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by

Brandon Pahl

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the German

Waltraud Maierhofer
Thesis Mentor

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All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between a later work of the German novelist Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, and the Expressionist movement of the early twentieth century. This relationship is analyzed primarily from two angles. First, the novel's themes and techniques are compared and contrasted with those of German literary Expressionism, a movement in literature which predates *Doktor Faustus* by a couple decades. The novel and movement are found to be lacking enough in common to warrant *Doktor Faustus*' inclusion in the movement's canon, although certain ideas of the novel appear to echo this movement. Then the novel's relationship with Expressionist music, as exemplified by the work of Arnold Schoenberg, is examined. A comparison is made between the fictional works of the novel's main character, Adrian Leverkühn, and those of Schoenberg's expressionistic phase, thus demonstrating the influence of Schoenberg and, by extension, Expressionist music on the novel. The paper concludes with a brief analysis of the theme of anxiety, which is characteristic of not only the Expressionist movement as a whole but also of *Doktor Faustus*. While *Doktor Faustus* is not an example of an "Expressionist novel" it bears the influence of Expressionism in certain of its themes and references to Expressionist works.

Introduction

In the English-speaking world, German Expressionism is a phenomenon best known in its artistic and filmic forms. Museums around the world display the works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Marc and Erich Heckel, to name only a few of the most exemplary German Expressionist painters, and modern cinema would not look quite the same without the influence of such films as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920), *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922), and *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931). The popularity of Expressionistic art and film often overshadows the influence Expressionism has had on other art forms, namely music and literature. Expressionism, like most important cultural movements in human history, managed to seep into and impact various aspects of culture, particularly in Europe, and for that reason may be observed in seemingly odd places. The work of Thomas Mann may be seen as one such odd place.

The act of classifying a certain author or work in terms of a particular movement or genre is naturally an act fraught with controversy and difficulty, and in the case of Thomas Mann's whole oeuvre, one may rightfully consider it unclassifiable. Although later works such as *Der Zauberberg* (1924) and *Doktor Faustus* (1947) exhibit some Modernist themes and techniques, they do not take the same experimental approach to literature of notable Anglophone contemporaries such as James Joyce or Gertrude Stein, whose names are more often associated with Modernism than Mann's. Furthermore, earlier works such as *Buddenbrooks*, *Verfall einer Familie* (1901), which predates the Modernist movement, have more in common with nineteenth-century Realism in terms of style and theme. Throughout a career spanning roughly fifty years, Mann defied the label of any one literary or artistic movement; yet this does not imply that he went through the early half of the twentieth century entirely uninfluenced and unimpressed by its

various movements. Nor does it imply that an examination of Mann's work through the lens of one such movement, Expressionism, would prove entirely worthless or unfruitful, depending on what period one chooses to examine. Certain parts of *Doktor Faustus*, the crowning achievement of Mann's late period, suggest that Mann was at least partially influenced by the general Expressionist movement.

The main subject of my analysis of Mann's relationship to Expressionism shall therefore be *Doktor Faustus*. This novel includes two essential characters: Adrian Leverkühn, a composer who acquires both genius and madness after contracting syphilis, and his childhood friend Serenus Zeitblom, who serves primarily as Leverkühn's biographer but also, incidentally, as reporter on the atrocities of the Nazi regime. These two characters are linked throughout the narrative not only by a long-standing (but somewhat cold) friendship, but also by feelings of anxiety, Leverkühn's in the face of encroaching insanity, Zeitblom's in that of the encroaching destruction of his nation, Germany. Anxiety is one of the main themes we might consider key to Expressionism in all of its forms, whether it be a sort of general, existential anxiety, or anxiety stemming from a palpable threat, such as war. It is no coincidence, after all, that Expressionism blossomed in the period during and after World War I. Mann's *Doktor Faustus* is therefore indebted to Expressionism not only in terms of its references to Expressionist works and techniques, such as, in particular, the work of Arnold Schoenberg, but also in its relationship to Expressionist themes. An analysis of theme shall, however, be reserved for the latter portion of this thesis; firstly, an examination shall be made of Expressionism in its literary and musical forms, and Mann's relationship to these forms not only in *Doktor Faustus* but throughout his career.

German Literary Expressionism

Certain aspects of Expressionism are easy to recognize and define. The most blatant of these is contained in the name itself: “expression,” a mostly unhindered outpouring of emotion, which goes hand in hand with Expressionism’s general interest in anxiety. The Norwegian artist Edvard Munch’s *The Scream* (1893) (known in German as *Der Schrei der Natur*), which is arguably the most well-known piece of Expressionist art, bears witness to this feature of the movement. Expressionism extends, however, far beyond this popular example, and it is therefore essential that we identify other, less obvious aspects of Expressionism, as well as examine the less well-known branches of Expressionism. In this latter group one might adequately place German literary Expressionism, which has not garnered much critical attention outside of the German-speaking world, perhaps because it is difficult to pinpoint precisely what its features are. Ulrich Weisstein compares Expressionism to a “vast Milky Way,” in which one can however find “identifiable constellations, such as the *Sturm* group, Activism, and the *Blaue Reiter*” (Weisstein, “German Literary Expressionism” 276). Of these three groups, *Sturm* and the *Blaue Reiter* were concerned primarily with the visual arts and only marginally with writing, whereas the Activists were more focused on literature.

In another essay, “Expressionism: Style or ‘Weltanschauung’?,” Weisstein sets the Activists slightly apart from “their Expressionistic brethren” (47). The aesthetic ideals of the Activists were more concrete, and they were generally more politically involved than the Expressionists. Given their interest in politics, it therefore makes sense that Weisstein chooses to distinguish Heinrich Mann, whose work was generally more polemical than that of his brother’s, as the most important member of the Activists (“Expressionism: Style or ‘Weltanschauung’?” 47). Whereas Thomas, as the author of the politico-aesthetic manifesto *Betrachtungen eines*

Unpolitischen (1918), appears only to have begun to change his mind on liberalism near the beginning of the Nazi era and largely *because of* the Nazis, Heinrich maintained a lifelong devotion to liberal ideals. His politics in turn informed his most well-known novels, *Professor Unrat* (1905) and *Der Untertan* (1918), both of which are more bitingly satirical than any of his brother's work, taking as their target the bourgeois and ruling classes of Germany.

Given the nature of the Activists, not to mention their association with a brother with whom he often quarreled, it would be inappropriate to place Thomas Mann's work even tangentially in their canon. Insofar as the Activists fall underneath the general heading of Expressionism, this also seems to drive Mann, or at least the early Mann, away from Expressionism as well. This "early" Mann's opinion of Expressionism, as recorded in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, is mainly negative:

Expressionismus [...] ist jene Kunstrichtung, welche, in heftigem Gegensatz zu der Passivität, der demütig aufnehmenden und wiedergebenden Art des Impressionismus, die Nachbildung der Wirklichkeit aufs tiefste verachtet, jede Verpflichtung an die Wirklichkeit entschlossen kündigt und an ihre Stelle den souveränen, explosive, rücksichtslos schöpferischen Erlass des Geistes setzt. [...] Lassen wir aber gelten, daß der expressionistischen Kunsttendenz ein geistigerer Impetus zur Vergewaltigung des Lebens innewohne [...]. (Mann, *Betrachtungen* 600-601)

Expressionism [...] is that artistic direction which, in vigorous contrast to the passivity, the humbly registering and re-presenting manner of Impressionism, most deeply despises the imitation of reality, resolutely dismisses all fidelity to realistic appearances and replaces it with the sovereign, explosive, ruthlessly creative decree of the mind. [...] We

should recognize however that inherent to the Expressionist tendency in the arts there is an intellectual impetus to do violence to life. (Quoted in Donahue, 3)

Mann's main objection to the Expressionists appears to be that they are opposed to a Realist style of writing, which is sensible considering that "realistic," at the time of the appearance of *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, was the most fitting epithet one could apply to Mann's career thus far. Neil Donahue frames the Expressionists as being reciprocally opposed to Mann, arguing that "Expressionism emerged as a reaction to the entrenched solidity of prosperous, pre-war German bourgeois culture as chronicled with ironically doting but critical detachment by Thomas Mann in his *Buddenbrooks*" (2). As ironic as his style is, Thomas Mann rarely treated his characters with the sort of satirical hostility they would have received at the hands of his brother Heinrich. This is so of *Buddenbrooks* and *Der Zauberberg*, although it seems less certain when one considers *Doktor Faustus*.

A sort of grotesque, satirical approach to characterization applies less to the main characters of *Doktor Faustus* and more to the novel's secondary characters. Zeitblom, the novel's most typically bourgeois character, is handled with gentle irony by Mann, who, in *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus* (1949), a memoir of his process writing *Doktor Faustus*, sees Zeitblom as "eine humanistisch fromme und schlichte [...] Seele," "[ein] undämonisches Mittel" (32; "a harmless and simple soul," an "undemonic medium"; 31 in English edition) through which Leverkühn's tragic story could be inflected with a modicum of humor. Furthermore Leverkühn, the novel's main character, is treated with more sincerity, as we see his life mainly through the eyes of Zeitblom. It may be said that Zeitblom views Leverkühn's life and career through a somewhat rose-tinted lens, but Leverkühn is the only character who receives such treatment. Veering away from the main subject of his biography, Zeitblom is unafraid to record

his opinions of other, minor figures in Leverkühn's life, such as the members of the Kridwiss circle, who are (though Zeitblom does not describe them as such) a group of proto-fascist intellectuals. Though he may not call a spade a spade, Zeitblom makes his distaste for them known explicitly.

Foremost among the characters that draw Zeitblom's disapproval is Dr. Chaim Breisacher, a Jewish reactionary who is, in Zeitblom's eyes, a "geistig fortgeschrittenen, ja waghalsigen [Typ] von faszinierender Häßlichkeit" (Mann, *DF* 405; "an advanced, indeed reckless intellect, and a man of fascinating ugliness"; 294). An easy parallel might be drawn between Breisacher and the character of Naphta in *Der Zauberberg*, if Breisacher were not even more absurdly archconservative and unsympathetic than Naphta. Among Breisacher's targets of scorn are such seemingly unimpeachable figures as the Old Testament kings David and Solomon, as well as the very notion of prayer, which he calls "die vulgarisierte und rationalistisch verwässerte Spätform von etwas sehr Energischen, Aktiven und Starken: der magischen Beschwörung, des Gotteszwanges" (Mann, *DF* 413; "a late form—vulgarized and watered down by rationalism—of what was once very energetic, active, and strong: the magical invocation, the coercion of God"; 299). The preposterousness of his ideas, coupled with the fact that preposterousness is virtually his only attribute, nearly pushes the boundaries of belief, and certainly qualifies as satire. One might even deem it grotesque, or at least apply this epithet to other members of the Kridwiss circle, such as the poet Daniel zur Höhe, "einen in geistlich hochgeschlossenes Schwarz gekleideten hageren Dreißiger mit Raubvogel-Profil und von hämmernder Sprechweise" (Mann, *DF* 528; "a gaunt thirty-year-old clad in clerical black up to his tight collar, with the profile of a bird of prey and a hammering way of speaking"; 383), or the Nietzsche-like Helmut Institoris, who "während ihm die Schwindsucht auf den Wangenknochen

glüht, beständig schreit: Wie ist das Leben so stark und schön!” (Mann, *DF* 418; “with cheekbones glowing from consumption, constantly shouts, ‘How strong and beautiful life is!’”; 303). These characters are among the most uncanny and paradoxical Mann ever created, and he reaps them of satirical value not only in their own expressions and actions, but also through Zeitblom’s disdainful and even prudish descriptions of them.

A preoccupation with the grotesque and a penchant for satire may be attributes of German literary Expressionism, but they, on their own, do not create an Expressionistic work. Satire, it should go without saying, has existed at least since the time of Swift, thus predating Expressionism by several centuries. The appropriation of satire as a technique by literary Expressionism is seen by Weisstein as a useful parallel to the distortion “of form or color” which is paramount to Expressionistic art; thus “caricature, the grotesque, and satire” are “techniques which invariably involve distortion” (“Expressionism: ‘Style or Weltanschauung’?” 59). Expressionistic artists such as Munch or Kirchner use distortion in their paintings to enforce the strangeness of the subjective world as seen by them; writers in the Expressionist and Activist camps likewise use distortion to reinforce their own subjective, but also satirical, take on the world. It may at first seem incorrect to consider “distortion” a quality of Thomas Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, or of any of Mann’s novels for that matter, especially since they are not overly reliant on satire. On a purely compositional level his work is the antithesis of distorted; the prose is refined and elegant, almost to the point of endearing fustiness. Yet if distortion is not a quality of the language of *Doktor Faustus* itself, distortion as a theme is to be found here where it is mostly absent in the remainder of Mann’s oeuvre.

Aside from the distortion of reality through satire which characterizes Breisacher and the rest of the Kridwiss circle, there are also parts of the novel in which reality is distorted by

supernatural elements. This is evident particularly in the novel's twenty-fifth chapter, which could also be seen as its spiritual nucleus, when Leverkühn, in a scene echoing Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, imagines that he is conversing with the devil. The scene is ostensibly the result of a hallucination brought on by syphilis, of which Zeitblom is aware; but the simple act of transcribing is nevertheless enough "um meine Hand zittern und meine Buchstaben ausfahren zu lassen beim Schreiben" (Mann, *DF* 324; "to make my hand tremble and send the letters skittering out of control"; 238). It is as if Zeitblom, although a rational human being who is ambivalent about God, critical of theology, and skeptical of the devil, in this moment halfway believes in the latter. It seems that he would like to believe in the devil, for "[gab] es ihn aber nicht, den Besucher, [...] so ist es grausig zu denken, daß auch jene Zynismen, Verhöhnungen und Spiegelfechtereien aus der eigenen Seele des Heimgesuchten kamen" (Mann, *DF* 323; "if he, the visitor, did not exist [...] it is gruesome to think that the cynicism, the mockery, and the humbug likewise comes from [Leverkühn's] own stricken soul"; 237). The devil could, then, be a useful scapegoat on which to project one's own negative attributes—if only he existed.

Although the devil never appears as a real entity in *Doktor Faustus*, thus removing the novel from the territory of fantasy literature or magical realism, his presence as an idea which Leverkühn, especially near the end of the novel, treats seriously, complicates the novel's sense of objectivity. The world one finds in *Doktor Faustus* is still "realistic," but it is viewed subjectively, sometimes through the eyes of Leverkühn itself, more often through those of his biographer. Herbert Read has observed that a crucial component of the Expressionistic artist's approach is to capture "not the objective reality of the world, but the subjective reality of the feelings which objects and events arouse in us" (qtd. in Weisstein, "German Literary Expressionism" 272). Zeitblom, more than most other Mann characters, is attached to such a

principle in his semi-frequent digressions on current events. Even Leverkühn himself, although a relatively hermetic type lacking Zeitblom's political conscience, reacts metaphysically to the history happening around him. During the turmoil at the end of the first World War, for instance, he is "außerordentlich leidend [...], ohne daß man etwa unmittelbar für sein Leben hätte fürchten müssen, welches aber auf einen Tiefpunkt gelangt zu schien" (Mann, *DF* 496; "extraordinarily ill [...], yet there was no need to fear directly for his life, though it seemed to have reached a low point"; 359). Leverkühn and Zeitblom are quite different from the protagonist of *Der Zauberberg*, Hans Castorp, who disregards the events leading up to World War I during his time spent on the mountain. The protagonists of *Doktor Faustus*, some of whom witness both world wars, cannot separate themselves from the political situation of Germany, or view it all with a sort of objective indifference.

Of Zeitblom this is especially so. One might see in him a hint of the Activist, of Heinrich Mann, although he also bears some resemblance to Thomas Mann: the skeptical, latecomer Humanist whose only possible method of combatting the Nazis is by privately criticizing them. Nevertheless, the fact that he criticizes contemporary politics and current events represents a change for Thomas Mann. Politically-minded characters in his earlier novels, such as Settembrini and Naphta, have tended to expound on abstract ideals rather than concrete issues. Zeitblom offers the reader a bit of both. He entertains Adrian's aesthetic ideas and even tolerates the Kridwiss circle's thought, but when confronted with the horrors that the Nazis have produced his condemnation is unequivocal: "Fluch, Fluch den Verderbern, die eine ursprünglich bieder, rechtlich gesinnte, nur allzu gelehrige, nur allzu gern aus der Theorie lebende Menschenart in die Schule des Böses nahmen!" (Mann, *DF* 697-698; "Damn, damn those corrupters who taught their lessons in evil to an originally honest, law-abiding, but all too docile people, a people all

too happy to live by a theory!"; 506). This is not Zeitblom's only overt outburst against the Nazis or others. He declares that Wilhelm II is "[ein] zurückgeblieben[er] Dummkopf" (Mann, *DF* 437; "a retarded idiot"; 317), and even condemns the bourgeois class to which he belongs: "die Herrschaft der Unterklasse will mir, dem deutschen Bürger, als ein Idealzustand erscheinen im nun möglich gewordenen Vergleich mit der Herrschaft *des Abschaums*" (Mann, *DF* 493; "the rule of the lower classes begins to seem to me, a middle-class German, an ideal state in comparison (for the comparison is now possible) with the rule of scum"; 358). If Zeitblom is not an Activist in the same way that Heinrich Mann (a fellow bourgeois) is, it is because he is not "active" enough. He, like his creator, is too fusty and even timid to take up the helm of truly experimental literature as a weapon against political malefaction.

Thus far our analysis of German literary Expressionism and its relation to *Doktor Faustus* has focused on various confluent themes: satire, distortion, political activism, etc. The subject of composition itself, structure and language, was touched on briefly but deserves to be examined in depth in a closing look at how much *Doktor Faustus* actually owes to German literary Expressionism. Style would seem, after all, to be just as essential in determining the character of a work as theme. It may be considered more important, in fact, as no one theme belongs entirely to one genre. Walter Sokel has written that the style of German literary Expressionism "[tends] towards structural concision, forcefulness, and terseness of expression" (73). The early work of Alfred Döblin is particularly representative of this style: "Subordinate clauses explaining or describing motivation are missing, and syntax is reduced to its most basic elements" (Sokel 73). This style may at first seem opposed to the abovementioned "distorted" nature of Expressionist writing. This idea of forceful, terse writing, however, goes hand in hand with at least two of Expressionism's core ideas: firstly, the expression of core feelings and emotions without many

frills or digressions; secondly, the inadequacy of language to *truly* describe those feelings. For this reason, poems, short stories and plays are more normally found under the heading of German literary Expressionism than novels, which necessarily invite verbosity.

The point has already partially been made that Mann's style is not "distorted" in *Doktor Faustus* or any of his other works. Likewise his style, while at many points "forceful," has always been the opposite of "terse," although one might see in the long-windedness of *Doktor Faustus* a hint of self-parody absent in Mann's other, equally verbose novels. Sentences are necessarily long and circumlocutory, as that is the nature of the novel's narrator, whose status as a former (and in some ways, failed) educator may be partly to blame for this. On more than one occasion Zeitblom apologizes for writing too much (chapters IV and V, for just two examples), as if worried the reader will be bored by a surfeit of information. Perhaps he suspects that the Expressionists' view of the futility of language might have a bit of weight to it, and that in writing more he is really writing less, avoiding the crux of his topic rather than capturing it more plainly. Then again, a desire to write more simply does not imply a desire to write like an Expressionist, which neither Zeitblom nor Mann ever do. Mann may have written *Doktor Faustus* under the shadow of German literary Expressionism, with an awareness of its style and themes, but it would be apt to rephrase the analogy and call German literary Expressionism a "partial shadow" which falls halfway over the novel but does not engulf it nor, in fact, penetrate it very deeply. Even though a great chunk of the novel takes place during the peak of German literary Expressionism, representatives or advocates of the movement never appear as side characters, perhaps because the majority of the side characters are musicians and social critics rather than fiction writers. *Doktor Faustus* echoes Expressionist themes but never references authors of this movement, nor does it adopt or even acknowledge the aesthetic of German

literary Expressionism. If one is to find deeper ways in which *Doktor Faustus* takes cues from Expressionism, one must turn to the artform practiced not only by its main character but by many of its side characters: music.

Expressionist Music

Doktor Faustus is only Mann's most ambitious foray into the realm of what might be called musical fiction, or fiction about music. Passages dealing with music are also to be found in his earlier novels: the penultimate scene of *Buddenbrooks* features the young Hanno Buddenbrook pouring his fragile soul out at the piano during an *étude*; and Hans Castorp, while not a musician himself, is captivated by the record player in his mountain sanatorium. It is worth lingering on these two examples for a moment to note that both of them treat the experience of music not only as impassioned but also as obligating solitude. They are alone in their respective playing and listening. Music is most meaningfully experienced by each of these characters when it is experienced subjectively; they would likely have difficulty expressing their experiences to others, and might even echo the dying words of Goethe and claim that no one understands them. In any case, Goethe's dying words would certainly appear to apply, by the end of *Doktor Faustus*, to Adrian Leverkühn, the mostly hermetic composer whose work, while expressing much of his own inner turmoil, has been misunderstood by most of his peers and is largely unheard by the general public. His *Apocalypse*, for instance, is performed on only one occasion in Frankfurt due its difficulty, and its reception is "zornig[er] Widerspruch [und] der Vorwurf der Kunstverhöhnung" (Mann, *DF* 563; "angry protests and loud, embittered claims that art was being mocked"; 409). The only person who seems both to appreciate and understand Leverkühn's work is Zeitblom, whose isolation (physical as well as emotional) and horror at

Germany's devastation perhaps make him *more* qualified to understand than his friendship and knowledge of Leverkühn does.

It is important to note, before assessing Leverkühn's fictional works and examining how they correspond to those of his real-life counterpart Arnold Schoenberg, that Leverkühn, like any artist, goes through a number of phases in his artistic development. In some ways, Leverkühn's trajectory as an artist is the opposite of that of Schoenberg's, even though both of them develop the same original method of composing: the twelve-tone technique. Schoenberg was actually incensed by Mann's attribution of the twelve-tone technique to Leverkühn, and the writer was obliged to add in later print-runs of *Doktor Faustus* a note acknowledging that the technique was "das geistige Eigentum eines zeitgenössischen Komponisten und Theoretikers, Arnold Schönbergs, [...] und von mir in bestimmtem ideellem Zusammenhang auf eine frei erfundene Musikerpersönlichkeit [...] übertragen wurde (quoted in Adorno and Mann 30; not in *DF* which follows the first edition; "the intellectual property of a contemporary composer and theoretician, Arnold Schoenberg, and I have transferred it within a certain imaginary context to the person of an entirely fictitious musician"; 535). As disconcerted as Schoenberg may have been by all this, he could not accuse Mann of having plundered his personal life in crafting that of Leverkühn's. Schoenberg began his career as a practitioner of late Romanticism, then took a turn towards atonality before finally adopting the twelve-tone technique as his key method of composition. Leverkühn's career, on the other hand, is characterized in its early stage by a light-hearted, parodic style, not at all similar to Schoenberg's predominantly dour Romantic works. As Leverkühn's career proceeds (mirrored by Germany's trajectory towards World War II) his music not only utilizes atonality more often but becomes darker and less ironic. If anything, Leverkühn's later period thematically resembles Schoenberg's middle period: the time when (as

scholars such as Theodor Adorno have indicated) Schoenberg's work was most closely related to Expressionism.

Naturally, Mann was fully aware of the twists and turns in Schoenberg's career, having read the manuscript of what would become Adorno's *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (1949). As has been well-documented by more than a few scholars (such as Hans Vaget and Ehrhard Bahr), this book, and in particular its main section "Schoenberg und der Fortschritt," served Mann as a primary text in the creation of *Doktor Faustus*. Mann himself admits to lifting certain ideas about the row system and Beethoven from Adorno's manuscript for direct use in *Doktor Faustus* (apparently without offending Adorno, who served, during this period, as Mann's informal musical advisor), thus testifying to his reliance on the manuscript (*Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus* 46). He would therefore have read Adorno's analysis of Schoenberg's more Expressionist works, among them *Erwartung* (1909) and *Die glückliche Hand* (1913). Both of these pieces are concerned with depicting, in music, intense feelings of anxiety and loneliness. Adorno, in *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, defines *Erwartung* thematically as a "Monodram" which "hat zur Heldin eine Frau, die nachts ihren Geliebten sucht, allen Schrecken des Dunklen preisgegeben, um ihn schließlich ermordet zu finden. Sie wird der Musik gleichsam als analytische Patientin überantwortet" (43; "monodrama," which "has as its heroine a woman who, at night and at the mercy of all night's terrors, searches for her lover, only to find him murdered. She is consigned to the music as an analytical patient to the couch"; 37). In technical terms, the piece features a single female soprano who often seems less to sing and more to screech and cry, accompanied by an orchestra that groans and creaks behind her. The duration of the whole opus is about one half-hour, during which the singer replays over and over again the scene of her

trauma, thus making for an experience which the casual listener would likely describe as repetitious, nerve-racking and uncomfortable.

Adorno considers *Die glückliche Hand*, a “Drama mit Musik” (“drama with music”), as “[musikalisch] [...] vielleicht das Bedeutendste, was [Schoenberg] gelang” even though “er niemals als ganze Symphonie sich realisiert” (44; “musically perhaps the most important of [Schoenberg’s] achievements” even though “it was never completed in the form of a whole symphony”; 38). This piece includes orchestral passages of atonal quality, similar to those of *Erwartung*, although the solitary soprano is here replaced by a male lead who is accompanied, in the first and last scenes of the drama, by a chorus of men and women. This male lead is described as “der Strindbergisch Einsame, der erotisch die gleichen Versagungen erfährt wie in seiner Arbeit” (Adorno 45; “the Strindbergian solitary, who in his erotic life experiences the same failure as in his work”; 38). As in *Erwartung* repetition is a major theme, as the protagonist encounters similar emotions and problems, represented by leitmotifs, throughout the drama’s four scene structure. (The last scene, in point of fact, is entitled “Musstest du’s wieder erleben,” or “you had to relive it again”.) On a strictly musical level, the piece could perhaps be judged as more cacophonous than *Erwartung*. At two instances (the end of Scene I and the end of Scene III), the chorus breaks out in startling, atonal laughter that is accompanied by an aggressive crescendo from the orchestra. Perhaps due to these unexpected and even frightening outbursts of laughter, in addition to “the difficulty of staging the work,” (stage performances call not only for an orchestra and chorus but also for mimes) *Die glückliche Hand* is not often performed (Crawford 598). Today’s average listeners, and perhaps even professed lovers of classical music, are therefore mostly unaware of this work.

The fact that they go unperformed and unappreciated is not the only area of overlap between these pieces of Schoenberg and a few of the invented works of Adrian Leverkühn. Of all of Leverkühn's works, which Mann's narrator Zeitblom invariably describes with just enough detail to lend them verisimilitude, perhaps the one that is most blatantly reminiscent of *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand* is the *Apocalypse*. Zeitblom's description of this work is injected with angst and terror, as certain experimental musical techniques utilized by Leverkühn bring out his "humane Ängstlichkeit" ("humane anxieties"), such as "der Gleitklang, das Glissando, - ein [...] Mittel, dem ich immer eine anti-kulturelle, ja anti-humane Dämonie abzuhören geneigt war" (Mann, *DF* 542-543; "the sliding tone, the glissando—a musical device [...] in which I have always tended to hear something anticultural, indeed anti-human, even demonic"; 393). Sounds resembling howls and shrieks erupt from both the instrumental and vocal parts of the piece, but one part of the *Apocalypse* in particular seems to be almost directly influenced by *Die glückliche Hand*: "das Pandämonium des Lachens, das Höllengelächter, das, kurz, aber gräßlich, den Abschluß des ersten Teils der 'Apocalipsis' bildet" (Mann, *DF* 548; "the pandemonium of laughter, of infernal laughter, that forms the brief, but ghastly conclusion of the first part of the *Apocalypse*"; 397). Laughter, it should be noted, first appears as a theme early on in *Doktor Faustus*, during the chapters on Leverkühn's childhood; nevertheless, it is difficult not to view in this detail at least a hint of homage to *Die glückliche Hand*. The *Apocalypse* diverges from *Die glückliche Hand*, however, in that the outburst of "Höllengelächter" is immediately followed by new section which begins with a "ganz und gar wundersamen Kinderchor, [...] von einem Teil-Orchester begleitet" (Mann, *DF* 549; "totally strange and wonderful children's chorus, accompanied by a small orchestra"; 397). Neither *Die glückliche Hand* nor *Erwartung*

feature such a specific transition; it would appear to be Mann's (or rather, Leverkühn's) completely original invention.

Does the *Apocalypse*, in its similarities to these Schoenberg pieces, therefore qualify as a piece of Expressionist music? John C. Crawford, in an essay on *Die glückliche Hand*, considers the piece to be "Expressionist in that it constantly reflects the changing psychological states of the characters, and in that the tonal combinations employed are apparently free from any preconceived constructional scheme" (600). While the *Apocalypse* features a slew of characters, it would possibly be a stretch to say that the piece captures their "changing psychological states," going simply off of Zeitblom's description. The narrator of the *Apocalypse* is, for instance, "[ein] Tenor [...], dessen kaltes Krähen, sachlich, reporterhaft, in schauerlichem Gegensatz zu dem Inhalt seiner katastrophalen Mitteilungen steht" (Mann, *DF* 547; "a tenor [...] whose cold, reporterlike, matter-of-fact crowings stand in horrible contrast to the contents of his catastrophic message"; 396). Thus this narrator seems to have an objective, controlled psychological state, in sharp distinction to the turbulent protagonist of *Die glückliche Hand*, referred to simply as "the Man" (Schoenberg 4). But while the characters of the *Apocalypse* lack this "changing psychological state," the piece itself may perhaps be viewed as possessing such a feature, in particular in its sudden and harsh transitions from "hellish laughter" to "children's chorus." Such a transition harkens back to the imagined devil's description of hell to Leverkühn, where hell "ihren Insassen nur die Wahl läßt zwischen extremer Kälte und [...] Glut [...] – zwischen diesen beiden Zuständen flüchten sie brüllend hin und her, denn in dem einen erscheint der andre immer als himmlisches Labsal, ist aber sofort und in des Wortes höllischster Bedeutung unerträglich" (Mann, *DF* 360; "allows its denizens only the choice between extreme cold and fire [...]— between these two conditions they flee yowling to and fro, for within each the other ever appears

a heavenly balm, but is at once, and in the most hellish sense of the word, unbearable”; 262).

Leverkühn finds satisfaction rather than horror in this concept of extremes, and certainly seems to have put it to use in his music. In it may even be seen a metaphor for his own psychological state, which might be diagnosed as manic-depressive.

While the *Apocalypse*, certainly Leverkühn’s most bombastic and unsettling piece, bears certain striking similarities to Schoenberg’s *Die glückliche Hand*, another of Leverkühn’s later works, *The Lamentation of Dr. Faustus*, shares one or two aspects in common with *Erwartung*. *The Lamentation*, as its title indicates, is a substantially melancholy piece in distinction to the *Apocalypse*. Zeitblom characterizes it immediately as “ein expressives Werk, ein Werk des Ausdruck und [...] damit ein Werk der Befreiung” (Mann, *DF* 704; “an expressive work, a work of expression, and as such [...] a work of liberation”; 510), a description he has given none of Leverkühn’s other, earlier works. He distinguishes it further from, in particular, the *Apocalypse*, in characterizing it as “stilreiner [...], dunkler im Ton als Ganzes und ohne Parodie [...], milder, melodischer, mehr Kontrapunkt als Polyphonie” (Mann, *DF* 708; “purer, darker in tone on the whole and without any parody [...] milder, more melodic, more counterpoint than polyphony”; 513). Based alone on this description, the similarities between this piece and *Erwartung*, which is far from the “milder, more melodic” side of Schoenberg, may not immediately be clear. Certainly *The Lamentation* takes as its main mood melancholy, whereas the mood of *Erwartung* is anxiety. The two pieces are comparable, however, in the way that they approach these moods. *Erwartung*, as has already been established, depicts the repetition of a single moment stretched out as far as it will go. It is a piece in which “die seismographische Aufzeichnung traumatischer Schocks wird [...] das technische Formgesetz der Musik. Es verbietet Kontinuität und Entwicklung” (Adorno 44; “the seismographic record of traumatic shock [...] becomes the

technical law of music's form. It forbids continuity and development"; 37). In much the same way is the musical form of *The Lamentation* described: "Dies riesenhafte 'Lamento' [...] ist recht eigentlich undynamisch, entwicklungslos, ohne Drama" (Mann, *DF* 705; "This gigantic *lamento* [...] is, properly speaking, undynamic, lacking development and without drama"; 511). Both *The Lamentation* and *Erwartung* are pieces in which emotions are pushed to their extremes, in which the limits of expression (and by extension, Expressionism) are strained.

We have thus established the influence of the works of Schoenberg's Expressionist phase on certain works of *Doktor Faustus*' protagonist Adrian Leverkühn, during what we may very well term *his* Expressionist phase (though Zeitblom never uses this term and rarely connects Leverkühn's work to any particular movement). The question which now faces us is if and how Schoenberg may have influenced the structure and composition of *Doktor Faustus* itself. If *Doktor Faustus* is to be viewed not only as fiction about music, but also as musical fiction, in what ways does it translate musical techniques into the artifice of fiction? Musical ideas of Schoenberg, such as the twelve-tone technique, are necessarily difficult to translate in such a manner; at the most, the idea is referenced by name and utilized by Leverkühn, as when it is used for the twelve syllables of the theme of *The Lamentation*: "Denn ich sterbe als ein böser und guter Christ" (Mann, *DF* 708; "For I die as both a wicked and good Christian"; 513). *Doktor Faustus*, for as much as it draws from Schoenberg's compositions, is not itself structured along the lines of a Schoenberg composition. As Hans Vaget has argued, "the basic operations of serial music [...] are too rigid and too limiting to be useful as structural models to a writer of prose fiction" (180). If musical models for the structure of *Doktor Faustus* are to be found, they must be searched for in the period of music predating both Schoenberg and Expressionism—namely, in the period of Richard Wagner.

Though besmirched by the Nazis, the reputation of Wagner as a great and innovative artist was sustained in the early twentieth century by new artists who recognized in his work more than just pan-Germanic gobbledygook. Two such artists who found inspiration in Wagner despite the Nazi association were Schoenberg and Thomas Mann. In the case of Schoenberg, the influence of Wagner can be observed directly in *Die glückliche Hand*, where it is apparent “in the opera’s use of leitmotifs and, even more clearly, in the identification of particular tone colors with the opera’s two main characters” (Crawford 593). Likewise, leitmotifs served as an inspiration for Mann well before *Doktor Faustus* and even before Schoenberg composed *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand*; their use may be observed in such early works as *Buddenbrooks* and *Tonio Kröger* (1903). Although *Doktor Faustus* “is the most complicated and elaborate of all Mann’s novels” it may be seen “as an essentially Wagnerian narrative” (Vaget 180), in which leitmotifs, though not always as immediately detectable as they can be in music, nevertheless abound. Vaget identifies a few, including “Leverkühn’s eyes” as well as his laughter, and also asserts that some “motifs are transferred from one level of the narrative to another and are developed in symphonic fashion, independently and concurrently” (180-181). Thus Mann treats the leitmotif not simply as a musical tool to be utilized by his composer-protagonist, but as an all-purpose device which can be made to function in music as well as fiction.

It would appear that Mann, even in *Doktor Faustus*, sees himself more as a traditional artist with innovative tendencies, in the vein of Wagner, rather than a fully experimental and divergent one in the vein of Schoenberg. This makes *Doktor Faustus* into something of a conundrum: “a novel that espouses *avant garde* music but is structured according to the principles of an older musical model” (Vaget 181). In its portrait of a figure such as Leverkühn,

Doktor Faustus seems to praise the principle of the experimental, Expressionist artist—yet that portrait is presented to us through the lens of a fusty traditionalist, Serenus Zeitblom. Once again, we see at play the idea (or might we call it the motif?) of extremes which the devil makes explicit to Leverkühn in the novel's twenty-fifth chapter. Although they are life-long friends both hailing from the fictional village of Kaisersaschern, set in Luther's homeland of Saxony-Anhalt, Leverkühn and Zeitblom are divided along many lines, one of the most significant both historically and culturally being that Leverkühn was raised Protestant while Zeitblom's background is Catholic (Mann, *DF* 17-18; 10 in English edition). Nevertheless, the two are able to get along and to form even a small amount of mutual understanding between each other. One might see Mann's unlikely merging of the avant-garde and the traditional in a similar light. He is able to weave the two disparate elements together in small but meaningful ways, finding themes and motifs that apply to both. The analysis of one such theme, anxiety, shall provide the conclusion to our overarching analysis of *Doktor Faustus* and Expressionism.

Anxiety/Conclusion

In the grand scheme of Expressionism, anxiety as an emotion seems often to be linked almost irrevocably with madness. Munch's *The Scream*, ever the prime example for the artistic wing of the movement, represents with its anonymous, horrified figure both anxiety and madness at once, or better yet, anxiety as the catalyst for madness. The two are certainly not interchangeable, for, judging by the example of Adrian Leverkühn, who at the end of *Doktor Faustus* has fully succumbed to the deleterious effects of venereal disease, thus becoming a non-functioning catatonic, one can go from the state of anxiety to madness but the possibility of a return trip is, in most cases, unlikely. What is the source of this anxiety, particularly in the early

twentieth century, the time of the Expressionist movement? In the case of the two main characters of *Doktor Faustus*, the answer is nuanced but contains some areas of overlap.

Leverkühn's angst stems from his identity as a theological student turned artist, who, especially after the effects of the syphilis he contracts from the prostitute Esmerelda begin to take hold, sees his path in life as largely predetermined. Incidents which the average onlooker would see as sad coincidence, such as the deaths of Rudolf Schwerdtfeger and Nepomuk Schneidewein, his friend and nephew respectively, are seen superstitiously by Leverkühn as acts of fate and proof of the devil's proclamation that he may never truly love. Although Nietzsche's ideas of fate and theology differ somewhat from Leverkühn's, Donahue sees Leverkühn as "a composite portrait [...] of the Expressionist artist, based on various composers (Mahler, Webern, Schönberg, Berg), but primarily on Nietzsche" (7). The anxieties of Leverkühn in the early twentieth century are similar to those of Nietzsche in the late nineteenth century: both men, tacitly or explicitly, see the coming of a godless, nihilistic world, and both realize that such a world will not be pretty. Nietzsche's proposal for avoiding this world, is of course, the coming of the *Übermensch* and the transcendence of the idea of God. Leverkühn, meanwhile, places his faith not in God or in an *Übermensch* but in the devil who appears to him in a hallucination, perhaps because he believes that the devil you know (in this case, one's own self) is better than the one you do not know. In any case, both men meet the same end: striving for transcendence but descending into madness.

The same fate of certifiable insanity does not befall Zeitblom, although he still has his own feelings of dread, and in some ways his fate is worse than that of his biographical subject. Though he intends his manuscript to be a biography of Leverkühn it more often comes across as a memoir in which Zeitblom "is not recording his own life so much as watching a gruesome,

spine-chilling horror film” (Durrani 654). The name of this “horror film” may as well be called “Germany: 1914–1945,” a tale of war, genocide, betrayal, and cruelty. Zeitblom inevitably witnesses more of Germany’s history in the early twentieth century than Leverkühn (who dies in 1940), and unlike the hermetic Leverkühn he experiences it less as allegory and more as reality. He experiences World War II not only as a concerned but powerless witness but also somewhat vicariously through his two sons who, he says somewhat grimly, “dienen heute [...] ihrem Führer” (Mann, *DF* 21; “now serve their Führer”; 13). World War I he saw from the battlefield, an experience about which he is uncharacteristically reserved, although what little description he does give indicates that the war was, for him, far from glorious: “Daß ich mich elend fühlte [...], von bösem Husten und Gliederreißen geplagt infolge nassen Nächtgens unter der Zeltbahn, gereichte mir zu einer gewissen Beruhigung” (Mann, *DF* 451; “I took some comfort in the miserable torments of a cough and rheumatic pains that came with dank nights spent under canvas”; 327). If his experiences both watching and participating in two world wars has not driven him insane, it has at least made his heart a weary, horrified one.

The “humane anxieties” which plague Zeitblom in his analysis of Leverkühn’s the *Apocalypse* are much the same anxieties which follow him throughout *Doktor Faustus*, and which distinguish him on a deeper level from the artistic anxieties of Leverkühn. More so than Leverkühn, Zeitblom professes a philosophy of Humanism; his ideas, as we have seen, are almost in line with those of the Activists. However, as Osman Durrani has pointed out, Zeitblom has failed in his commitment to Humanist ideals, in that he “has deserted his pupils at the precise moment when their need of a ‘Humanist’ was greatest, when his declared values needed a spokesman and a champion” (657). Zeitblom is unable to transform his “humane anxieties” into “humane actions.” He neither engages in open and direct action against the Nazis (the type of

action of a Sophie Scholl or Dietrich Bonhoeffer) nor does he attempt to undermine their plans through smaller, more secretive action. As mentioned above, he is unable to prevent his own sons from serving Nazism, even if their absence would make but a small difference in the collective power of the Third Reich. He also gives little thought to helping refugees persecuted by the Nazis escape the country, though he nevertheless laments the horrific murders committed in the concentration camps. Zeitblom's only refuge, his only means of opposing the Nazis, tacitly or explicitly, is art—that is, his own art of the biography, as well Leverkühn's art of music.

If Zeitblom represents the Activist, the bearer of humane anxieties, then Leverkühn is the Expressionist, the bearer of artistic anxieties. Art, thinking about it as well as creating it, is the dominant factor in Leverkühn's life, much as it is for the Expressionists: "Art, for these writers and painters, was not a substitute for religion; it was religion itself" (Weisstein, "Expressionism: 'Style or Weltanschauung'?" 48). Leverkühn's case may be somewhat different, however, in that it often seems art is *both* substitute for religion and religion itself for him. He has his doubts about the "goodness" of the art which he has created out of his anxieties and sufferings, but nevertheless he, in the last scene of the novel before he becomes completely insane, wonders "vielleicht kann gut sein aus Gnade, was in Schlechtigkeit geschaffen wurde [...]. Vielleicht auch siehet Gott an, daß ich das Schwere gesucht und mirs habe sauer werden lassen" (Mann, *DF* 727; "perchance what is fashioned in wickedness can yet be good by grace [...]. Perchance God sees, too, that I sought out what was hard and gave myself to drudgery"; 526). Like most great artists he is, of course, skeptical of his own greatness and a biased judge when it comes to his own music. He requires a Zeitblom to interpret his works, someone who, despite their multitude of differences, shares anxiety in common with Leverkühn. Anxiety appears almost as a guiding light among the more indecipherable and unapproachable aspects of Leverkühn's music.

While it is a verifiable theme of Expressionism it is also, in a broader context, a universal human emotion which even those opposed to the narrower aesthetic elements of Expressionism can understand. On its own, anxiety does not make of *Doktor Faustus* an Expressionist work, but its presence in *Doktor Faustus*, coupled with certain other allusions and devices, indicate an Expressionistic influence.

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