



Mythology as Metaphor: Romantic Irony, Critical Theory, and Wagner's [^]URing[^]R (Contributions to the Study of Music and Dance)

Mary A. Cicora

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This literary and critical approach to Wagner's *Ring* provides an original interpretation of the *Ring* tetralogy and challenges the standard political analyses of the work. The *Ring* is examined in the tradition of the Romantic drama as a reworking of Greek tragedy as theoretically expressed in the second part of *Oper und Drama*. In the *Ring*, using myth as a metaphor for history presents a paradoxical world. The innertextual reflection that Wotan performs in his monologue causes the *Ring* to self-destruct from within. He actually dismantles or deconstructs the text of the *Ring*. The doom of the gods happens because the *Ring* has undermined, unworked, and dismantled its system of signification.

Studies of Wagner's theoretical writings and music-dramas have not emphasized aspects of his works within the tradition of German drama and aesthetic theory. This discussion of Wagner's revision of Greek tragedy in *Oper und Drama*, supplemented by an original interpretation of the *Ring* operas, places Wagner's writings within these realms. As a fresh interpretation of the *Ring* tetralogy, this valuable analysis will appeal to Wagner scholars and musicologists interested in Wagner's operas as well as to German cultural history and literary scholars.

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