

Spinell and Connie: Joyce Carol Oates Re-Imagining Thomas Mann?

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I

Joyce Carol Oates's widely-anthologized story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" has attracted considerable attention since its initial publication in the fall of 1966.¹ Despite its relatively short length, critics have proposed a variety of readings and have adduced a number of sources and intertexts for it. The author herself added impetus to the latter activity when she talked about the genesis of the story: a song by Bob Dylan, "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," reading about a killer in the American Southwest, and thinking about the legends and folk songs connected with the subject of "Death and the Maiden" had given her the idea for the story (Knott/Reaske 19).

Oates is known for her wide reading and her knowledge of literature and literary tradition, and intertexts for "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" can be found in a variety of places and even media. One of them was the case of Charles Schmid, who in the winter of 1965-66 murdered three girls in Tucson, Arizona. The case was widely reported, particularly in *Time*, *Life*, and *Newsweek*, and Oates transformed certain details of Schmid's behavior, bizarre appearance, and apparent charisma for her portrayal of Arnold Friend (Schulz/Rockwood 155-56, Quirk 413-16).

In addition to life (or *Life*), and the legends and folk songs, other areas of culture have also provided intertexts. Noting Oates's dedication of her story to Bob Dylan, some critics have proposed links with Dylan songs²; others have gone further and suggested interfigural links with either Dylan himself or with Elvis Presley.³ Schulz and Rockwood confronted Oates's story with the texts of eight different fairy tales and found similarities in

motifs, figures, and themes (158-62); Robson and Wegs drew on Christian religious tradition in their readings; and Easterly returned to Greek myth for a comparison.⁴ Two critics have suggested specific works of literature as intertexts: Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" (Winslow) and Flannery O'Connor's "Greenleaf" (Dessommes).

However, for a reader familiar with the German writer Thomas Mann, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" contains a detail which triggers an immediate recollection: the description of Ellie Oscar. Arnold Friend's taciturn accomplice is hardly a paragon of masculinity, with his "bright orange shirt unbuttoned halfway to show his chest, which was a pale, bluish chest and not muscular like Arnold Friend's" (*Wheel* 45). Moreover, "Connie saw with shock that he wasn't a kid either—he had a fair, hairless face, cheeks reddened slightly as if the veins grew too close to the surface of his skin, the face of a forty-year-old baby" (46). "Ellie's lips kept shaping words, mumbling along with the words blasting in his ear" (46). In 1903, Thomas Mann published the novella "Tristan," set in an alpine sanatorium. The protagonist is Detlev Spinell, a writer of sorts. The narrator describes him in part as follows: "his looks were quite out of the common. Imagine a dark man at the beginning of the thirties, impressively tall, with hair already distinctly gray at the temples, and a round, white, slightly bloated face, without a vestige of beard. Not that it was shaven—that you could have told; it was soft, smooth, boyish, with at most a downy hair here and there" (Mann, *Death* 326).⁵ "His voice was mild and really agreeable; but he had a halting way of speaking that almost amounted to an impediment—as though his teeth got in the way of his tongue" (328). One of the other patients, "a cynic and ribald wit, had christened him 'the dissipated baby' . . ." (326).

Could Mann's "Tristan" be yet another intertext for "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" One should be cautious in answering: there are undoubtedly other literary figures with this unusual combination of older years and immature physical features. Did Oates even know Mann's novella?

An answer to the last question begins with the information that Joyce Carol Oates has on numerous occasions expressed her admiration for

Thomas Mann's literary work in general. In an interview from 1969 Betty Lee quoted her as saying, "And: 'I admire Thomas Mann very much. Mann is one of those extraordinary people. You can lose yourself forever in Mann'" (23). Three years later, Oates remarked on Mann and, one might say, on intertextuality, to Joe David Bellamy: "I am always rereading Mann in utter admiration, in love. Ah, to be able to write like Thomas Mann . . . or even to write a novel that Mann might approve of, even mildly When I write a story or a novel I don't feel that I am any particular person, with a particular ego. I seem to share, however vaguely, in the "tradition"—the tradition of literature, of all that has been done that I know about and love" (Bellamy/Milazzo 23-24).⁶

Oates's concern with Mann is evident in other ways as well. Her fine critical study of his 1947 novel, *Dr. Faustus*, shows quite clearly that she had already read a number of works by him.⁷ In addition, *The Wheel of Love*, the first collection to include "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" contains other stories with definite and probable references to works by Mann. In "The Heavy Sorrow of the Body," Nina picks up a copy of *The Magic Mountain* and asks Conrad about it, who replies with an approximate quotation (316).⁸ The female protagonist of "How I Contemplated the World from the Detroit House of Correction and Began My Life All Over Again" divides the patients into the slightly sick, the sick, the deathly sick, and the unsick, with differing doctors or procedures for each category (173). This is strongly reminiscent of the division early in "Tristan" between Dr. Leander, who heads up the sanatorium, and Dr. Müller, "who takes care of the slight cases and the hopeless ones" (321-22). Less certain, but still possible, is a detail in "Demons," where the father is described as "the attractive cold man with bluish veins streaking his forehead like cobwebs" (240, 241). This recalls one of the most striking features of Gabriele Klöterjahn, the female protagonist of "Tristan." She is an attractive woman, but the narrator notes, in his initial description of her, "an odd little vein branched across one well-marked eyebrow, pale blue and sickly amid all that pure, well-nigh transparent spotlessness. That little blue vein above the eye dominated quite painfully the whole fine

oval of the face" (323). This vein is mentioned five more times in the novella (333, 334, 336 twice, 346), eventually taking on leitmotivic function.

Joyce Carol Oates told Michael Schumacher in 1986, "'Only in my late teens and 20s did I read Lawrence, O'Connor, Thomas Mann, Kafka—yet these influences are still quite strong, pervasive'" (Schumacher/Milazzo 143). This suggests that she began reading Mann during, or just after, her university years (Syracuse University 1956-60, University of Wisconsin 1960-61), i.e. the late 50s and the first half of the 60s. Johnson notes that she was asked to teach an upper-level course in European literature, including Dostoevsky, Mann, Kafka, and Camus, at the University of Detroit, probably in 1964-65 (112). Thus biographical evidence, the traces of Mann in *The Wheel of Love*, and the essay on *Dr. Faustus* all point to a particularly strong concern with Mann and his works in the middle and later 60s. This, and the fact that "Tonio Kröger," "Death in Venice," and an early version of "Felix Krull" all appear in the same collection with "Tristan," establishes the possibility that the latter novella was indeed an intertext for "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"

II

Because of Joyce Carol Oates's voracious reading, her solid grounding in English and American literature, her familiarity with many of the great figures and works of other world literatures, her oeuvre is an intertextualist's dream come true. Nevertheless, a single detail, even combined with the virtual certainty that she was familiar with "Tristan," is not yet enough. A closer look at both texts is necessary, beginning with brief plot summaries.

In "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" fifteen-year-old Connie has a strained relationship with her parents and her older sister June. She prefers hanging out with her girl friends at a nearby shopping center, listening to popular music, and interacting with boys of her own age in a relatively innocent fashion. One summer Sunday, she is home alone, when a grotesquely-decorated jalopy pulls up in the driveway. The

driver is Arnold Friend, whom she does not know but recalls having seen previously in a parking lot, along with his buddy Ellie Oscar. Arnold proceeds to try and convince Connie to come for a ride with them, using a combination of music, charisma, and gradually increasing threats. Connie is at first puzzled and amused, then concerned, and finally terrified. In the end, she acquiesces.

In "Tristan" Detlev Spinell has already been a patient in the sanatorium "Einfried" for some time when a new patient arrives, the young woman Gabriele Klöterjahn. Even though she is married, Spinell is immediately smitten, and he begins to befriend her in his own clumsy, but not unsuccessful way. Both share a love of music, although Gabriele has been explicitly forbidden by her doctors to play any instrument, because the physical exertion could harm her. One day, however, when most of the patients are gone on a sleigh outing, Spinell persuades her to play a few pieces by Chopin on the sanatorium piano. Once started, there is no stopping, particularly when the music for Wagner's *Tristan* turns up. Gabriele plays selections from the opera, including the Prelude, the Lovers' Idyll (Act 2), and the Love-Death (Young 25-26). At the end Spinell falls on his knees before Gabriele, in a silent gesture of desire and imploring. As Gabriele stares at him, they hear the sounds of the other patients returning from the outing. The incident is not without its consequences, however: Gabriele's condition takes a turn for the worse, and Herr Klöterjahn is summoned from his Hamburg home to the sanatorium.

Thus the basic motif informing both stories is the same: a young woman is seduced away from her family by a male who desires her, using the power of music as a weapon. The result is in all likelihood her death. Both Gabriele and Connie are lured away, the one from her husband and robust infant son, the other from her parents and older sister, with music playing a key role: Richard Wagner in one case, Elvis Presley and/or Bob Dylan in the other.⁹ On the level of realism, Gabriele, weakened by the physical stress occasioned by Spinell's seduction, probably dies of tuberculosis; on the same level, Connie is probably raped and then murdered.

There are also secondary motifs common to both texts. Isolde's "Love-Death" in Wagner's opera, one of the pieces played by Gabriele, is

potentially present in the open ending of Oates's story, in the brutalized form of rape and murder. Critics have pondered Arnold Friend's surname, with Wegs noting that it was phonemically very close to "Fiend," and A. F. could be "Arch Fiend" (69). Robson went even further, deleting "r" and obtaining "an old fiend" (Robson 1985, 99). However the opening words of "Tristan" are "Einfried, the sanatorium" (320), not unlike "Arn-old Friend."¹⁰

Another secondary motif is what one might call a tactic for getting acquainted. Spinell visualizes an incident in Gabriele's life and paints for her a verbal picture of it. She mentions summer days spent with girl friends around the fountain in the garden behind the family home, and Spinell immediately enhances the scene by making her the queen, with a little gold crown (335-36). Gabriele responds, "Nonsense, there was nothing of the sort" (336), but the stylization catches her imagination, as a question two weeks later demonstrates: "'Is it really true, Herr Spinell,' she asked, 'that you would have seen the little gold crown?'" (338). Similarly, when Connie warns Arnold Friend that her father could come home, he responds, "'He ain't coming. He's at a barbecue,'" and then proceeds to paint a verbal picture of the scene, complete with names and descriptions of the people there (46-47). His uncanny, detailed knowledge of Connie's life is one of the traits which led Wegs to identify him as a devil figure (69), and Connie's reaction betrays uncertainty and disorientation: "She felt a little light-headed. Her breath was coming quickly" (47).

Finally, there is the light at the end of each text. Spinell leaves the sanatorium to go for a walk "in the splendid colourful afternoon light, strong shadow and rich, golden sun" (358). He rounds a turn in the path and comes face to face with the Klöterjahn nanny and young Anton Klöterjahn Jr., in his baby carriage. Behind them the setting sun "set the tree-tops aglow and poured its red-gold radiance across the garden" (359). The symbolism of the light is clear, if ambivalent: it both frames that hyperactive embodiment of Life, young Anton, and as the *setting* sun it is simultaneously an omen of death for Gabriele. At the end of "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" Arnold Friend is also framed by light: "the vast sunlit reaches of the land behind him and on all sides

of him—so much land that Connie had never seen before and did not recognize except to know that she was going to it" (54). Here the significance is less easy to determine. Reading the story positively, it could be a sign of enlightenment, or maturation, perhaps.¹¹ However Quirk noted that this vast sunlit land assumes a macabre significance when one knows that Charles Schmid raped, killed, and buried his victims in the desert (419).

III

Given Joyce Carol Oates's likely familiarity with Thomas Mann's novella, and given the identity of the basic motifs informing the two works, along with a number of secondary motifs in common, it seems reasonable to consider "Tristan" as yet another intertext for "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" But there may be more to say about the two texts and Oates's productive reception of Mann's work.

Mann's "Tristan" was the latest in an already lengthy "intertextual serialization" (Plett 23-24), a chain which had started with the medieval Tristan and Iseult, and the 1903 text could be read as a dialogue with Richard Wagner's opera. The question arises: is Joyce Carol Oates's story another link in the chain, a dialogue with Mann's novella? The question is all the more appropriate because of five stories which appeared in Oates's 1972 collection, *Marriages and Infidelities*, which she has called "re-imaginings."¹² Each has for its basis an earlier story by an American or European writer: "The Metamorphosis" (Kafka), "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" (Thoreau, *Walden*), "The Lady with the Pet Dog" (Chekhov), "The Turn of the Screw" (James),¹³ and "The Dead" (Joyce). In each case, Oates transformed the original text in varying ways, creating new texts which could stand on their own as independent stories.

Joanne Creighton devotes five pages to the "re-imaginings" in her book on Oates. She sees "The Metamorphosis" and "The Lady with the Pet Dog" as close parallels to their originals, while others, such as "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," "bear no thematic or formal resemblance to the originals and could only have been envisioned as startling ironic contrasts"

(131). She then looks at four of the five stories and at Oates's transformations. In "The Lady with the Pet Dog," the setting is changed to contemporary America, the narrative perspective from male protagonist to female, and some details are changed, others added; plot and theme remain essentially the same. The result is a story "less imagined than transposed" (132). In "The Metamorphosis" the setting is again changed to the United States, and details and characters are added, with the reactions of the family given additional prominence. However the "phantasmagoric" aspect of the original (Gregor's transformation into a huge insect) is dropped, and the result, in Creighton's view, is inferior to Kafka's story (132-33). More successful is "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," even though its link with the original is not immediately obvious.¹⁴ Here Oates *adds* a phantasmagoric aspect and combines it with a protagonist who is the very antithesis of Thoreau. "To contrast this self-victimized man with nineteenth-century Thoreau highlights a shocking loss of independence, optimism, and joy" (134). In "The Dead," structure, theme, and some language and symbolism are parallel with Joyce's original, as is the emotional sterility of the protagonist, and the "dead" environment. Setting and plot are different, and the point of view is female rather than male. Although Oates does not, in Creighton's view, attain Joyce's eloquence, she "invites the reader to reexperience the Joycean story, while she offers a contemporary re-creation of it" (136).

Creighton's analyses are presented here as examples of the kinds of transformations which can produce a "re-imagining." Subsequent critics deal with these texts (including "The Turn of the Screw") in greater detail, looking at additional transformations, and sometimes reaching interpretative and evaluative conclusions different from Creighton's.¹⁵

Confronting "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" with "Tristan," some transformations are immediately obvious. Again Oates has changed the setting from Europe to America, in this case from a turn-of-the-century Alpine sanatorium to a location in the American Southwest of the 1960s; and again she has changed the male protagonist into a female protagonist. The structure of "Tristan" (exposition, followed by chronological action) has been retained, but shortened. The basic motif underlying

the two texts is the same, but numerous details of plot, action and conflict have changed. In "Tristan" the action takes place primarily on the intellectual and the emotional/spiritual levels, in Oates's story on the emotional and physical levels. The motives of the seducers are different: Spinell wants to win Gabriele back to an affirmation of her earlier artistic self, which she had put aside in order to marry Herr Klöterjahn. In so doing, he hopes to strike a blow at her businessman husband, whom he despises as a *petit-bourgeois* representative of Life.¹⁶ Arnold Friend, in contrast, is simply after Connie's body. The ending is also transformed and simplified. Mann leaves Spinell in an ambivalent "win/loss" situation: he may have won Gabriele back over to the "Art" side of the Art/Life polarity,¹⁷ but at the end he blunders into a confrontation with the robustly healthy Anton Klöterjahn Jr. and is forced to flee before this infant embodiment of triumphant Life. Arnold Friend, again quite simply, is left as the unambivalent victor.

Common to both texts is the power of music and its use as a weapon of seduction. Gabriele loved music, and before her marriage she played the piano (335). Thus it required only relative solitude, a piano, and the fortuitous presence of music by Chopin and Wagner for Spinell to make effective use of this weapon. Connie also loves the popular music of her time, and Ellie's transistor radio happens to be tuned to the very same station she was listening to when the men arrived (41). The music creates a bond of shared interest between the two men and Connie, and it can be heard constantly in the background throughout Arnold Friend's seduction attempt. Nevertheless, changes were necessary, even here. The transformation of setting and protagonist brought with it the change from Wagner to Presley et al, and from actively playing the piano to passively listening to a radio. Ellie Oscar, in charge of the radio, embodies this transformation exactly: he combines the appearance of Detlev Spinell with a clothing style and a first name similar to Elvis Presley's (Petry 155-56).

Because of Oates's transformed narrative situation, this was still not enough. Spinell was no satyr¹⁸; and although both Gabriele and he were aware that there was danger in yielding to the seductive call of the music, the doctors could be wrong: playing the piano might not harm her after

all. In contrast, Friend faces a more difficult task than did Spinell. His desires are decidedly carnal, and the element of danger for Connie in going for a ride with the men is far more tangible and immediate than playing the piano in the sanatorium drawing room. How then to convince her? Oates solves the problem by splitting Mann's seducer into two figures. Ellie Oscar, with Spinell's appearance, suspect masculinity, and the music, is simply not enough, so Spinell's ability to persuade is amalgamated with that of Charles Schmid in the charismatic masculinity of Arnold Friend, who then takes center stage, opposite Connie.

IV

Thomas Mann's novella is clearly an intertext for "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" but is it also possible to position Oates's story as an early "re-imagining" of "Tristan"? At first, it might seem doubtful. There is no explicit link to "Tristan," no "signpost" for the general reader, who would not likely notice, for instance, the description of Ellie Oscar. In addition, all five "re-imaginings" in *Marriages and Infidelities* first appeared in 1970-72,¹⁹ and the interview with Bellamy in which Oates talked about them probably took place in the spring or summer of 1972. "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" dates from a few years earlier (1966).

Nevertheless, along with the similarities in motif and detail, the transformations of protagonist, action, and setting are well within the limits of what constitutes a re-imagining, as Creighton's examples demonstrate. Even the missing link need not be a problem,²⁰ as it was not, for instance, with the story "Where I Lived and What I Lived For." Moreover, it is unlikely that the five stories explicitly mentioned exhaust Oates's category of "re-imaginings"; Herget points out that other stories in *Marriages and Infidelities* may also be intentionally related to specific literary texts.²¹ In the end, the weight of the evidence suggests that Oates's dialogue with Mann's novella may indeed be a re-imagining: Spinell's turn-of-the-century, genteel, asexual seduction of Gabriele Klöterjahn is transformed into

Arnold Friend's probable rape of Connie in the later twentieth century. Richard Wagner, Spinell's "virtual accomplice," is replaced by Elvis Presley and/or Bob Dylan. But whether in the European sanatorium or the American Southwest, the end result is the same: the probable death of a young woman.

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NOTES

¹Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?," *Epoch* 16 (Fall 1966): 59-76. Through 1999 there have been at least 23 articles which focussed primarily on it.

²Mike Tierce and John Michael Crafton found three songs, quoting from them to demonstrate similarities: "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Mr. Tambourine Man" (223-24); and James Healey added "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (Item 5).

³Arnold Friend has been seen as a Dylan figure (negatively: Robson 1985, 101-02; positively: Tierce / Crafton 220-21), and Friend's sidekick, Ellie Oscar, as an Elvis Presley figure (Robson 1985, 102; Petry).

⁴Robson (1982, 1985). Wegs began the interpretive chain with her 1975 article and a figurative reading of Arnold Friend: "Arnold is far more than a grotesque portrait of a psychopathic killer masquerading as a teenager; he also has all the traditional sinister traits of that arch-deceiver and source of grotesque terror, the devil" (69). In contrast, Easterly compared Friend with the satyr, pointing out that while Satan was traditionally interested in souls, Friend is after Connie's body (539).

⁵All quotations from "Tristan" are from the paperback edition of the English translation, by Helen T. Lowe-Porter. Although Oates knows some German, it is more likely that she read Thomas Mann in translation, and the Vintage paperback edition, *Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories*, first published in 1954, was very popular for use in university courses, or as a source of representative short works by Mann for the general reader.

⁶Additional examples are found in Clemons / Milazzo (5) and Avant / Milazzo (29).

⁷Oates 1969. On the basis of this article, it is quite certain that Oates had read, in addition to *Dr. Faustus*, the essay "Freud and the Future," the novellas "Tonio Kröger" and "Death in Venice," very likely *The Magic Mountain*, and perhaps part or even all of the *Joseph* tetralogy (378, 379, 382, 386). See also Friedman (116n26) and Dörfel (267n4) for evidence relating to Oates's familiarity with Felix Krull.

⁸Conrad says, "What is man, tell me, what is man?—*man is water, mostly, and cellulose*. Are you made of water and cellulose, my dear Nina?" (316). Presumably, Conrad is having some fun with Nina (or Oates with Conrad!); his words are paraphrased from the chapter "Research," in *The Magic Mountain*, but Mann does not mention cellulose as a component of human beings. Mann, *Magic* 174-76.

⁹Healey and especially Tierce and Crafton (220-21) and Robson argue for Dylan. Indeed, Robson insists that Oates's dedication to Dylan "is an ironic dedication, as he—or, rather, the type he represents—is responsible for the lack of morals in society" (Robson 1985, 101). Quirk argues for Presley et al: "It is the gyrating, hip-grinding music of people like Elvis Presley, whom Schmid identified as his 'idol,' which emanates from Ellie's transistor radio, the 'hard, fast, shrieking' songs played by the disc jockey 'Bobby King' rather than the cryptic, atonal folk music of Bob Dylan" (417-18), and Petry agrees (156-57).

¹⁰"Einfried" was recognized very quickly by critics as an allusion to Richard Wagner's home in Bayreuth, "Wahnfried."

¹¹For Tierce and Crafton, Connie "broadens her horizons to include the 'vast sunlit reaches of the land' all around her" (223). G. J. Weinberger writes, "Realizing then, if only in a hazy way, that each person must undergo the rites of passage alone, with only one's other self to help, Connie, brushing the hair out of her eyes in order to see more clearly, crosses the threshold and goes out into the sunlight, into the vast, threatening adult world" (213-14). Marilyn Wesley concedes that, "although she will probably be raped and killed . . . , the diction of light and open space of the final words of the story implies positive value . . ." (145).

¹²She first mentions these and describes what she means by the term in the interview with Bellamy: "'These stories are meant to be autonomous stories, yet they are also testaments of my love and extreme devotion to these other writers; I imagine a kind of spiritual 'marriage' between myself and them, or let's say our 'daimons' in the Yeatsian sense—exactly in the Yeatsian sense, which is so exasperating and irrational!'" (19).

¹³There may be as much or more of Thomas Mann in this story than Henry James, since it has strong similarities with "Death in Venice" (Creighton 159n13).

¹⁴Explicit links, signposts for the reader, are scarce. Herget notes that the title comes from the title of the second chapter of *Walden*, but otherwise he finds only the common date of July 4 as an intertextual link (370). Had Oates not specifically mentioned Thoreau in the interview, it might have been some time before it occurred to anyone that the story could be read as a re-imagining of *Walden*.

¹⁵Cf. particularly Bastian, who treats all five stories, and Herget, who focuses on "The Dead."

¹⁶In his letter to Klötterjahn, a masterpiece of invective, Spinell writes, "'Kindly permit me to tell you, sir, that I hate you. I hate you and your child, as I hate the life of which you are the representative: cheap, ridiculous, but yet triumphant life, the everlasting antipodes and deadly enemy of beauty'" (353).

¹⁷Even before the piano-playing incident, but after she has got to know Spinell, Gabriele has grown strangely unconcerned about her husband and infant child back

in Hamburg (338), and shortly before her final hemorrhage she is heard humming a piece of music, presumably from *Tristan* (357).

¹⁸A number of critics have theorized from his physical appearance that he was impotent. For a thorough medical diagnosis, see Olsen.

¹⁹Oates, *Marriages*. The date of first publication for each of the stories appears on the Acknowledgments page, except for "The Turn of the Screw"; however in the Bellamy interview Oates says that this one will be "out soon" (19).

²⁰For Oates to have entitled her story "Tristan," for instance, would have led most of her readers back to the medieval epic, rather than to Mann and Wagner.

²¹Herget links "The Sacred Marriage" with Henry James's "The Real Right Thing" and "The Aspern Papers," "By the River" with Sherwood Anderson's "Godliness," and "Night Music" with the German work by Eduard Mörike, "Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag" (371). "Night Music" definitely has a link with Mozart, at least. In a letter to Joanne Creighton, Oates acknowledges that the story "'is loosely based on Mozart's life—very loosely'" (Creighton 159n13).

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