengrin*, people had had the opportunity to acknowledge Richard Wagner's genius and outstanding skill, and also, in many places, to follow his music with unadulterated enjoyment. But in the present work the baroque was predominant, and though the subject belonged chiefly to the genre of comic opera, the instrumentation was so overwhelming that it would have been rather strong for even a cloak-and-dagger melodrama. The system whereby each of the characters was to have his own song-theme was here carried through to such a degree that the victorious knight repeated his melody at least twelve times, and the defeated mastersinger was, in both musical and dramatic respects, such a caricaturish figure that he belonged in a marionette theatre rather than in an opera.
>
> The piece was staged with great care and there were many successful moments in the performance; but what particularly appealed to the general public were the comical apprentices, the brawl, and the guildmen's procession. The members of the orchestra found the music interesting, but—except for a glorious quintet and a few melodious spots—the singers had not a single rewarding spot, while several of the principal numbers were drowned out by a mass of dissonants [sic] which frequently degenerated into downright caterwauling. This colossal composition could not hold its place in the

> repertoire. It was laid to rest in our 'musical mausoleum,' to be resurrected when the Future has matured our taste and hardened our eardrums.[650]

Bournonville's belief that he felt the pulse of public opinion regarding the reception of *Meistersinger* once more betrayed his polemical short-sightedness. Nevertheless, it is interesting to perceive the contemporary view, even if it is a biased one, that once more, those elements in Wagner that were either more superficially entertaining or somehow melodically indicative of prior operatic eras, were what the Danish people enjoyed most of all. Those views conflict with Andersen's appraisal of the work, but again demonstrate the polarizing atmosphere of Wagnerian musical reception.

The same biting wit ensued in 1875 for the Danish premiere of *Tannhäuser*. Bournonville reflected:

> The opera kept its current repertoire afloat partly by means of pieced-together set decorations, while all the scenery for *Tannhäuser* was obtained from Vienna. This magnificent opera, which ought to take precedence over *Lohengrin*, constitutes the actual introduction to the series of compositions with which Wagner thinks he can conquer the Future. In *Tannhäuser*, one still encounters some of the musical forms which correspond to accepted notions of lyric drama. There are many superbly thrilling moments, and in the glorious 'Grand March,' in particular, one finds an extraordinary wealth of melody; but at the same time, one has difficulty familiarizing oneself with the wildness that is supposed to depict the sensual pleasures of Venusberg.
>
> As the one who was to compose dances for this fantastic scene, I could easily have arranged from this music the history of a fire, with cries for help, crowds of people, fire engines, and a salvage corps! Well, it was naiads, bacchantes, and Heaven knows what mythological creatures, that Wagner's imagination had packed into the mountain which lies quite near 'die Wartburg!' The plot, which mainly revolves around the 'Tournament of Song,' has in singular fashion neglected the principal feature, which is rather subordinate in melodic respects; whereas the role the composer seems to have been fondest of is unquestionably that of the rejected lover, the minnesinger Wolfram.
>
> Even though Wagner considers all other opera texts to be far inferior to his own, in many places the latter suffer from childish absurdity and scenic awkwardness. Miracles such as the transformation of the Lohengrin-swan into the little Duke of Brabant, and the departure in the shell, which is towed out of

[650] Ibid., 374.

> the river Scheldt with the aid of a flying dove, really seem to lie beyond the bounds of illusion. The inevitable bier at the end of each opera, and the 'nonchalance' with which German kings and landgraves and treated in his texts, also give evidence of a remarkable lack of taste and historical discretion.
>
> I have no idea how far the eccentric master has gone in his later compositions, particularly in his Bayreuthian *Ring of the Nibelung*, since I have not seen these productions; but even zealous supporters of his Muse steer clear of further explanation.
>
> *Tannhäuser* was appreciatively received by our musical audience; but even though several portions of this remarkable composition will retain interest, one would hardly dare to prophesy any important future for the opera itself on our lyric stage.[651]

Clearly, Bournonville found *Tannhäuser* musically more agreeable that *Lohengrin* due to what he perceived to be more traditional musical devices, predicated on a greater abundance of melody. This is a bit of a hypocritical turnaround from when he previously called *Lohengrin* more agreeable than *Tannhäuser* because he considered the latter to be static and with less romantic body. He once more takes issue with the plot and libretto, always referencing Wagner's arrogance for writing his own libretti. And once again, he believes that the opera will not maintain popularity in Denmark. If Bournonville's polemics are any reflection of generalized Danish sentiments, then it would paint the picture of a highly conservative public that seeks entertainment above enlightenment, which was the precise accusation that Wagner and the young Andersen made on the position of the arts within their respective societies. In his youth, Andersen explicitly charged his countrymen with possessing this mentality. Regarding Bournonville, though, this moralistic assessment is tenuous due to his personal prejudice against Wagner, but it is still plausible.

Bournonville's final published reflections of Wagner are to be found within a collection entitled, "Biographical Sketches Drawn from Memory." One entry is devoted to the Danish composer Hans Christian Lumbye, approximately coinciding with his death in 1874, which has these opening remarks:

> Richard Wagner, the Apostle of the Music of the Future, whose penetrating observations on the art of music in general and the lyric drama in particular carry a certain weight, has in his book about opera and drama stated the opinion that on the whole, music has but two definite means of expressing itself, namely,

[651] Ibid., 384–85.

> 'singing and dancing.' These two principal elements frequently intertwine, and dance music has the unmistakable advantage of also being singable.[652]

This is a curious passage, as it does not attack Wagner in any way, yet was written after the letter debacle. Bournonville once again demonstrates his knowledge of Wagner's theories, but perhaps not even he could be polemical in light of Wagner's favorable attitude towards dance. If this statement, in conjunction with his judgments before and after receiving Wagner's final letter, are any barometer of insight, it is that Bournonville was a highly opinionated and passionate man whose inconsistent remarks about Wagner should be viewed with suspicion, but also considered, from another perspective, as telling depictions of the Danish reception of Wagner. Bournonville was clearly well acquainted with Wagner and Wagnerism, yet he still could not fully embrace the German in the way that Andersen had. Of course, Andersen had a far longer relationship with Wagner, and had even met the composer, so one wonders how Bournonville would have come to view Wagner and his music if he had the same advantages as Andersen. Nevertheless, if any parallel can be drawn between the two great Danish artists, it is that an acceptance of Wagner is neither immediate, nor acquired without persistence.

Danish Reviews of Wagner's Staged Performances

Three years after Hertz's translation of *Opera and Drama*, *Lohengrin* would finally have its Danish premiere in 1870. Despite the seemingly-late arrival of Wagner on the Danish stage, the string of Wagner premieres that ensued directly mirrored first-time performances in larger European cities. For example, the first Wagner staging in London was also in 1870 when *Der fliegende Höllander* was performed, followed by *Lohengrin* in 1875, *Tannhäuser* in 1876, and *Rienzi* in 1879.[653] The practice of using Wagner's earliest operas to introduce new audiences to his music was adopted in other Northern European countries. After the 1865 Swedish premiere of *Rienzi*, impresarios in Stockholm next staged *Der fliegende Höllander* in 1872, *Lohengrin* in 1874, and *Tannhäuser* in 1878.[654] Sweden would have to wait until 1887 for their premiere of *Die Meistersinger*,[655] which was already seen in Denmark in 1872. *Tannhäuser* was staged in Copenhagen in 1875, so one year before London and three years before Stockholm. This decade alone proved to be paramount for the

[652] Ibid., 670.
[653] Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.
[654] Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism, 227.
[655] Ibid., 228.

distribution of Wagner's operas, and with them, wider elements of Wagnerism, as we will see.

About a month before the Danish premiere, music historian Carl Thrane published an article in the 20 March 1870 edition of *Illustreret Tidende*, which was titled: "Richard Wagner and his Opera." The article presented a romanticized biography of Wagner from childhood, his earliest interests in theater, his early veneration of Weber and Beethoven, and all of the operas and dramas he had completed and worked on to that point. It was clearly meant to recapitulate all elements of the composer to the Danish audience before the premiere of his opera. Although the previous texts by Rée, Nyegaard, and Hertz were not named or even alluded to, the majority of Thrane's article echoed points that had been made in the past, such as Wagner's famous prose works, and what they symbolize in his music. But he also does not shy away from mentioning the more controversial elements, such as Wagner's attacks of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer in *Judaism in Music*. He also mentioned how *Art-Work of the Future* idealized the ancient Greek tragedy, but how in 1860, Wagner wrote *Music of the Future*, which disavowed *Art-Work*, in the way that Hertz had previously alluded to by only saying that Wagner had abandoned his artistic views by the time he wrote his translation. Thrane's texts, therefore, would be the first time that the Danish audience was given a detailed account in a journal of how Wagner no longer adhered to the principles that were presented as so central to his theories of opera as Rée and Nyegaard had sought to explain and defend in the 1850s. Thrane also went into detailed accounts of how Wagner suffered in Paris in the 40s, as well as the 1861 Paris debacle of *Tannhäuser*. As a result, he also mentioned Wagner's polemical essay "German Art and German Policy" from 1867, which stands "sharply against the propaganda of French culture."[656] Importantly as well, and without naming names, Thrane mentioned the scandalous affair that Wagner had with his future second wife Cosima while she was still married to Hans von Bülow.

Towards the end of his article, Thrane describes Wagner's leitmotif system, saying how it unifies the narrative and music in a perpetual symmetry, where

> Wagner thus holds the audience indemnified for the loss of catchy arias; for these motifs are repeated so often that they could well, if one wishes, be taken home. But although Wagner in the invention of these orchestral motifs often brings great genius to the fore and by almost masking them by different key and instrumentation, and notwithstanding any true work of art must of course be inspired by an idea, it cannot be denied that the characters are sometimes

[656] Carl Thrane, "Richard Wagner og hans Opera," *Illustreret Tidende*, March 20, 1870.

> suffocated by this weight of ideas, and it may be that they give the impression of personified ideas rather than of individually pronounced beings, just as Wagner also particularly likes such hazy figures floating between spirit and man as *The Flying Dutchman* and *Lohengrin*.[657]

This passage exemplifies the issues that previous Danish critics had with the weightiness of Wagner's character portrayals, and how the leitmotif acts in place of more standard operatic forms. Like Hertz, Thrane's text sought to project objective truths and details that presented Wagner's theories and life honestly and transparently. Also like Hertz, and in contrast to Rée and Nyegaard, Thrane did not attempt to promote Wagner, rather taking the position of a historian over that of a critic. Interestingly, there was no mention of the pending *Lohengrin* premiere, which further speaks to the notion that Thrane was writing to an audience that was aware of Wagner and the upcoming performances. It was an impartial prelude, and echoed Hertz's position of letting the Danish readership make up its own mind. Nevertheless, Thrane ended his article by reiterating the importance and brilliance of Wagner, noting how in his music, "the spectator constantly holds his breath and—unlike many operas—shows him the attention to treat him as a thinking being."[658] Lastly, he writes how "the present already recognized that Wagner's genius, which again raised Gluck's flag, has lit a torch which not only has the consuming and enlightening properties of suffering, but also often its warming properties."[659]

A few weeks after Thrane's article, Erik Bøgh, Danish poet, journalist, and composer, wrote his own article review of *Lohengrin*. Bøgh had published a yearly collection of feuilletons for several years, and on 2 May 1870, in his collection *Dit og Dat*, he published his review of Wagner's opera. He opens his article with a colorful description of a conversation he had with an unnamed German doctor in Berlin, with whom he discussed cultural phenomena, the development of the arts, and philosophical meaning while scrutinizing murals by Kaulbach at a museum.[660] The essence of this discussion was meant to stimulate the author's perceptions towards artistic events, where he then gravitated to Wagner, noting from an audience member's perspective:

> There they hear a composer who in music is as colossal as Kaulbach in the painting. It is no longer this naive, old-fashioned tonal art that only expressed

657 Ibid.
658 Ibid.
659 Ibid.
660 Erik Bøgh, "Lohengrin," in *Dit og Dat fra 1870: Feuilletoner af Erik Bøgh* (København: Forlagt af Boghandler Th. Sandrup, 1871), 98.

> moods, only appeals to the ear, and only seeks the so-called heart. Here the sound of every note is a conscious thought, every side of the score is like a picture of Kaulbach. The same implemented three-story system, as they see in his painting and Hegel's philosophy, must be admired in the musical composition: the solo parts, the choir and the orchestra are here so systematically fused that if one removes only the slightest insignificance of the whole vast expansive apparatus, then it is impossible to find meaning in the rest. By the way, *Tannhäuser* is one of his most popular works. They should hear *Lohengrin* - it is a much deeper work! His *Die Niebelungen* [sic] and *Tristan und Isolde* are probably again far above *Lohengrin*, but these are works that can only be learned and performed by a staff who have been trained exclusively to 'sing Wagner,' and are simply perceived by an audience raised from childhood to listen to him.[661]

This admission depicts Bøgh's opinionated tone, which makes no effort of impartiality. Unlike all other Danish writers/critics on Wagner, Bøgh does not seek to educate his readership to who Wagner is or what his ideals of music and art are. Indeed, he writes in a first-person narrative that reads like an authentic journalistic criticism rather than a scholarly study. Nevertheless, he touches upon common themes that have always followed Wagner in Danish publications: An awareness of structural cohesion, a brief mention of his most recent works that are unknown to the Danish stage, and an awareness that specialized forces are required to properly execute the novelty of what Wagner presents.

Bøgh continues by noting that he did not particularly enjoy seeing *Tannhäuser*, and that he is perfectly content hearing "a small piece of music by Mozart performed beautifully on the piano. What does that suggest to the countless admirable creatures that Wagner sets in motion!"[662] From this opinion, it is clear that the author belongs to that reactionary, traditionalist faction of listeners that Andersen projected in the form of the singing master in *Lykke Peer* (which, incidentally, Bøgh also reviewed later that year in the same feuilleton). Bøgh continued:

> The time came when we Danes also had to hear the music of the future roar beyond us. Drawn by the mechanic Vedin's mechanical swimming bird, the swan knight *Lohengrin* made his entrance on our stage on Saturday, 18 April 1870. He had been difficult to get dragged in; a whole season's work had been applied before he could be brought before the lamps, but patience overcomes all, even the difficulties of the 'Wagner song,' and since only as much faith as a grain of sand is needed to move mountains, and when in our educated audience

[661] Ibid., 98–99.
[662] Ibid., 99.

> there is already a whole rock-belief in the speculative music, there is every probability that the Wagner admiration will follow and spread straight down to the hard-of-hearing concert-goers who can only use the program to distinguish between Bendel and Beethoven.[663]

Bøgh's first impressions of *Lohengrin* do not inspire particular admiration, and his sarcasm demonstrates not-too-subtly that regardless of his view, the Danish audience will seemingly still endorse Wagner, ultimately to include those listeners whom he pejoratively disparages at the end of the passage. He does, however, acknowledge the common trope of labeling *Lohengrin* as music of the future, which he may have also said disparagingly.

He subsequently praises the execution of the performance both musically and vocally, and provides a narrative overview of the opera, for which he acknowledges that Wagner wrote his own text. He ends his critique, though, by rather harshly presenting his opinion of the music:

> On it I shall not venture to pronounce my opinion as any justified judgment. I respect the statements of my Berlin companion, and confess that I understand the conditions challenged to pay homage to the new form for which a pattern has been given here, as I fully belong to the time that preceded the abolition of the melody and the dictatorship of the cunning arrangements. I like to hear beautiful recitatives and similar musical prose between the songs in an opera, but the songs themselves I cannot do without in a song piece, and whether the musical dialogue is as artificial and beautifully harmonized and orchestrated as it is in so many places here, I willingly leave the future, the enjoyment, and appreciation of the dramatic musical works, in which it may find what it seeks and misses, but in which I miss and search in vain for what the musicians of my time set most – the melody.[664]

By ending his article in this way, Bøgh admits that he is no devotee of Wagner's. He draws a clear stylistic distinction between Wagner's work and those earlier operas that adhere to melody and recitative. Bøgh is clearly more in favor of a Mozartian paradigm, and his view is an important contrast to the texts of his contemporaries who did their utmost to propagate Wagner to the Danish audience. As the only critic thus far not to have discussed or even alluded to Wagner's theoretical texts, one can only deduce that Bøgh was either unfamiliar with them, or did not find them applicable when assessing Wagner's operas.

[663] Ibid., 100.
[664] Ibid., 102–03.

Exactly two years later, on 31 March 1872, Carl Thrane again wrote an article in *Illustreret Tidende* on Wagner in conjunction with another Wagner drama being premiered in Denmark. The article was titled: "Royal Theater: 'Master Singers of Nuremberg,' Opera in 3 Acts by Richard Wagner." The tone that Thrane employs this time depicts an even greater sense of familiarity with Wagner, as well as a more critical approach to Wagner's art by drawing correlations to *Lohengrin* as an operatic work, but also in context of its Danish premiere two years prior. Indeed, Thrane's opening salvo is a crucial summation of the *Lohengrin* premiere that warrants full reproduction:

> When Wagner was introduced to the Danish scene two years ago through *Lohengrin*, it happened in complete silence. A lot had been written about future music in the magazines, but the audience had probably found out that according to its concept it was not suitable for the present, and at the first performance of *Lohengrin*, there was, therefore, not even a sold out house. To the audience's own astonishment, however, it soon found a taste for *Lohengrin*, and to its even greater astonishment, it gradually discovered one catchy melody after another in this unmelodic music. Was the description of the music of the future then incorrect? Impossible. It was usually east of Wagner's own writings. Had you then suddenly become so musically undeveloped that you were equally good at past, present, and future? One did not believe such modesty. Then at last a solution to the riddle of the anxious mind sounded: '*Lohengrin* is not future music at all.' 'They should have said that immediately, then I would have been more excited from the start. But what is future music?' 'The Master Singers of Nuremberg,' was the answer. People now got into trouble. One hated future music beforehand, but one had come to admire its composer, and out of this peculiar mood grew a curiosity which filled the theater at the first performance of 'Master Singers' with an excellent crowd of *la haute volée*, art lovers and art connoisseurs in general, Wagner lovers and Wagner haters in particular, as well as the many who come more or less close to these categories. Dark hints went through the minds of the Wagner lovers after the first act; for then there was strong shouting. After the second act, a few empty seats appeared on the floor; '*Ça n'est pas de la musique*,' said a Frenchman as he went his way, and the vast majority of the audience apparently played the role of Sixtus Beckmesser and sat and quietly got Wagner's sin board full of chalk lines. But during and after

> the third act, Hans Sachs' party was taken over and did not seem at all reluctant to hand him the Wagner-Walther laurel wreath.[665]

This passage tells a far different story of the *Lohengrin* premiere than the triumphant musings of Andersen in his diaries regarding the event. Thrane was correct in saying that there were many written accounts preceding the *Lohengrin* premiere about Wagner's theories, including those regarding music of the future. Yet, according to him, the Danish audience could not reconcile the theories with what they heard on the stage, thereby resulting in somewhat of a lukewarm initial reception. Nevertheless, after repeat encounters, the audience inexplicably developed an affinity for the music and saw in it qualities that were not immediately perceptible. This phenomenon suggest that the Danish audience was quite prone to expecting certain outcomes, which their anticipatory system of affects did not convey at first exposure. One wonders, then, if all the various analyses of theory, symbolism, and intent over several years had not fostered an unrealistic idealism for an audience that was still largely inexperienced with the Wagnerian sound or dramaturgy. Even so, Thrane perceived a shift in reception that then brought into question if *Lohengrin* was indeed the music of the future if it did not strictly adhere to the composer's theoretical texts, which Thrane explicitly mentions in the context of this paradox. Of course, posterity knows that despite the novelties of *Lohengrin*, it was still a mid-century romantic opera that owed heavily to tenets of French grand opera, and was the last opera he composed before his exile and focus on expounding his theoretical texts. These distinctions, seemingly, only became evident to the Danish audience when they heard the opera.

Thrane claims that the single logical recourse to the dilemma of categorizing *Lohengrin* was to disavow it from the associated theories, and to interpret it as something other than the music of the future. Thrane believed that if such a distinction was made from the beginning, the opera would have been more enjoyable from the start. This notion is once again curious, and shows how analytical and judgmental the Danish audience was if they were in possession of all these preconceived ideals before so much as hearing a single note. Thrane now arrives to *Master Singers*, and claiming how at last, there is the answer to the question of reconciling Wagnerian theory with experience. Thrane describes how the audience went into *Master Singers* with these questions in mind, and that it resulted in factionalizing listeners into those who were for and against Wagner. The experience was divisive, but as the rest of Thrane's article attests, the drama's redemption was the strength of the final act, which followed two weak and ineffective acts.

[665] Carl Thrane, "Det kongelige Theater: 'Mestersangerne i Nürnberg,' Opera i 3 Acter af Richard Wagner,'" *Illustreret Tidende*, March 31, 1872.

After criticizing some dramatic elements regarding the character depiction of Hans Sachs, Thrane describes the initial impact of the drama:

> The first impression is almost, despite the deafening noise, that one hears nothing at all; gradually one discovers the individual melodies that, according to the theory of future music as the common thread, should wind their way through it, and if one has become a little more familiar with the music, one feels the innumerable melodies, short and fleeting, but frequently recurring, which eventually gather themselves in a forest melody of a poetic total impression. Now, in order to stay with the picture, one must not forget that even if a beautiful forest walk presupposes a little effort and produces a little fatigue, one would not, for that reason, hold back and evade the enjoyment.[666]

When one excises Thrane's poetic critic's kitsch, the above passage is telling for conveying a sense of judgment that is still intrinsically tied to reconciling the drama with Wagner's theories. It is as if no Danish writer on Wagner is able to divorce the presentation of his stage works from the theories that Thrane and the Danish audience have so clearly brought into question after the *Lohengrin* premiere. He is essentially saying that one must be patient in order to decipher and follow the leitmotifs of *Master Singers*, which is the style that is more closely aligned with the theory of the music of the future. Interestingly, Russian critics came to similar conclusions of *Master Singers* in 1863 when they first heard the prelude performed under the direction of Wagner himself when the composer conducted concerts in St. Petersburg and Moscow from February to April 1863. The newspaper review echoed Thrane's misgivings of nine years later, describing how "members of the audience were lost. Our audience was perplexed to hear this outlandish music, in which previous forms have been replaced by some sort of ill-defined wavering and comprehensible melodies by audacious and sometimes wild fantasy. Many were bewildered and really did not know whether to laugh or cry."[667]

In further comparison to *Lohengrin*, Thrane writes about the songs in the contest in *Master Singers*, saying how: "The 'master songs' are prepared according to the same principles as *Lohengrin*, but the principles are followed with greater rigor. In particular, the lead role that Wagner assigns to the orchestra in his operas is so magnificent and strenuous here that, above all else, it might justify extraordinary fire."[668] Once again, Thrane compares the two vastly-different operas for the sake of drawing on familiarity for the Danish readership to comprehend. He subsequently

[666] Ibid.

[667] Quoted in Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, 30.

[668] Thrane, "Det kongelige Theater: 'Mestersangerne i Nürnberg.'"

says that *Master Singers* is full of beautiful music, but that the narrative plot is often static. As a result, Thrane asks: "Why then set such a large apparatus in motion, which presupposes that something more significant is going on than is the case?"[669] Then, after somewhat abruptly noting that the orchestra is too often forceful and not subtle enough, states that "Nor is the incessant return of the main motifs as well in place here as, for example, in *Lohengrin*. Thus, when the orchestra often returns to Lohengrin's ban on Elsa, it points to the idea of the piece, and the tragic, melancholic basic tone is often excellently estimated. But in this hilarious opera, the recurring motifs, some of which are even repeated countless times, make no good impression at all."[670]

The discussion next gravitates towards a criticism of the thematic repetitions in the orchestra, where Thrane posits that Wagner:

> Created himself a 'tablature,' which seems no less arbitrary or pedantic than the tablature of great arias, duets, etc., which he would have abolished. But the golden mean has seldom been the business of genius. A less fortunate circumstance for the play is that it must produce the superiority of the natural, the free art over and superiority over the pedantic school compulsion. For Wagner may be, if not the greatest composer of the future, then of today, and have manifold advantages; but to these belong at least the naturalness of his music.[671]

By this admission, Thrane is suggesting that the structure of *Master Singers* still conforms to the strict procedural paradigm that is also found in numbers operas, which employed the vocal forms that he lists, and makes clear that Wagner wished to move beyond in his concept of music of the future. Nevertheless, Wagner's sense of naturalness over the scrupulous, Thrane argues, is the particular element that makes Wagner the greatest composer of the time, if not for the future, which Thrane stylizes as a tenuous parameter for judging Wagner, especially in context of the misconception of *Lohengrin* fitting this structure. Despite that, Thrane accuses him of not composing in a "simple" and "straightforward" manner.[672]

In the next passage, Thrane oscillates between convoluted criticisms of Wagner's melodic use in *Master Singers*, and saying how "he then has a marvelous ability to let the melody or mood rise in power and fervor—it is as if it could never get tired of rising higher, to go on and on, and it is not just in the physical sense that one can

[669] Ibid.
[670] Ibid.
[671] Ibid.
[672] Ibid.

say then with the poet: 'It is as if the chest is to be burst with longing and desire.'"[673] The issue that Thrane takes is when he perceives a melodic vocal passage to be an "artificial, slightly distorted impression of what has hardly been intended."[674] His meaning here is rather dubious (most likely an example of the age-old critic's criticism because they simply can), but he attempts to equate the pervious compliment of letting the melody rise in power by describing how it was an improvement over such a phenomenon in *Lohengrin*: "In his earlier works, such as *Lohengrin*, this peculiarity of his is not so prominent, as that piece was sometimes reminiscent of Weber or Marschner, as an atonement for what he himself might lack. In 'The Master Singers,' he quite stands on his own two feet; he is there only in his own greatness, where he owes everything to himself."[675] This admission is significant as it supports Thrane's theory that *Master Singers* is indeed the opera of the future rather than the derivative *Lohengrin*, which has to stylistically borrow from Weber or Marschner to be greater than what it is on its own without such borrowings.

Thrane ponderously ends his article—as befitting the title that carries the name of the Royal Theater—by describing the novelty that the *Master Singers* premiere entailed for the company: "It is probably the first time in many years that an opera has been performed here at home so shortly after its first performance abroad. The theater deserves a thank you for the energy with which it has driven the work. There will probably also be no doubt that such an uncommon phenomenon in the musical world, where so few wonders are seen nowadays, will probably for a long time arouse the interest that it undoubtedly deserves."[676] This last point is certainly true, and is one that Rée in particular emphasized repeatedly in his advocacy for having pieces reach Denmark much sooner after their world premiere than what has historically been the case, which he felt resulted in the nation falling behind the aesthetic times. In that regard, perhaps the theater does deserve the credit that Thrane had lavished upon it.

To reiterate, this article is an important cultural indicator of the fickleness of Danish aesthetic views. Thrane begins by saying how seemingly unpopular the *Lohengrin* premiere of 1870 was because it was never sold out, yet two years later, *Lohengrin's* virtues are extolled when compared to *Master Singers*, which, by all accounts, received a mixed review from Thrane who denigrated the first two acts and praised only the third. This would imply that it takes the Danish audience time to adapt and recognize the value of Wagner's innovation, as Thrane himself alluded to

[673] Ibid.
[674] Ibid.
[675] Ibid.
[676] Ibid.

when he admitted that the audience in 1870 had grown to eventually develop a taste for *Lohengrin*. Nevertheless, they keep returning to Wagner and attempt to comprehend what they experience. The problem generally being that historical paradigms of opera in Denmark are hard to overcome, and most critics reporting on the performances at the time, do so reflexively of the whole operatic lineage back to Gluck, which instills a comparative quality in a society that paradoxically desires to focus their gaze forward onto the future, but keeps looking back over their shoulders somewhat nostalgically. Yet, Danish cultural nostalgia is engrained in their social psyche, as the powerful efforts of Grundtvig attest. Andersen himself had often in the past as well as in *Lykke Peer* contextualized Wagner in this dual perception of peerless revolutionary who nevertheless exists on a linear path of influence, which should not be forsaken. In that regard, one could equate the obvious conflict in Thrane's reception to that of Andersen's singing master in *Peer*. The old teacher's nostalgia resonates in some of Thrane's passages, especially at his most critical of Wagner, yet every single Danish writer on Wagner has called him a genius, a composer who embodies the future of music, and one whose theories of art and society must be understood. As previously mentioned, this adherence to prescribed convictions has benefits, but also detriments in its capacity to promote rigid idealizations that are not easily surrendered. Regardless of this, opera is important in Denmark; Wagner is important to opera; ergo Wagner is important to Denmark.

No essence of nostalgia for the past is better exhibited than in Erik Bøgh's review of *Master Singers*. He wrote his feuilleton in *Dit og Dat* on 25 March 1872, a mere six days before Thrane's article in *Illustreret Tidende*. If Bøgh's assessment of *Lohengrin* two years prior was negative, then his view of *Master Singers* is a diatribe of far greater discontent. The intervening years clearly did nothing to improve Wagner's standing with the critic. Bøgh opens his article with a polarizing and sensationalist tone that only punctuates his disdain rather that emphasizing a coherent assessment. One passage that clearly summarizes his view is the following:

> I must, after all I have suffered, acknowledge all that I can, and give my recognition without all affectation. First of all, I must pay Bournonville my due tribute. Had he not composed a ballet that people could watch while refraining from listening to the operatives walking and speaking words that no one understood, in tones without melody, then it is highly doubtful whether any of the spectators would have endured the fourth hour.[677]

[677] Erik Bøgh, "Mestersangerne i Nürnberg," in *Dit og Dat fra 1872: Feuilletoner af Erik Bøgh* (København: Forlagt af Boghandler Th. Sandrup, 1873), 69.

Bøgh expands on this by claiming that it was in fact Bournonville's decision to include a ballet that saved *Master Singers*, despite what "all the little futuristic musicians" believe.[678] He continues by flippantly saying the following:

> I also give my admiration to Wagner – yes, that is sincerely meant! I wish all those who admire him because they do not understand him to confess it as honestly as I admit that I admire him, even though I do not understand much more of him than they do. In this realization there is neither exaggeration nor irony. The astonishing skill he develops in the chaotic direction inevitably compels admiration - even in the art world, the artistic power and skill can show itself! Well, when he occasionally lowers himself to bring out a bit of melody, one gets a little suspicious of his ability to produce in a few respects, as his melodic motifs are neither very original nor very beautiful.[679]

He next attacks Wagner's abilities as a librettist:

> After, as a critic, he has risen to such an exalted prejudice that he mocks Rossini and Auber as schoolboys, and after expressing his deepest contempt for the former libretto writers, one naturally asks what to expect from himself, and then he writes such a fool's gossip as the lyrics to *Rheingold*, and such a childish, undramatic, unpoetic and unmusical attempt in the comic opera text, as his *Master Singers*.[680]

Bøgh's reactionary criticisms and ad hominems clearly underlie a personal distaste for Wagner's own critiques of others, which Bøgh seemingly uses as ammunition against his works. His admiration for Bournonville implies an ideological kinship with the ballet master, who was staunchly anti-Wagnerian, despite staging his operas in Denmark. One can assume that the allusions Bøgh makes of Wagner's criticisms of Rossini and Auber, as well as the attack on his libretti, are insights that he recycled from Bournonville's autobiography, which attacked Wagner as a hyper German nationalist. One can further assume that Bøgh's attacks are also a reflection of a larger anti-German perspective that many Danes, like Bournonville, held in the wake of the second Schleswigian War. Whatever the reasons may be, Bøgh's diatribe against Wagner is palpable and should be viewed more as the musings of what Bøgh himself admitted: That he does not understand Wagner. The details of his motivations, though, are incidental to the overall critical narrative that Wagner's art

[678] Ibid., 70.
[679] Ibid., 71.
[680] Ibid., 71–72.

and ideology experienced in these crucial first years of exposure on the Danish operatic stage. Like the opposing assessments of Germany that Andersen and Grundtvig projected, so too do these various critical receptions of Wagner constitute strong divisions in reception that often accompany the composer.

In a wider context of Baltic Sea Region Wagnerism, it is helpful to remember Salmi's admission that Wagner became much more publicly noticeable after the inception of the Bayreuth Festival in 1876.[681] Under these conditions, it becomes even more palpable to comprehend the unique abundance of Danish critical analysis of Wagner's theories and music. An argument can be made in regard to the representation of public scrutiny concerning Wagner between Denmark and the rest of the Baltic Sea Region with what Salmi describes as the "social boundaries of Wagnerism,"[682] denoting in this study, Denmark's closer ties, arguably, to German art than the rest of the region, despite being one of the last nations to stage a Wagner opera. To do this, as the only country in Wagner's lifetime to have waged war with the composer's own country, suggests a socio-cultural kinship the likes of which H.C. Andersen advocated for during his entire adult life. Even the pain and humiliation inflicted by Bismarck's forces, echoed in Bournonville's reactionary diaries and earlier in Grundtvig's anti-German polemical texts, could not deter Wagner's arrival on the Copenhagen stage. It is a set of circumstances that distinguishes Danish Wagnerism from that in any other corner of the Baltic Sea Region, and may paradoxically, in a way, elevate Danish Wagnerism as being the most resilient in the region for having to overcome so much adversity to simply have the right to exist and illuminate.

Indeed, another aspect of the "social boundaries of Wagnerism" can stem from the reception of Wagner the left-wing revolutionary: Whereas Russian authorities tailed Wagner during his trip to Russia in 1863 due to skepticism and mistrust associated with his political past,[683] this same association with the composer was applauded by the Danes, who saw the political activist and agitator in Wagner as a fellow underdog and cosmopolitan freedom fighter, and related to his persecution at the hands of German authorities. These perspectives emphasize the variation that Wagnerism as an ethos invites, which was often projected onto Wagner's person as well during his lifetime. It once again reaffirms the importance and relevance of investigating Wagner's reception as a fundamental reflection of a nation's social, moral, and cultural outlook. Certainly, as professor of English Emma Sutton states: "Wagnerism became a medium through which to evaluate the contemporary cultural context as well as that of Wagner himself. Wagnerism was examined as a force that

[681] Salmi, Wagner and Wagnerism, 231.
[682] Ibid., 184.
[683] Ibid., 106.

had shaped, and through which might be illuminated, the aesthetic theories, intellectual currents, and material conditions of culture."[684] Furthermore, the Russian press took an opportunity to express their aesthetic and cultural progressiveness via their receptiveness to Wagnerism, when one critic wrote in context of Wagner's 1863 trip: "We Russians, as a northern people, are more able than the French (not to mention the Italians) to understand the innovator who has broken all links with routine and boldly thought of re-creating dramatic music on new foundations. Eventually, our social life would benefit, for a production of one of the operas of the radical reformer would inject an active current into our sleepy aesthetic pond and would awaken in us a desire."[685] The exuberant call to stage a Wagner opera in Russia echoes similar rhetoric of Danish critics who believed that the Danish audience, through their diligent understanding of Wagner's theories, would be as receptive as the Russian critic suggested his society would be to the Wagnerian innovation.

The collective views of these Danish critics express common tropes of early Wagnerism where, as stated earlier, nineteenth century critics voiced their opinions as reiterations of more expert insights that they themselves did not presume to possess. As a result, the critical gaze presented at this time, generally around Europe, was largely an exercise in public dilettantism. However, the benefit of analyzing clearly biased, review-based journalism and not scholarship is that such views echo public opinions and perceptions more transparently than scholarship aims to do, as those latter audiences belong to an esoteric few. Many of these critics conveyed their views as a standardized mirror of social perceptions, which is their central function to this study of Wagner's reception in Denmark between 1857 and 1875.

Indeed, Carl Dahlhaus presents two notions that reflect reception as a social mirroring that is palpable in Wagnerian reception study overall, and particularly in the way that Danish critics approach the composer. In his chapter "problems in reception history," Dahlhaus firstly suggests that the primary focus of the reception historian is not to present an analysis that seeks to capture a musical work's authentic "meaning," but instead to reflect the precision and earnestness of the time, place, and social construct that influenced the nature of the historians' convictions, which in turn informs their reception of a work. Dahlhaus stresses that the central point is not to capture the essence of the past, but to express the values and the ethos of the present. Meaning is meant to be discovered in the time in which the various and opposing viewpoints acquired predominance.[686] Secondly, he states that music

[684] Sutton, Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism, 4.
[685] Quoted in Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, 34.
[686] Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J.B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 154.

histories are produced around the renown of compositions, and the endeavor to preserve that renown. Lesser or unknown works by composers also rarely achieve renown unless their composer has already achieved success with other works.[687] In regard to this latter trend, a parallel can be drawn with the reasons why Wagner was desirable to import to Denmark: The renown that surrounded his works and theories had been distributed across Europe to such a degree that even mixed or mediocre stage debuts could not deter Wagner's international prominence. In that regard, in a manner of speaking, every debut was a success because no nation ever premiered one Wagner opera and then never again staged another one. When one considers this, the reactionary views of Wagner polemicists in any single nation, Denmark included, do not inform renown, per se, but are important to the formation of authentic meaning when it relates to localized reception as a reflection of time, place, and society. Wagnerism is a particularly adept cultural and aesthetic phenomenon at investigating the interconnected nuances between reception meaning and the constituent parameters of renown.

With the sole exception of Adolf Hertz, all the critics spoke interpretively of Wagner, whereas Hertz was the only one to apply a system of analysis that approached future musicological methodologies by giving a voice to the subject of study to express himself without yielding to diluted and erroneous projections. Nevertheless, all critics were aware of how Wagner used his theoretical texts to advance his reformist beliefs, which informed their ultimate validation of the importance of Wagner as a cultural epoch, which would in turn help establish Wagnerism as a Pan-European movement that allowed critics from multiple countries to use Wagner to implicitly comment on the status of their own cultural institutions.

In this regard, Denmark applied a similar approach to Wagnerian reception that was evident in these formative mid-century years across the continent, as Wagner was accepted as an unavoidable force in the realm of opera, theater, and culture itself. However, for the purpose of capturing the public's imagination, the divisive, controversial, and at times even confused critical reflections of Wagner's art and ideology in Denmark presented enough intrigue to maintain interest in the composer in an upward trajectory as time elapsed. Indeed, the crucial five years from the time of the first Wagner opera staging in Copenhagen in 1870 and the publication of the Wagnerian narrative *Lykke Peer*, to the third new production in 1875, established this time and the preceding 13 years as a formative arrival point of Danish Wagnerism that would from now on remain an integral establishment within the Danish operatic tradition.

[687] Ibid., 160.

Conclusion

In a broad-scale recapitulation of this study's main findings, a few key elements stand out for their significance. The main research question sought to ask: How were Wagner's ideas and music received in Denmark between 1857 and 1875, how were Wagner and Wagnerism connected to the question of Danish nationalism and identity, and how was Andersen involved in these phenomena? This question was answered by thoroughly analyzing the theories and beliefs of Wagner, Andersen, Grundtvig, and other relevant figures/actors of the studied period and cultural context, who crucially all lived through the shifting identities that were historically so integral to both Denmark and Germany in these volatile years of change. The early cultural reception of Wagner in Denmark, as my research aim emphasized, was first and foremost derived from the manner in which Andersen was associated with Wagner and his music, as well as other music, socio-cultural paradigms, and politics. Wagner's reception in Denmark was also contingent upon a larger evaluation of the changes in perception that ensued in Denmark following years of warfare and border adjustments. But most significantly, the cultural reception hinged on the kind of abstract national unification that was predicated on the way that language, history, and culture were harnessed and almost weaponized even as tools for instigating a new national identity that ideologically and idealistically put Andersen and Grundtvig in opposition to one another. This, in turn, informed the Danish landscape in which Wagner's theories and music began to be received. The analyses of the two Schleswigian Wars and the explicit Wagnerian imagery in Andersen's novella *Lykke Peer* contributed to a juxtaposition of insight that illustrated the interconnectedness of these phenomena as bearing influence on Danish Wagnerian reception.

Beyond the main research aims, this study also sought to fill a gap in Wagner reception studies from a geographical perspective, as Wagner's Danish reception has not been examined in close detail in previous studies. The present investigation also strove to develop an intersecting discourse on theory as it was related to the arts, society, and politics, as well as philosophy (as seen in the literary appropriation of Schopenhauerian mysticism and metaphysics in *Lykke Peer*), and lastly in the formation of a new Danish national identity. All of these endeavors presumed to make important contributions to an overall cultural paradigm in Northern Europe

that was established in palpable ways during the years of inquiry in my study. These cultural trends perpetuate to this day in the form of national identities born out of conflict, and influenced by some of the region's most formidable historical personalities. Danish national identity today was formed in the aftermath of the Schleswigian Wars, which establishes an essential parallel between the historical investigation and social perception (the latter relating to the influence the wars bore on Wagner's cultural reception in Denmark) that my study has sought to encapsulate. This element renders the present study valuable and applicable to interdisciplinary endeavors, and also situates Wagnerism and its study as a flexible and adaptable subfield of research that can be related to numerous studies, demonstrating connections between historical musicology and any number of projects that also look to investigate the constituent parts that this study sought to blend together.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the methodological association between my study and the field of historical musicology. The study of reception and the perception of ideologies like identity and nationalism are all phenomena that can be traced as historical developments. In other words, they never formed at a specific moment in time and as the result of a single specific event. As such, these investigations are permeated by a variety of historiographic approaches that often require a nuanced understanding to untangle subtleties that may not be as readily perceptible without recognizing the examination as a developmental circumstance. The present study sought to clarify the subtlety of hostile reactions that some Danish critics had to Wagner's theories and music. The method of inquiry with which I analyzed these reactions in greater context of Denmark's cultural and political history aligns my approach with an intrinsic historical pathway, which is further justified by the type of source materials that were gathered and studied, underscoring a system that the historic method promotes through a mixture of primary and secondary sources. These approaches were implemented in this study to position it as a work of historical musicology.

The concept of cultural reception was a central method of analysis, where I equated this process of investigation in my study with a broad social framework of Wagner that went beyond his music to include the composer's expressions of Germanness in both mytho-idealistic and nationalistic texts, which arrived in Denmark before full stagings of his operas. My explication of this cultural reception was further progressed through Andersen's various textual endeavors, which resulted in a wide array of source types that were used to develop an analysis of Wagner's early cultural reception in Denmark. My goal with this combination of sources and the narrative disposition of my study was to present two distinct and polarizing halves that constituted the pro-German convictions of Andersen and Wagner (albeit, in contrasting ways from each other at times), and the anti-German bend of Grundtvig that was exacerbated by the Schleswigian Wars, which found

voice and was further echoed in some of the critical reviews on Wagner in the Danish press. These two large-scale arcs of the study are key features of the complex cultural landscape in Denmark that affected and impacted Wagner's early reception there. As a result, we encountered what Yuri Tsivian described as a prominent staple of cultural reception, where there is a symbiotic effect of influence between the artwork impacting the viewer (or listener) and the viewer exerting sway over the artwork via projections of their personally-engrained culture, which in this case, profoundly informed the outcome of Danish Wagnerism. By this, I mean the manner in which Danish critics (the viewers) affected how Danish society would, in part, view and receive Wagner, based on a set of convictions that the critics expressed that were derived from their own historical and socio-cultural experiences.

When recounting the thematic parts of the study in terms of its linear development, Hans Christian Andersen deserves the first mention, as his musical aesthetics noticeably evolved from the conservative and provincial tastes of his native Denmark in the early nineteenth century, where he was initially ambivalent towards Wagner's bold romanticism and preferred more classicist styles like those of Mendelssohn. Yet, from his exposure to progressive trends in Germany, and in particular, the Liszt-led Weimar Court, the poet slowly came to accept the new paths that music was taking, in conjunction with his own burgeoning views on the need for a change in the social function of the arts. A significant turning point for Andersen was meeting Wagner while the composer was in exile in Switzerland. This encounter greatly impressed Andersen, and from then on, he not only favored Wagner as the leader of the music of the future, but also became an idealistic devotee, seeing Wagner as the symbiotic entity that would help Andersen realize his long-standing desire of witnessing a culturally-unified Denmark and Germany, and redeem the social disposition of the arts by elevating them to where the poet felt they belonged.

Andersen's faith in and devotion to Wagnerism came to its climax in 1870 with the publication of his final novella, *Lykke Peer*. In this work, Andersen centralized Wagnerian ideology, and indeed stylized his protagonist Peer as the quintessential Wagnerian hero, albeit while also distancing Peer from Wagner's anti-Semitic views in the novella's narrative. Direct and indirect allusions to Wagner and his philosophies were made, exemplifying Andersen's idealized solution for the future of art and society. *Lykke Peer* essentially synthesized both Wagner's and Andersen's theories on the future of the arts, which were analyzed in depth for their symmetrical complexities to further epitomize their shared preoccupation with aesthetic social theory. Andersen's writing of *Peer* importantly coincided with the first fully-staged production of a Wagner opera in Denmark, which happened to be *Lohengrin*—the opera that was explicitly showcased in *Peer* as well.

The importance of these narrative analyses was meant to emphasize the artistic and cultural manner in which Wagner was first appropriated in Denmark. The study then shifted to more historical notions, to establish a framework of Danish national identity in order to trace the complex and problematic evolution of the modern Danish identity, which was forged in the same turbulent years that Wagner's art and ideology were finding their way to Denmark. The essential point is that many of these difficult events in Denmark directly corresponded to decisions made in Germany. Enter the powerful influence of N.F.S. Grundtvig, who would adopt a policy of cultural nationalism that was meant to insulate Denmark from external threats, chief of which was Germany, in his view, in order to contrive a new Danish national identity that would look solely inward. Grundtvig had the advantage of spinning his propaganda in the wake of the devastating second Schleswigian War against Bismarck's German forces, which was arguably Denmark's most humiliating military loss in the nation's entire history. The opportunity to vilify Germany was one that Grundtvig capitalized on, fostering a hostile domestic view of the larger, soon-to-be-unified southern neighbor. A massive polarity ensued within this idealistic chaos where Andersen and Grundtvig stood at opposite ends regarding their view of Germany and the nature of Denmark's association with it, despite their occasional resonances with each other. A fascinating narrative thus ensued for Wagnerian reception in Denmark amidst these significant and controversial circumstances. To add further intrigue, Danes were aware of Wagner's explicit nationalism, which did not endear his person or art to judgmental audiences, as was the case with the anti-Wagnerian polemics of August Bournonville and Erik Bøgh, where Wagner's perceived nationalism was highly unpalatable to Bournonville, who reacted accordingly in his memoirs. However, both Grundtvig and Andersen also expressed nationalistic sentiments, thereby rendering the ideology an important element to consider in the unfolding portrayal of culture, history, and national identity.

The last significant element considered in the direct reception of Wagner's ideology and music was an analysis of the contemporary public reviews made in Denmark during this study's span of inquiry. These public texts emphasized a keen awareness of Wagner's career and literary exploits, in an effort to establish a foundation of understanding that was meant to warm public opinion for the ultimate task of comprehending future public stage productions of Wagner's music in the country. Part of the value of these early reviews was their introductory tone, which allowed for a transparency and honesty where one could sense a distinct Danish morality informing the expressed views. As such, a knowledge of relevant social, moral, and political history was important in order to establish a framework for understanding how and why these views were explicitly Danish. This approach informs the linear trajectory that this study aimed to present, depicting important

associations between different groups of people, separated in equal measure by their ideology and nationality.

To briefly sum up, the significance of this research is two-fold: Firstly, it fills an important gap in Wagner reception studies that have analyzed Wagner's stature at length in virtually every country of the western world except Denmark. However, the present study aimed at taking a more abstract path by tracing ideologies that bear conceptual qualities, such as memory, which informs the nostalgic impetus associated with cultural nationalism. This latter notion is in turn connected to an idealization of the past, where advocates of cultural nationalism, like Grundtvig, consistently seek to remind their society of past socio-cultural qualities that need to reemerge in the present because they are either under threat or have seemingly disappeared altogether. Likewise, through the central analysis of *Lykke Peer*, the goal was to also present a philosophical approach that addressed the significance of Wagner and Andersen as thinkers as much as creative artists. This was pivotal because the nature of this national reception study is based on works of art, and for that reception to bear full meaning, the art works in question needed to be deconstructed in such a way that they could emerge as aesthetic metaphors of what regular people were exposed to and interested in thinking about. This study is therefore as much about the power of ideas as it is about uncovering trends of public interpretation regarding works of art.

There is another important, yet implicit element to consider regarding the narrative analysis of *Lykke Peer*. Andersen, like Wagner, created his characters as idealized versions of heroic individuals that their creators generally either wished to see society produce, or more aptly in the case of both men, wished to embody themselves. Indeed, Wagner saw himself as the only authentic proponent of the noble German spirit, while Andersen deeply desired to be Peer himself, and to especially possess his social impact and legacy. The point being that the theoretical and artistic works of Wagner and Andersen that this study analyzed are reflections of their socially conditioned but also highly personal ideals. Such an occurrence imbues these works with a powerful humanism that can and does inspire many who experience them to project their own humanity upon them—to wish to vicariously embody the characters as much as their creators did, thereby raising what is in one instance a social ideal to a personal-moral one. A common trope states that art acts as a mirror to society. Wagner, Andersen, and Grundtvig sought to create works that did just that, but why should that mirror be limited to reflecting only one place and time? In that spirit, a central desire of the *Lykke Peer* analysis was to also allow readers to see themselves in these descriptions and to reflexively look at and question their existential essence as a result of comprehending Peer's complex and turbulent journey to finding himself, his purpose, and his place in the world.

The second significant contribution that this study makes is related to the fact that modern Danish identity was largely formed in the years that the present study investigates, thus having crucial repercussions for contemporary studies that investigate the complex changes that result over time and via paradigm-shifting events. Two world wars and extraordinary technological advancements, among many other developments, separate the time of Wagner and Andersen from our own. Yet, in Denmark today, Danish parliament still invokes the ideologies of Grundtvig in order to challenge and interpret decisions as being the right course of action for the government to take in the name of the people.[688] This is a fascinating aspect, and one that depicts Denmark's continued reliance on the mode of thinking that they clearly believe is still applicable some 200 years after it was first conceived. Moreover, this phenomenon crucially connects nineteenth century Danish identity to that of today, further validating the tenets of this study as establishing important historical parameters of insight into circumstances of the present that are understood even more in context of how and why they came to be.

Furthermore, Denmark can be viewed in another important context: As a member of the specific Nordic coalition. The Nordic region is ideologically and behaviorally somewhat distinct from the rest of Europe due to its geographic remoteness, general lack of diversity—perhaps as the result of a relatively-weak history of colonialism[689]—and largely unassuming demeanor in world affairs. These observations may be slightly reductionist, but the point is to emphasize that the Nordic region palpably stands apart from the rest of Europe in certain ways that become clearer to foreign inhabitants of the region. So how does this relate to Wagner and Wagnerism? The close-knit structure of the region can also inform the manner in which Wagner was received there. As such, Wagner reception studies have emerged in all of the major Nordic countries prior to this study, except Denmark. Norway is also yet to contrive a fully-fledged study on Wagner's reception in that country, but they did not experience full independence until 1905. In Wagner's lifetime, they were either part of Denmark or Sweden, thereby less inclined to realistically present a decidedly "Norwegian" interpretation of Wagner. Regardless of that, the Danish reception of Wagner fills another essential gap when localizing the phenomenon to the Nordic region beyond just a western one. It now emerges where Wagnerism can be plausibly juxtaposed with the other Nordic

[688] Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National Identity, passim.

[689] Denmark possesses a rich history of colonialism, but when assessing these traits within a larger continental Nordic framework that includes Finland, Sweden, and Norway, the region on whole does not boast a colonial past, which for other countries, was a phenomenon that intrinsically led to an influx in diversity. France and the United Kingdom spring to mind when considering this circumstance.

nations, which shared a similar history of operatic distribution, whereby Wagner's operas reached other Nordic stages at relatively-late points of time like they did in Denmark. These are important elements of comparison in context of the strong cultural ties that the Nordic region shares, again rendering this study viable for those reasons as well.

In context of potential new avenues for further research regarding Wagnerism and Wagner reception, the study of entire national and geographical trends is a finite source of investigation. Recently, focus has been placed on studying Wagner in the more specific and contained parameters of cities and regions, especially in places where the composer had been himself, such as Paris, Riga, and Tribschen. However, more interdisciplinary trends are also maintaining their fascination with Wagner, consistently placing him, his thought, and crucially, his influence, in contexts that are only remotely associated with music, and often not at all. Wagner's prose and propensity towards philosophy and forward thinking (in terms of his future-oriented writings) have inspired people from the very inception of these endeavors. It is this abundant curiosity that fuels a continued fascination with the composer. This study has sought to combine notions of cultural and narrative theory and reception precisely to address the applicability of this phenomenon in their original historical circumstances, but also in ways—as with the notion of national identity—that bears a reflection of trends and focal points that hold meaning in academic circles today when considering new pathways for research that connect the historical past with the present. As such, further research is always possible by continuing to emplace Wagner in virtually any field that is predicated upon critical and abstract thinking, with no shortage of the most essentially-perpetuating commodity: imagination—in regard to creatively discovering relevant avenues of interdisciplinary inclusion.

This discussion of Wagner's viability within diverse academic settings also raises a curious question of distribution. It is somewhat paradoxical to only speak of spreading knowledge that is inherently performance-oriented at its core merely through the often-inaccessible and specialized circles of academic discourse. However, one contemporary theory may offer a potential solution. In an effort to gain a wider scope of interest, ethnographers have employed what has come to be known as multi-targeted ethnography. Within academia, there is a strong institutional framework in place that underlies the accumulative process of conducting research using multiple methods and tactics. Scandinavian-based ethnographers, particularly in Denmark and Sweden, now argue that emphasis must be placed on how research is distributed, where the goal is to find new systems of distribution that are more interactive with their audiences, who can in turn benefit from the research. One element of focus for this goal of expanded dissemination is to inspire the researcher to engage their senses and to think how to present research

that can be seen, heard, and experienced in new ways. The key to all of it, though, is to deepen the researcher's reflexive intuition to ask him or herself how their work is intended to affect their target audience, and how these deliverables can be used. It somewhat presumes to push academia to become more industrial and practical. This is a challenge for historically-oriented research that is not ethnographic in scope, yet, there can be meaningful associations between this methodology and the future evolution of Wagner studies.

Since this study is about emplacing Wagner in Denmark, a relevant example of the principle of multi-targeted research could be the Copenhagen-based music positioning company Snyk, whose task is to organize and administrate projects that aim to develop the social position of classical music in Denmark through networking and various other methods of engagement. They are ultimately employing multi-targeted systems to innovatively promote music in Danish society. In this regard, it can be surmised that they are inherently aligning their company ethos with Wagner's and also Andersen's desires of enhancing the social function of the arts. As Wagner and Andersen ostensibly shared a vision for the future of the arts, it is plausible to surmise that Snyk is working to this end, which Andersen poetically wrote about at the end of *Lykke Peer*. As such, the theoretical tenets that this study set out to explicate can logically be applied, through a multi-targeted ethnographic method, to depict the intersection between music, industry, and society in ways that would have viability as examples of academic research, which also holds meaning to different audiences beyond the academic ones that can benefit from the exposure in ways that academic paradigms alone cannot yield. For example, Snyk has worked to promote the establishment of the "Music House Copenhagen," which is a historic mansion in the heart of the city that was transformed into a multi-purpose music space for all musical genres in an effort to create and centralize a venue that can be used as a gathering point for performing artists, ensembles, and audiences. The space can be seen as the result of how a multi-targeted ethnographic endeavor can produce a social impact of significance by creating a new structure of distribution potential that promotes artistic growth through social visibility and relevance.

This discussion of Snyk and one of its projects can be associated with the premise of creating new interdisciplinary pathways for Wagner research and the present study's focus on juxtaposing Wagnerism with Danish nationalism and identity. Wagner's prose on society-building, as it relates to promoting the arts, can be viewed as kind of blueprint of sorts for effectively integrating music and the arts into society through the kind of artistic leadership that he advocated for in both the texts of his Swiss exile, such as *Art-Work of the Future*, and his later nationalistic-oriented texts, like how he described the association between an artist and their community in "On State and Religion." These texts can be analyzed directly in books by Wagner or read

in imbedded forms, such as in my study here, by an organization like Snyk that looks to position music in Danish society in innovative ways to foster social relevance. The organization can further ponder if and how Wagner's visions of a better society can be practically realized, even in part if not completely. Moreover, the distinction of the space being called "Music House Copenhagen" denotes a sense of local identity by bearing the city's name. As my study has suggested, the formation of a new Danish national identity was tied to how Danish society interacted with its national spaces, such as Grundtvig's folk high schools. In this regard, one can hypothesize that the "Music House Copenhagen" is a contemporary fixture of an explicit or implicit nationalized commodity that stands in service of the city's musical structures that bear its name. The way in which Danish society culturally received Wagner in the years of this study's inquiry can be analyzed for its symmetry with how Danes react to the "Music House Copenhagen," as both are derived from responses informed by a sense of national identity. This phenomenon can function as both a future research initiative or as a reflection of my study's applicability in Denmark today.

The example above places Wagner in a spectrum view of Denmark in relevant applications to contemporary trends. But this is a study of historical musicology, and it is important to recognize a historical lineage that categorizes Wagner through a historic Danish lens. On a superficial level, both Wagner as a person and Denmark as a state experienced triumphs and tragedies that were associated with military-related struggles that would weigh significantly on their future histories: Wagner and the failed Dresden uprising of 1849, and the repercussions in Denmark due to the Schleswigian Wars. Both entities needed to profoundly redefine their sense of self in the aftermath: Wagner abandoning his left-wing revolutionary zeal in favor of Schopenhauerian spiritualism and enlightenment, and Denmark in the formation of a new national identity. An irony of it all was Wagner's biting nationalism. For although Denmark at the time was certainly also nationalistically-oriented, the expression of German nationalism was difficult for them to contend with. Yet, despite this, Andersen viewed Wagner as a cosmopolitan freedom fighter for the arts, where such a view alone, if one momentarily disregards Wagner's nationalistic preoccupation, would presumably endear him to the small Danish nation as a fellow underdog, struggling to exist in the way that they would like in the face of daunting odds that wish to deny them. In other words, both Wagner and Denmark were seen in their own assessments of themselves as victims of unjust circumstance. Whether this was true or not is incidental to the reflexive element, which is significant enough to align them both as abstract microcosms of each other's plights. One may argue then that the event of Wagner's stage premiere in Denmark in 1870, thereafter establishing an uninterrupted mainstay, is similar to the impression that the new Danish national identity instilled as also perpetuating indefinitely. Therefore, the

intertwining historical narratives of Wagner's life and career and the Danish nation state and culture bear poetic symmetries that attest to the unique, fascinating, and enduring legacy of Richard Wagner in Denmark.

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