WAGNERIAN ELEMENTS IN THE FICTION OF

THOMAS MANN

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THOMAS MANN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The task of relating Richard Wagner and Thomas Mann is in effect a study in ambiguity, in co-existing antithesis of ideas and ideals. It is also a study of an active admiration of the novelist for the composer—active to the extent of Mann's having consciously assimilated into his own nature and work elements distinctive of the Bayreuth master.

In a lecture on Wagner delivered at the University of Munich in 1932, he gave verbal tribute:

My passion for the Wagnerian enchantment has accompanied my life ever since I was first conscious of it and began to make it my own and penetrate it with my understanding. All that I owe to him, of enjoyment and instruction, I can never forget: the hours of deep and single bliss in the midst of the theatre throngs, hours of nervous and intellectual transport and rapture, perceptions of great and moving import, such as only his art vouchsafes.¹

Mann saw Wagner as the artistic culmination of Nineteenth Century German Romanticism, the nature of which he felt to be essentially ambiguous.² He often expressed the view that Romanticism, though pure, refreshing and beautiful, holds

simultaneously within it the seeds of decay and dissolution. The appeal that Romanticism, and most particularly, the Romanticism of Wagner, held for Mann was therefore disturbing to him. In this dichotomy of feeling lies to a large extent the basic conflict from which arose a major portion of his themes, such as the sensitive nature of the artist alienated in a bourgeois world; disease, spiritual and mental, against health; darkness opposed to light; and death encroaching upon the sources of life. Both Wagner's life and work provided endless examples of just such conflicts, and the stimulus they were to hold for the youthful Mann persisted throughout his life.

The temper of the times in Germany during Wagner's life and afterward affected his role in a changing cultural climate. Perhaps there has never been another composer who has been so inextricably linked with his country's history. Mann shared Wagner's love for the German folk-soul and found himself sympathetic with the composer's treatment of the German nature in myth; he admired Wagner's concern with the primeval beginnings of things, his predilection for death and night; and above all he was intrigued by a quality which he considered to be the essence of Wagner—\"the indissoluble mingling of the daemonic and the bourgeois.\" 

\[^3\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 339.}\]
This study will examine the phenomenon of the elevation of Wagner from relative obscurity under Bismarck to the symbol of German Nationalism under the Third Reich, and will attempt to ascertain the reasons for Mann's continuing dedication to Wagner despite his growing apprehension about Germany's destiny under Hitler. Although Mann and, in the beginning, Wagner, did not regard themselves as political men, they could not long remain indifferent to the doctrine of German supremacy, which affected not only the political organization of the German state, but also the whole of the people—the Volk—with whom artists such as Wagner and Mann were essentially concerned. Themes that appear in their works often reflect aspects of the national temperament. Such a knowledge of cultural relationships makes the artistic themes more lucid and imposing.

Once the relationship between Romanticism and German Nationalism has been established and clarified, the student can more easily analyze Mann's use of the themes, philosophies, symbols, and structural techniques that bear the Wagnerian stamp. Certain works of Mann have been selected for analysis: four novels, Buddenbrooks, The Magic Mountain, The Holy Sinner, and Doctor Faustus; two novellas, Death in Venice, and Tonio Kröger; and a number of short stories from the collection entitled Stories of Three Decades. Because of the extensive volume of Mann's work, it has been necessary to
limit selection to those works of prose fiction considered most exemplary of the Wagnerian influence.

The operas to be examined in conjunction with this study will be those composed by Wagner after *Rienzi*. The earlier operas up to and including *Rienzi* were written in a conventional style, and it was later that Wagner developed the method upon which his fame rests. These later operas span the years from 1841 to 1882 and include *Der fliegende Holländer; Tannhäuser; Lohengrin;* the four operas constituting *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which are *Das Rheingold; Die Walküre; Siegfried; and Götterdämmerung; Tristan und Isolde; Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg;* and *Parsifal.*

Relationships between the writer and the musician exist in considerable abundance, but can be generally encompassed under the classification of theme, tone, philosophical thought, and techniques. These areas of comparison will be explored in some detail for each of the works of Thomas Mann selected for study. Development and change in Mann's attitude toward Wagner as artist and man is likewise a fascinating concern for the student of Mann's literary output; and this aspect of the relationship will receive due attention.
CHAPTER II

WAGNER—HIS CAREER AND IDEAS

In order to understand the complex relationship that exists between Thomas Mann and Richard Wagner, one must first examine, at least in brief, some of the more salient facts of Wagner's life, his career as an artist, and his ideological contributions to German thought and history. Wagner both influenced and was influenced by the Nineteenth Century Romantic Movement, of which he is generally regarded the musical culmination. Wagner's reputation was widespread and multi-based, and certain specific elements of it demand close scrutiny in connection with Thomas Mann.

Richard Wagner was born on May 22, 1813, in Leipzig. Wagner's mother was left a widow six months after Richard's birth, when her husband succumbed to an epidemic of typhoid fever. Frau Wagner, with seven fatherless children, was in dire financial circumstances; she married Ludwig Geyer, an actor, painter, singer, and playwright, in August, 1814, scarcely nine months after her husband's death. It is thought that Frau Wagner had been having an affair with Geyer even before her husband's death.

There has, therefore, been a great deal of controversy concerning Wagner's true paternal origins. In the published
version of Mein Leben, Wagner's autobiography, he names Friedrich Wagner as his father. On the other hand, Friedrich Nietzsche, who had seen the original manuscript (now lost), believed that in the original version, Wagner claimed Geyer as his true father.\(^1\) The evidence to date seems to verify Nietzsche's opinion, but the controversy has never been resolved. There has been some opinion that Geyer was of Jewish extraction. This claim, too, has never been proved, but the doubt was a matter of great anguish to Wagner, whose later views were extremely anti-Semitic.

After Frau Wagner's marriage to Geyer, the family moved to Dresden. It was here that Wagner encountered his first musical influence—Carl Maria von Weber. Geyer sang in Weber's productions, and the great composer was a frequent visitor in the Geyer home. In his Autobiographical Sketch, Wagner related: "Nothing gave me so much pleasure as the Freischütz; I often saw Weber pass by our house when he came from rehearsals; I always looked upon him with holy awe."\(^2\)

During the years in Dresden, Wagner had his first instruction in piano. He never learned to play the instrument properly, preferring to amuse himself by improvising overtures


\(^2\) Henry T. Finck, Wagner and his Works (New York, 1901), I, 15.
to Die Förstimentos and Mozart's The Magic Flute. Wagner was not a musical prodigy. His interests were too varied to be concentrated in a single area: music, drama, painting, poetry, and classical philology. At the age of thirteen, he completed a translation of the first twelve books of Homer's Odyssey, an accomplishment that evidences his ardent love for Greek literature, history, and mythology.

Ludwig Geyer died when Richard was eight years old, and seven years later the family moved back to Leipzig. Richard received the normal education for a boy of his years until he was sixteen. He was finally expelled because the school he attended failed to stimulate his interests.

Wagner had early tried his hand at writing drama based on classical models and by his fourteenth year had acquired a passionate interest in Shakespeare. His dismissal from formal education gave him time to launch on an ambitious dramatic project that was to occupy him for two years, a production that would combine Hamlet and King Lear. According to his own description of this play:

The plan was extremely grandiose: forty-two persons died in the course of the piece, and in developing the plot I found myself compelled to make most of them reappear as ghosts, because otherwise there would have been no personages left for the last acts.3

The writing of this drama had important results for Wagner. During the course of work on it, he became acquainted with the

3Ibid., p. 20.
music of Beethoven for the first time. He was particularly impressed by the *Egmont*, composed for a work by Goethe; and, full of enthusiasm, he determined to do something in the same style to accompany his own drama. He encountered unforeseen technical difficulties; but his interest was aroused, and, in his sixteenth year he decided to become a musician. Again he began music lessons, and again he failed to do the assignments. Instead, he spent his time in composing orchestral overtures, one of which he succeeded in having played at the Leipzig Theatre. The reaction of the audience was one of general merriment, however; for the score called for a loud and ludicrous drum tap every fourth bar.

Wagner attended lectures at the University of Leipzig, and after indulging in the usual student excesses, he finally determined to pursue seriously the study of music. He engaged the Cantor at the Thomas-schule, Theodor Weinlig, a gifted musician and teacher; and under his tutelage, Wagner mastered the complexities of counterpoint at the end of six months. About this time, Wagner had a sonata published and a Symphony in C-minor played in Leipzig and Prague. He began making exploratory efforts at writing an opera, *Die Hochzeit*, and his first completed opera, *Die Feen*, was written in 1833. This opera, in the traditional Romantic style of Weber and Marschner, was never performed during Wagner's lifetime.
In 1834, Wagner took a position as musical director at Magdeburg. Under the influence of fashionable French and Italian opera, he wrote Das Liebesverbot, based on Shakespeare's Measure for Measure. The performance of this opera in 1836 was something of a fiasco because of problems in production, and afterward Wagner abandoned both the opera and his position as director.

In 1837, Wagner accepted a post as musical director of the Königsberg Theatre. Two months previously he had married Wilhelmine (or Minna) Planer, an actress whom he had met at Magdeberg. She was a devoted wife, but unimaginative and incapable of understanding her temperamental and idealistic husband. Wagner soon regretted his imprudent marriage, but he and Minna tried to adapt to each other for twenty-five years before separating. Fortunately, they had no children.

When the Königsberg Theatre became bankrupt, Wagner went to Riga. Here he began work on Rienzi, based on a novel by Bulwer-Lytton. In the meantime, Wagner's already excessive debts began to mount. In search of more favorable circumstances, he and Minna set out for Paris, disguised to avoid their creditors. As they went by sea, first to London, the impressions that Wagner received from the stormy sea voyage provided him with the inspiration for Der fliegende Holländer. He completed the opera in Paris in 1841 and also finished Rienzi, which was performed with great success in Dresden.
A production of *Der fliegende Holländer*, which followed in January, 1843, did not receive the acclaim accorded *Rienzi*.

After two and a half years of bitter poverty, struggle, and disillusionment in Paris, Wagner returned to Germany to accept an offer from the Dresden Opera. He also wrote his *Autobiographical Sketch* in 1843, which he closed with the lines, "For the first time I saw the Rhine; with hot tears in my eyes, I, poor artist, swore eternal fidelity to my German fatherland."

*Tannhäuser*, written in 1845, was Wagner's attempt to blend the grandiose style of *Rienzi* with the dramatic idea of redemption as it appeared in *Der fliegende Holländer*. This work was not well received by the Dresden audience.

*Lohengrin*, completed in 1848, was not performed until August, 1850, when it was produced in Weimar by Franz Liszt.

Wagner had to flee Germany as a result of his participation in the Revolution of 1848, a liberal (or national) uprising. He barely escaped to Switzerland, where he resided in exile for eleven years. During this time he devoted himself to the writing of political and philosophical tracts and treatises on art. He planned a new opera, *The Death of Siegfried*, but finding his subject matter too great for a

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single opera, he created instead a cycle of four operas, Der Ring des Nibelungen, which consisted of Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried, and Die Götterdämmerung. The composition of the total cycle required a period of some twenty years. His work on it was interspersed with the composition of Tristan und Isolde (1859) and Die Meistersinger (1867).

During the writing of Tristan, Wagner carried on a love affair with Mathilde Wesendonck, the wife of one of his most benevolent patrons. She was neither the first nor the last of Wagner's extra-marital attachments, although she exercised more influence in his life than almost any other. His wife was ill and frequently absent for extended periods of time to take cures. Her unsatisfactory relationship with her husband caused her physical condition to worsen; and after many temporary separations, the couple finally separated permanently.

Wagner's last major romantic involvement was with Cosima von Bülow, the daughter of Liszt and the wife of Hans von Bülow, an orchestra conductor. A daughter, whom Von Bülow thought was his own, was born to Cosima and Wagner on April 10, 1865. She was named Isolde. Two other children, Eva, born on February 17, 1867, and Siegfried, born on June 6, 1869, were fathered by Wagner before Cosima secured a divorce from her husband in 1870. On August 25th of that year, Cosima and Wagner were married, and Wagner was happy with her for the remaining fifteen years of his life.
The conduct of this affair caused Liszt's regard for Wagner to cool for some years. It was typical of Wagner to disregard completely the feelings of those who most befriended him. He was a thoroughgoing egoist who felt that special dispensations should accompany his genius. There was a certain kind of naivety about Wagner's personal ethics—or lack of them—that made him feel that the world owed him homage. It was not so much that he was incapable of compassion as that he simply did not think of the needs of others except in theory. In other areas, too, Wagner's professed theories did not coincide with his behavior. For example, he disparaged money and luxury but continually plunged himself in debt for expensive clothing, exotic perfumes, and luxurious furnishings.

In 1864, King Ludwig of Bavaria bestowed his patronage upon Wagner, temporarily rescuing the composer from his creditors. King Ludwig made possible the productions of Tristan und Isolde, Das Rheingold, and Die Walküre in the years between 1865 and 1870. Wagner's dream, however, was to establish his own theatre, the specifications for which would conform to his own theatrical ideals and would permit an enormously complicated staging. He chose Bayreuth as the locale for his theatre, and the people of that city presented him with a suitable site. Some funds were raised through benefit concerts, but lack of money caused numerous delays.
Once again, the generosity of King Ludwig saved the project. The Festspielhaus, which opened in 1876, was enormously successful, and Wagner quickly drew about him a devoted and powerful cult.

After the move to Bayreuth, Wagner completed only one more music-drama, Parsifal. On July 26, 1881, Wagner went to Venice. Here he suffered a heart attack and died. He was buried at Wahnfried, his home in Bayreuth.

Wagner's musical style, so distinctive in his later operas, began with the traditional German romanticism of Die Feen. Das Liebesverbot, however, reflects an Italian influence, reminiscent of Rossini and Donizetti. Rienzi continued the popular style of grand opera. As has been mentioned, this opera was received very well. Der fliegende Holländer was considered less brilliant. In actuality this opera marked Wagner's first step toward real dramatic development, but critics largely failed to perceive its transitional significance because it retained arias and ensembles and employed recitative.

Wagner's famous musical manner may be found thoroughly theorized in his essays, especially Art and Revolution and Opera and Drama. Most of his innovations had their basis in his concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk, or total art-work. His ideal creation consisted in a synthesis of the arts: music, poetry, scenery, and gesture blended in a single dramatic unity. Such a conception was revolutionary because it
discarded the idea of the opera as a loose succession of more or less complete single musical numbers, with the emphasis on the singer rather than on the story or the mood. To distinguish his works from conventional operas, Wagner called them music-dramas.

Wagner's masterpieces, including Tristan und Isolde, the Ring cycle, and Parsifal, are generally characterized by a "through-composed" musical form. In other words, Wagner did not write songs with repeated stanzas, but composed continually developing music to fit continually developing dramatic action, thus achieving perfect balance and unity between the music and libretto. He tended to eliminate from his music-dramas the conventional divisions into arias, ensembles, and recitative—divisions which often disrupt aesthetic unity and place emphasis upon vocal virtuosity rather than dramatic content.

The music-dramas of Wagner are perhaps most noted for their lush orchestration and sensuality. The orchestras required by Wagner's scores were unusually large for his day. He made full use of all instruments at his disposal. Particularly striking, however, was his emphasis upon brasses, such as the French horn and Wagnerian tuba, which impart a folk element to the music.

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Wagner purposely achieved sensual effects in a number of ways. For the most part, his music is restless, yearning—in short, erotic. This effect results partly from compositional devices which produce tension; for example, modulation or transition from one key to another. Wagner modulated almost continually; he passed through a key without remaining for lengthy development of melody or harmony. This wandering effect is in fact a rudimentary step toward atonality. In this respect, Wagner anticipates somewhat the modern composer, Schonberg, who wrote twelve-tone music frequently described as atonal.

Wagner most frequently employed chromatic modulation, or progression by half-steps rather than the steps ordinarily found in a scale. The direction of development was generally upward, with the feeling of building toward a peak, anticipating resolvement or release of tension.

Another compositional device used by Wagner was the appoggiatura, a preceding ornamental note either above or below the main note with which it is connected and the time-value of which it shares. Related to this device are suspensions and anticipations. Suspensions are notes appearing in a preceding chord yet carrying over into the next chord. Anticipations are notes that literally anticipate a note in the succeeding chord. The general effect here is one of dissonance, an excellent means of producing musical tension.
When these devices are used frequently, as in Wagnerian scores, the impression upon the listener is one of yearning for resolvement; hence, the music assumes an orgiastic quality becoming more and more intensified as the resolvement is again and again postponed.

Another primary characteristic associated with Wagner's music is his abundant use of the leitmotif. This device was not original with Wagner, but he was the first to employ it so extensively and to develop it beyond the function of a mere musical label. Even in his early operas, Wagner used the leitmotif; however, the motives served mainly to denote certain characters and were longer melodic themes than those used in the later Ring cycle. Also, they were vocal in origin and, when repeated, did not change, but recurred in their original form. Wagner's leitmotif in the operas after Lohengrin originated in the orchestra; the motives occurred more frequently, were much shorter than they previously had been, and changed as the character changed, thereby reflecting changing psychological aspects of the character. In the late masterpieces the leitmotif became connotative as well as denotative, giving the composer more dramatic flexibility.

Ernest Newman makes the observation that

Wagner never forgot anything in his work; at any stage of it he could summon up at a moment's notice not only any figure he wanted, in all its natural warmth of life,
but the very atmosphere that surrounded it, the very mood it induced in others.\textsuperscript{6}

Such ability enabled Wagner to give to his music unexampled powers of description and characterization. Thomas Mann was one of the many who have recognized this literary quality of Wagner's music:

The texts round which it twines, filling out their dramatic content, are not literature, but the music is! Like a geyser it seems to shoot forth out of the myth's precultural depth—and not only seems, for it actually does it—and in very truth it is conceived, deliberately, calculatedly, with high intelligence, with an extreme of shrewdness, in spirit as literary as the spirit of the texts is musical.\textsuperscript{7}

Such comments convey an idea of the success Wagner attained in his purpose to create a work in which music and drama are "organically connected expressions of a single dramatic idea . . . ."\textsuperscript{8}

Aside from music, Wagner's ideological and philosophical development is important for two reasons: it largely determined his choice of subject matter and approach to music, and it was instrumental in shaping the direction of Germany's political and social evolution.

Wagner's ideological development was to a large extent manifested in political ideals, and he eventually progressed

\textsuperscript{6}Newman, \textit{Wagner as Man and Artist}, p. 364.

\textsuperscript{7}Mann, "Sufferings and Greatness," p. 320.

\textsuperscript{8}Donald Jay Grout, \textit{A History of Western Music} (New York, 1960), p. 564.
from early internationalism to supranationalism. Peter Viereck, a political scientist who has made a study of the metapolitical backgrounds of German National Socialism, would have Wagner's political involvement motivated by "personal subjectivity" and "lust for domination." On the other hand, Thomas Mann was inclined to view Wagner's political participation with a more kindly eye:

All his life long, Richard Wagner dreamed of an ideal public for his art, in the sense of a classless society, founded on love, freed from luxury and the curse of gold; thus as a politician he was much more of a Socialist, a believer in a cultural utopia, than he was a patriot in the sense of the all-powerful State. His heart was for the poor against the rich.

Nevertheless, there is some truth in Peter Viereck's analysis of Wagner's preoccupation with political power, for the "cultural utopia" that Wagner envisioned was a totally Wagnerian one with none other than himself at its head.

Wagner's earliest political viewpoint was one of democratic internationalism. From his seventeenth year to his thirtieth, he raised a strong voice against the vainglory of nationalism. In 1834 appeared Wagner's first published essay in which he predicted with approbation the advent of a master who would raise art above petty nationalism and write in a universal style. This view, at least in part, may perhaps be attributed to the influence of Goethe, who was an internationalist.

Wagner took up residence in Paris in 1839 in search of a more international atmosphere than that to be found in Germany. Wagner's thought was influenced during his Paris period by the socialistic philosophies of Hegel and his disciple, Feuerbach. He also absorbed what the Germans contemptibly called "French Ideas," such as rationalism and "atomistic liberalism," which placed highest value upon the individual. Wagner was fond of calling himself an "anti-mystic materialist."\(^{11}\)

As previously noted, Wagner's sojourn of two and a half years in Paris resulted in poverty and bitter disillusionment. When he returned to Germany in 1842, he left his internationalist ideals behind and replaced them with those of nationalism. More important, however, the first seeds of his later supranationalism were sown as he began to identify with the German folk-soul and to glorify the German spirit. In 1845, he began work on Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, which was, years later, to become the most popular musical symbol of Nazi Germany. Wagner sounded a warning against the corrupting influence of the "welsch," a term he used to mean the Latin and French world;\(^{12}\) and Hans Sachs, folk poet of the Meistersinger, was the embodiment of the folk-soul and served as Wagner's spokesman.

\(^{11}\) Vierbeck, Metapolitics, p. 94.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 98.
With the coming of the Revolution of 1848, Wagner felt that his dreams for the unification of the German state and the abolition of class distinctions and property were imminent. After the defeat of the uprising, the prevailing attitude in Germany was one of despair. Schopenhauer's concept of an inscrutable, indifferent Will against which men's individual efforts to shape their destinies is futile became for many of the revolutionists an accurate description of the world. In Switzerland, Wagner fell under the personal spell of Schopenhauer, to whom he was introduced by the poet Georg Herwegh. Wagner abandoned his former revolutionary stand and re-defined his position in terms of the Folk as a more basic objectivation of the Schopenhauerian will:

The Volk are those who deal instinctively . . . . Revolution is the movement of the mass toward acquisition and employment of the force hitherto in the hands of the unit. The mass attains to the same force as the individual, and only on this standpoint is freedom possible.13

Nineteenth Century Romanticism had a firm alliance with music, and Schopenhauer, whose philosophy is a striking expression of the romantic period, considered music to be the highest of the arts. The function of art, and especially music, since it most nearly approaches pure emotion or the essences of things, is to elevate the mind by freeing knowledge from its servitude to the Will. This is summarized thus by

13 Ibid., p. 105.
Will Durant: "A work of art is successful . . . in proportion as it suggests the Platonic Idea, or universal, of the group to which the represented object belongs."\(^{14}\)

Schopenhauer's philosophy revolves around his definition of Kant's *Ding an sich* (thing in itself) as the Will:

The will was the ultimate, irreducible, primeval principle of being, the source of all phenomena, the begetter present and active in every single one of them, the impelling force producing the whole visible world and all of life—for it was the will to live.\(^{15}\)

Schopenhauer's thought leads inevitably to pessimism:

Will as the opposite of passive satisfaction, is naturally a fundamental unhappiness, it is unrest, a striving for something—it is want, craving, avidity, demand, suffering; and a world of will can be nothing but a world of suffering.\(^{16}\)

This concept of an inborn, life-impelling Will that carries with it unavoidable suffering is essentially dramatic, because it encompasses the dilemma of mankind. As an artist, Wagner was no doubt aware of the aesthetic potential in the Schopenhauerean conflict, which he exploited fully in *Tristan und Isolde*, that arch-romantic work in which the hero and heroine find themselves impelled by the blind magnetism of passion (Will) and seek peace and consummation in death, or transcendence of life.


\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 381.
Schopenhauer had great aesthetic significance for Wagner, but in no less degree his importance for the composer was personal:

His acquaintance with the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer was the great event in Wagner's life. No earlier intellectual contact, such as that with Feuerbach, approaches it in personal and historical significance. It meant to him the deepest consolation, the highest self-confirmation; it meant release of mind and spirit, it was utterly and entirely the right thing. There is no doubt that it freed his music from bondage and gave it courage to be itself.17

When Wagner discovered Schopenhauer, the last remnant of his earlier atomistic, or individualistic, philosophy crumbled, and in its place came Schopenhauer's World-Will in the guise of the Folk-Will. Accordingly, the national organic unity could no longer function through individual politics. A new solution was called for, and Wagner's answer lay in "three supernatural concepts: the mystic life force of dynamism; the Führer concept; the purification of the race-soul."18

Adolf Hitler once stated, "Whoever wants to understand National Socialist Germany must know Wagner."19 Apparently Wagner's politico-social concepts were cherished principles in the Third Reich eighty years after they were formulated by the musician.

18Viereck, Metapolitics, p. 105.
19Ibid., p. 126.
Friedrich Nietzsche's superman also fit in very well with Wagner's new ideas. A leader, the product of exclusive breeding, who, by virtue of his superiority would exist on a plane beyond good and evil--this figure corresponded closely to Wagner's "Führer." Siegfried, hero of the Ring cycle, strikingly possesses these very attributes. In "The Case of Wagner," Nietzsche discusses this character:

"Whence arises all the evil in this world?" Wagner asked himself. From "old contracts": he replied, as all revolutionary idealists have done. In plain English: from customs, laws, morals, institutions, from all those things upon which the ancient world and ancient society rests. "How can one get rid of society?" Only by declaring war against "contracts" (traditions, morality). **This Siegfried does.** He starts early at the game, very early: his origin itself is already a declaration of war against morality—he is the result of adultery, of incest . . . . Not the saga, but Wagner himself is the inventor of this radical feature; in this matter he corrected the saga . . . . Siegfried flings all tradition, all respect, all fear to the winds. Whatever displeases him he strikes down. He tilts irreverently at old godheads. His principle undertaking, however, is to emancipate woman--"to deliver Brunnhilda." . . . Siegfried and Brunnhilda; the sacrament of free love; the dawn of the golden age; the twilight of the gods of old morality--**evil is got rid of.**

This article, written after Nietzsche's split with Wagner, is hostile in tone; nevertheless, Nietzsche once was enraptured by the character of Siegfried and a devoted admirer of Wagner.

Siegfried, in Germany, stands for anarchy and social revolution, traditionally concepts of intellectual origin and appeal. On the other hand, he is also a mythological

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Nordic sun-god and a clown, largely emotional in appeal and having roots in Folk myth. Mann was struck by Wagner's dualistic mingling of the intellectual and the emotional:

"Indeed, Wagner's unique fascination rests on the fact that his genius is an entirely unexampled mixture of the greatest modernity and intellectuality with elements of a mystic, primitive folkishness."\(^{21}\)

The *Ring* cycle is perhaps most Nietzschean in its underlying philosophy, and *Tristan und Isolde* is basically Schopenhauerean in concept, although elements of both men's philosophies may be found in each of these works. Nietzsche was perhaps a more intellectual influence, and Schopenhauer, more emotional.

The Second Reich brought political and economic prosperity, but the predominant romanticist yearning for spiritual fulfillment was left unsatisfied. Thus the establishment of the first Wagner society, which coincided with the foundation of the empire at the beginning of the 1870's, came at an opportune time. Bayreuth became something of a national shrine where the romantic spirit could exult in "Sacred German Art,"\(^{22}\) and Wagnerism was publicly asserted as the official German


ideology, although Wagner and Bismarck personally entertained little affection for one another. Wagner's music provided the appeal that could make Bismarck's dream of empire acceptable to all Germans, and the two unintentionally allied their respective energies to mutual advantage:

The works of Wagner were installed as a national concern, as an official apanage of the empire; and they have remained more or less bound up with the red, white and black—however little they have to do in their deeper essence and the quality of their Germanness with all or any empires based on power and war.23

If Wagnerism was essentially foreign to the bureaucratic government of Bismarck, it was totally integral to that of Adolf Hitler. Hitler exalted not the state, as Bismarck had done, but the Folk, a theme long familiar to the romantic Wagnerites.

Hitler himself was a Wagnerite of the first order. Even as a child he was roused to a state of excessive excitement by Wagner's music. Among Hitler's favorite literary works were listed none other than the political writings of Richard Wagner. As pointed out by Peter Viereck, the means or ideas which Hitler used to win the masses and rise to his position of power were taken from these writings:

These ideas are: Pan-German nationalism; vague promises of economic socialism (that "true" anti-Marxist brand); fanatic anti-Semitism, both economic and racist; revolt against legalism; revolt against reason, especially against "alien" intellectualism; the

Führer principle; yearning for the organic Volk state without class distinctions; hatred of free speech and parliamentary democracy and of the international bankers supposed to control democracy; misty primitivism of the Siegfried and Nibelungen sagas.\textsuperscript{24}

Such ideas were not original with Wagner, but he was the first man ever to weld all the "contradictory doctrines . . . into one single program of irresistible demagogic appeal to the mass man."\textsuperscript{25} Only Hitler was needed to activate them politically, to make them policies rather than artistic theories.

Although Wagner prescribed the formula for achieving the goals of National Socialism, he never advocated violent and terroristic means of implementing that formula. For example, the Führer that Wagner conceived "was often described . . . as a saintlike, almost priggish creature, with no more than a Chocolate Soldier reign of terror."\textsuperscript{26} Perhaps the discrepancy between Wagner's theory and Hitler's reality is evidence of the decadence which Wagner has so frequently been accused of perpetrating upon the world.

\textsuperscript{24} Viereck, Metapolitics, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 131.
CHAPTER III

BUDDENBROOKS

The influence of Wagner is obvious in Thomas Mann's first published novel, Buddenbrooks (1901), an account of the decline of a Hanseatic burgher family. Much of the material of the book is autobiographical; Mann's own family, like that of the Buddenbrooks, was a family of prominent grain merchants in Lübeck. The story traces the Buddenbrook family through four generations, from a position of solidarity and leadership in business and civic affairs to the final extinction of the Buddenbrook line. With each succeeding generation there are evidences of increased erosion of the will and strength that created and sustained the enviable position of the family.

Thomas Buddenbrook, who in outward appearance reaches the highest degree of refinement in his person and manner, inwardly wages an unequal battle with an innate tendency to dissolution. His brother, Christian, has not even sufficient will to resist this tendency and allows himself to be ruled by a love of the arts and a propensity toward dilettantism, disease and death.

The decline of the Buddenbrooks is also furthered by the bringing in of outsiders: Tony Buddenbrook's two
husbands avail themselves of her dowry and behave as scoundrels; Gerda, Thomas' wife, is possessed of qualities foreign to the Buddenbrooks; and Thomas' decision to take a partner proves to be debilitating to the firm.

The last of the Buddenbrooks is little Hanno, the son of Thomas and Gerda. Even from his birth he is threatened by death. He has none of the qualities of his grandfather for whom he is named, and it is clear that he has not the ability or the will to carry on the family tradition. When Hanno dies in adolescence of typhoid fever, the Buddenbrook name is extinguished.

_Buddenbrooks_ elaborates the characteristic decadence which precipitated the downfall of the family. The first elements of degeneration are seen early in the novel and increase in frequency and significance as the final termination of the firm and line draw nearer. Among numerous indications of encroaching dissolution some of the more pertinent are Christian Buddenbrook's chronic psychological illnesses; an increasing number of family deaths and preoccupation with death; Thomas' marriage to Gerda, a musician who shares none of the Buddenbrook interests or values; and the birth of little Hanno, a shy, delicate child inclined toward bad health, nightmares, and music.

The inclusion of music in this array of debilities definitely points to Mann's preoccupation with art and artists
other than writers, and especially to some of his early attitudes and ideas about Wagner. Friedrich Nietzsche, among others, has written extensive condemnations of Wagner's music as decadent. This charge is largely based upon Wagner's predilection for disease and death in his later operas.

Mann, too, was aware of the effect of decadence and sought to produce a similar effect in *Buddenbrooks* by contrasting the vitality of the Buddenbrook forebears with the inclination toward disease and death as seen in the later members of the family. Although the thematic content of a powerful family's decline might call to mind Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*--The Twilight of the Gods--which relates the end of the reign of Wotan and the other gods, there are deeper correlations between *Buddenbrooks* and Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Tristan und Isolde*.

Throughout the novel, Christian, who is weak-willed and sensuously indulgent, continually complains of various ailments, particularly that the nerves are too short "on the left side, the side where the heart is."\(^1\) His complaints are not physical in origin but stem, rather, from moral and spiritual disintegration. Christian, even in his name, suggests a parallel with Amfortas, the head Knight of the Holy Grail in *Parsifal*, who sustains an incurable spiritual wound. Amfortas received his wound when he went to the magic garden to

confront Klingsor, the evil magician. He fell under Klingsor's spell and succumbed to the charms of a woman of extraordinary beauty. As he lay in her embrace, his sacred spear, the same that pierced the side of Christ, was snatched by Klingsor, who used it to inflict a deadly wound in Amfortas' side. Each time that Amfortas must unveil the Grail, the wound in his side is freshly renewed with all its sinful implications. Correspondingly, each time that Christian attempts to assume the role expected of him as a Buddenbrook, his suffering is intensified to such a degree that he cannot continue. For example, Christian cannot spiritually withstand the routine dullness of working in the family firm. He can endure life only when he is free of responsibility and can continue the more pleasurable, though dissolute, existence of attending the theater, telling amusing stories at the local men's club, and lying with various mistresses. His bent is artistic rather than practical, and it is exactly in his indulgence of this inclination that his decadence and suffering lie. Like Amfortas, Christian must endure pain as the price of having yielded to temptation.

Thomas Buddenbrook, the central figure and scion of the family, while he makes great effort to preserve an outward appearance of poise and fitness, is inwardly consumed by nervousness and debility of will. The strain of conducting the family business and maintaining the Buddenbrook standard
demands more energy than he has. At the end of his life he is a beautifully groomed shell of a man. Even at the age of forty he is already worn out and is preoccupied with thoughts of death. When he looks at his young son, Hanno, he realizes that the Buddenbrook tradition, the thing to which he has devoted his energies, is at an end. His sense of futility is overwhelming:

Yet Thomas, ever more convinced by his reflective consciousness that the sense of futility which has taken possession of him is but the voice of inescapable catastrophe, seeks to employ all his moral resources in support of the Will, the will to be a Buddenbrook. On one occasion he even tests his moral courage and tries to assert his freedom with all the perverse logic of doom by entering, for the good of the firm, into a dubious business contract from which his moral character shrinks. Of course he is defeated. For no willful blindness can obscure a sight once seen by the reflective eye, and no maneuver of perversity heal the damaged integrity of the will.²

One day, almost by accident, Thomas Buddenbrook picks up the second volume of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*. The ideas on death that he finds in this volume are a metaphysical revelation to him. The oppression that he had experienced as a result of his premonition of death is lifted, and he feels "unaccountably expanded."³ The burden of his suffering is temporarily relieved, and he can say to himself:

Where shall I be when I am dead? Ah, it is so brilliantly clear, so overwhelmingly simple! I shall be


³Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, p. 511.
In all those who have ever, do ever, or ever shall say "I"—especially, however, in all those who say it most fully, potently, and gladly!  

Thomas' intentions to read further in the book are neglected, however, and soon afterward he collapses in the street and dies. Ostensibly, the cause of death is a bad tooth; in fact, Thomas Buddenbrook's will, his capacity for life, is at an end.

The comfort that Thomas receives from his brief encounter with Schopenhauer is based upon the anticipation of self, the "I" after death. This interpretation of Schopenhauer by Thomas Buddenbrook is obviously erroneous and subjective. Erich Heller points out that Schopenhauer's plea was "to renounce for good all 'I-saying' and seek that state of purest contemplation where the willing self is at last abandoned in saintly nothingness."  

Thomas Buddenbrook's yearning for death is much the same as that introduced by Wagner in Tristan und Isolde, which was inspired by Schopenhauer. In Tristan, the two lovers, unable to pursue their love in life, long for the night of death in which their love may be consummated. Clearly, neither Thomas Buddenbrook's nor Wagner's interpretation of Schopenhauer's philosophy is the metaphysical pessimism intended in The World as Will and Idea, for there is no real renunciation of

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4 Ibid., p. 513.
5 Heller, Thomas Mann, p. 60.
self in either Wagner or Mann in these works. Schopenhauer was, rather, a point of departure for both Mann and Wagner. Erich Heller attributes this philosophical aberration in Mann to the influence of Nietzsche, although Mann himself claimed only Schopenhauer and Wagner as influences in the writing of *Buddenbrooks*. It is possible, however, that this particular application of philosophy was due to Mann's adaptation of the "Wagnerian twist":

Of course, this strange and highly significant derailment of Schopenhauer's train of thought was anticipated by Wagner himself when he wrote his *Tristan* music to a text inspired by the Philosopher's metaphysical pessimism. The letter he wrote on the subject (December 1, 1858) is one of the most revealing jokes in the history of ideas. For in it he reports that, after reading once more "friend Schopenhauer's magnum opus" he felt moved "to extend and, in some details, even to correct it." And the extension and correction consist in nothing less than the discovery that there exists "a way of salvation leading to the perfect appeasement of the Will," a way which is much simpler and more direct than Schopenhauer's ascetic and strenuous road of renunciation. This salvation lies in love, not however, an "abstract love" but a love which "has its roots in sex." . . . The letter is written in Venice, where he /Wagner/ composes Isolde's *Liebestod*, and is addressed to Mathilde Wesendonck. Nevertheless, the naïveté with which he calls "a correction of some details" what is in fact the complete reversal of Schopenhauer's thought is disarming indeed. And yet his *Tristan* superbly succeeds in artistically realizing this intellectual slight of hand.7

Gerda Buddenbrook, Thomas' wife, is the complete antithesis of the bourgeois Buddenbrooks. She is given to

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headaches, is exotic, remote, and, most important, musical. Once again, Tristan is the Wagnerian work most associated with Gerda. Often in Mann's works, illicit love is associated with music. Gerda's capacity for passion is wholly confined to her interest in music—an area of which Thomas is completely ignorant. Gerda seeks spiritual and sensual rapport in the person of a certain Lieutenant von Throta, who shares her passion for music. Love, passion, and music are combined in a realm from which Gerda's husband is excluded as Isolde's husband, King Marke, is excluded from the death-bond between Tristan and Isolde.

Gerda's favorite music is, appropriately, that of Wagner. The sinister implications of this choice are made clear when Gerda lays out the music for Tristan on the music rack of her accompanist, Herr Pfühl. He protests her selection violently:

I cannot play that, my dear lady! . . . That is not music—believe me! . . . This is chaos! This is demagogy, insanity, madness! It is a perfumed fog, shot through with lightning! It is the end of all honesty in art.

The accompanist's reaction to Wagner is representative of the alarm of older, more conservative musicians, many of whom strongly mistrusted the composer's innovations and general mood of abandonment. Herr Pfühl also symbolizes the conservatism of the older Buddenbrooks. They rejected the new, the exotic, the artistic, innately sensing that these

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8 Mann, Buddenbrooks, p. 392.
elements comprised a threat to the solidarity of their bourgeois traditions. It is significant, however, that under Gerda's influence, Herr Pfühl ultimately accepts Wagner's music in spite of his initial objections.

Herr Pfühl, conscious of the daemonic elements of Wagner's music, is fearful for the child, Hanno, who sits raptly, absorbing the music: "Look, the child sits there listening—would you then utterly corrupt his soul?" 9

Herr Pfühl's warning is not without basis. Already Hanno exhibits qualities that present a most serious threat to Buddenbrook values. He is inclined toward ill health, day-dreaming, nightmares, and emotional excess. He has no interest in the business or his lessons. Rather, he prefers to spend his time enacting miniature music-dramas in his toy theatre and improvising upon his harmonium. The day before Hanno falls ill of typhus he sits at the piano and improvises a melody that is Wagnerian in the extreme:

Now the music seemed to rouse itself to new and gigantic efforts: wild runs in octaves followed, sounding like shrieks; an irresistible mounting, a chromatic upward struggle, a wild relentless longing, abruptly broken by startling, arresting pianissimi which gave a sensation as if the ground were disappearing from beneath one's feet, or like a sudden abandonment and sinking into a gulf of desire. Once, far off and softly warning, sounded the first chords of the imploring prayer; but the flood of rising cacophonies overwhelmed them with their rolling, streaming, clinging, sinking, and struggling up again, as they fought on toward the end that must come, must come at this very moment, at the height of this

9 Ibid., p. 393.
fearful climax—for the pressure of longing had become intolerable. And it came; it could no longer be kept back—those spasms of yearning could not be prolonged. ... walls of flame sank down. The resolution, the redemption, the complete fulfilment—a chorus of jubilation burst forth, and everything resolved itself in a harmony—and the harmony, in sweet ritardando, at once sank into another. It was the motif, the first motif! ... There was a quality of the perverse in the insatiability with which it [the melody] was produced and revelled in: there was a sort of cynical despair; there was a longing for joy, a yielding to desire; in the way the last drop of sweetness was, as it were, extracted from the melody, till exhaustion, disgust, and satiety supervened.10

The description of Hanno's Wagnerian invention, of which the above is only a fragment, is a musical recapitulation of Hanno's character, and, in the final harmony, the "sweet ritardando," his longing for death is intimated. Such excess of emotion and desire, untempered and unrestrained, are, as Mann describes it, "perverse," and more in the direction of death rather than life. With each successive generation, the Buddenbrook males have shown an increased refinement and sophistication and a proportionate decrease in sturdy healthiness, both physical and spiritual. The latent artistic and romantic impulses that Thomas Buddenbrook strove so hard to suppress are fully developed in Hanno, and his will offers no resistance when death beckons:

When the fever is at its height, life calls to the patient: calls out to him as he wanders in his distant dream, and summons him in no uncertain voice. The harsh, imperious call reaches the spirit on that remote path that leads into the shadows, the coolness and peace.

10 Ibid., pp. 587-589.
He hears the call of life, the clear, fresh mocking summons to return to that distant scene which he had already left so far behind him, and already forgotten. And there may well up in him something like a feeling of shame for a neglected duty; a sense of renewed energy, courage, and hope; he may recognize a bond existing still between him and that stirring, colorful, callous existence which he thought he had left so far behind him. Then, however far he may have wandered on his distant path, he will turn back—and live. But if he shudders when he hears life's voice, if the memory of that vanished scene and the sound of that lusty summons make him shake his head, make him put out his hand to ward off as he flies forward in the way of escape that has opened to him—then it is clear that the patient will die.\textsuperscript{11}

As Tristan and Isolde find fulfillment only in death, so Hanno only achieves peace by relinquishing life, which can only be a period of torment for one so unsuited to its harsh demands.

In addition to philosophical and thematic elements, Mann also borrowed from Wagner certain structural devices. Hanns Fischer notes:

\begin{quote}
Thomas Mann's highly individual, unmistakable diction is rooted in the love of ornamentation, figurative expression, in the joy of characterization and verbal luxuriance: in a word, in the element of form, its closest parallel in the harmonic mobility of musical structure. Economy of expression is not his concern: his way is that of the musical theme which gains in content and significance only through repetition, displacement, consistent development. It is not the sound and fragrance of his prose that invite the comparison with music, but its harmonic interplay, its wealth of color, rather than the lyrical quality itself.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

The point is well taken that the musical devices of "repetition, displacement," and "consistent development" were used by Mann to enhance and enrich the significance of the thematic content. This effect is primarily achieved through the employment of a literary version of the leitmotif. This device as used in *Buddenbrooks* is rudimentary and mechanical when compared to its expanded function in later works; it is likewise expanded in the later works of Wagner. In *Buddenbrooks* the leitmotif serves mainly as a "descriptive tag"\(^\text{13}\) by which the character may be identified, just as Wagner first made the device a simple musical label. Ideally, Mann's motifs are brief and have ironic or descriptive intent, and "the associations must be emotionally charged."\(^\text{14}\) If the word or phrase is successful and characteristic, it may, when repeated, call up a wealth of associations and psychological implications. Although Mann's later works, such as *The Magic Mountain*, are more sophisticated in this respect, the leitmotifs of *Buddenbrooks* are effective. The bluish circles under Gerda's eyes, Grünlich's gold whiskers, Sesemi Weichbrodt's exhortation to "be happy you good cheeild" upon every possible occasion—all of these and many others are effectively characteristic and gain in significance and irony with each repetition. There is one particularly touching motif—"to


sit on the stones"—which has some of the deeper associative value of motifs in later works. The phrase is originated with Tony Buddenbrook's first love, a poor commoner who has to "sit on the stones" while she visits with her elite circle of friends. Throughout her life, Tony uses the phrase, as she did with her lover, to mean being "neglected and lonely." As it is repeated, or displaced, in other contexts and situations, the whole association of Tony's past life is recalled.15

The influence of Wagner's music upon Mann is reflected in his adaptation of the leitmotif as well as in his choice and treatment of thematic content.

15 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
CHAPTER IV

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Most critics and readers of Thomas Mann consider The Magic Mountain his masterpiece. It was written in the twenties when Mann was reaching the height of his powers as a novelist. As might be expected, the book reflects many of Mann's early attitudes and techniques as well as many of those of his later works. It is large in length, scope, and magnitude as its imposing name suggests and difficult to classify. In his excellent study, Hermann Weigand has called The Magic Mountain a pedagogical novel; a Bildungsroman like Goethe's Wilhelm Meister or Keller’s Grüner Heinrich; a psychological novel; a symbolic novel; and, superficially, a naturalistic novel.\(^1\)

And yet, in spite of such complexity and an extremely large category of characters, The Magic Mountain focuses upon a single character, Hans Castorp. As a young man ready to begin life, he goes to a tuberculosis sanatorium high in the Alps at Davos Platz for a three-weeks' visit with his cousin, Joachim Ziemmsen, before beginning a career as a marine engineer. The atmosphere of disease at the sanatorium is so

insidious that Hans, through the power of suggestion, contracts a severe cold, which is soon diagnosed as a slight case of tuberculosis. A cure is prescribed by Hofrat Behrens, the manager of the sanatorium, and Hans extends his three-weeks' visit into a stay of seven years. At the end of that time, he descends the mountain to join the German effort of World War I.

In the seven years that Hans remains on the mountain, he is involved in the process of examining and evaluating his spiritual self. He is influenced by a number of people, chief among whom are his cousin, Joachim, who is a professional soldier; Herr Settembrini, who upholds the principles of Humanism and the Enlightenment; and Herr Naphta, a Jesuit of Jewish origin who believes in the principles of Bolshevism and the Inquisition as being favorable to the salvation of man's soul. There are also Clavdia Chauchat, a mysterious tubercular Russian noblewoman with slanting eyes, and Mynheer Peeperkorn, her elderly companion. Clavdia, with whom Hans is in love, is generally associated with Asia, and Peeperkorn is the embodiment of a dynamic life force. Hans entertains a certain fascination with death and a predisposition toward disease, sensual love, and freedom from responsibility. These predilections are associated with the East, with Clavdia, and with Naphta. On the opposite side of health, reason, and duty are Settembrini and Joachim Ziemmsen. Hans does not give
himself over to either side, but finds his own middle way. The climax of the novel comes in Hans' episode in the snow. Close to death, he has a dream which causes him to reject the extreme positions of both Settembrini and Naphta, and affirm love (in the spiritual sense) as the abiding principle of life. Hans' departure from Davos to return to the flatland and take part in a devastating war leaves open the question whether love or death is the primary law. One may choose to hope, however, that love will eventually emerge from the cataclysm of war and death.

The most obvious Wagnerian parallel to the general fable of The Magic Mountain is that of Tannhäuser. This opera tells the story of a young minstrel knight, Tannhäuser, who has been lured by Venus to the interior grottoes of her magic mountain, the Venusberg. As the opera begins, Tannhäuser is at the side of Venus, who demands that he sing a song in the praise of love. He begins, then lapses into a plea that he be allowed to return to his home. In order to do so, he must reject the immortality given him by Venus. Tannhäuser promises to remain Venus' champion, but declares that he must have his freedom. Venus, angry at having been rejected, sends him away saying, "Peace you will never find in the world! For salvation you must look to me." Tannhäuser replies that his hope is not in her but in the Virgin Mary.

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Back in his own country, Tannhäuser is soon discovered by his friends and reunited with his former love, Elisabeth. A song contest is organized; the subject is "the praise of love." Tannhäuser's opponent Wolfram sings a discreet song of devotion to Elisabeth, but Tannhäuser can only sing his passionate "Hymn to Venus," which is considered a great affront to Elisabeth. He is threatened with drawn swords, but Elisabeth intercedes for him; and, as he shows evident remorse, he is sent to Rome to seek absolution from the Pope. During his absence, Elisabeth remains faithful. One day Tannhäuser is seen by Wolfram, and Tannhäuser asks for the way to the Venusberg, for the Pope has said:

If you have felt this evil lust,
If you have lain on Venus' breast,—
As on this staff no leaf shall grow,
Salvation you may never know.3

Wolfram tells Tannhäuser not to despair, that he has an angel to plead for him in heaven. Elisabeth has died, and her body rests on an open bier. Tannhäuser prays for her intercession, and, as he does so, green leaves sprout upon his staff. His salvation is assured through Elisabeth's love.

Love in The Magic Mountain is represented in two aspects. During the first half of the book, love is associated with Clavdia Chauchat, who corresponds to Venus. Hans Castorp, of course, is Mann's Tannhäuser, and the mountain retreat of

3Ibid., p. 105.
Davos may be compared to the Venusberg. Hans’ attraction to Clavdia is basically physical, and since her body is diseased, Hans’ interest in her spiritually draws him toward death. Clavdia, with her slanted eyes, is also representative of Asiatic thought and culture—primal, ancient, and antipathetic to the more robust affirmation of life in Western Humanism. Clavdia thus represents a threat to Hans’ development in the direction of life and health, which is apparently his way to salvation; she tempts him toward abandonment and moral dissolution. By the standards of Hans’ bourgeois background, Clavdia is more than “phlegmatic,” as she is often described; she is evil and forbidden and, therefore, more attractive.

The climax of Hans’ passion takes place on the night of the mardi gras in the chapter, “Walpurgis-Night.” Clavdia tells Hans that morality consists in giving oneself over to sin, to danger, rather than in protecting oneself from evil. Clavdia tells Hans that his salvation lies in the direction that she has drawn him. Her advice is remarkably similar to that given by Venus to Tannhäuser. In both works, the lovers part after these corresponding scenes.

The connotations of love in the latter part of the book are different from those associated with Clavdia. Love stands in opposition to death. After Hans’ vision in the chapter entitled “Snow,” he comes to this conclusion:

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4 Henry Hatfield, Thomas Mann (New York, 1951), pp. 75-76.
Reason stands simple before him \( \sqrt{\text{death}} \), for reason is only virtue, while death is release, immensity, abandon, desire. Desire says my dream. Lust, not love. Death and love—no, I cannot make a poem of them, they don't go together. Love stands opposed to death. It is love, not reason that is stronger than death. Only love, not reason, gives sweet thoughts. And from love and sweetness alone can form come: form and civilization, friendly, enlightened, beautiful human intercourse...

With this revelation, love takes on a new, spiritual aspect for Hans.

As The Magic Mountain ends with Hans Castorp on the field of battle, at last descended from his Venusberg, the reader may choose to be optimistic that Hans' dream of love is his redemption just as Tannhäuser's salvation is accomplished through the pure love of Elisabeth. In a larger sense, the same hope exists for Germany and all of Europe when death and war are at last over:

Moments there were, when out of death, and the rebellion of the flesh, there came to thee, as thou tookest stock of thyself, a dream of love. Out of this universal feast of death, out of this extremity of fever, kindling the rain-washed evening sky to a fiery glow, may it be that Love one day shall mount?

The "Walpurgis-Night" scene, which takes place on the night of the Shrove Tuesday carnival, is, as previously stated, the culmination of the silent tension that has mounted between Hans and Clavdia. Yielding to the atmosphere

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6 Ibid., p. 900.
of abandonment produced by the carnival, Hans engages in a conversation with Clavdia in which he declares the body, death, and love to be the same thing. He confesses his love to Clavdia, and in doing so, praises her physical attractions, wishing no more than to die in her embrace. In this passage, as in the Liebestod of Tristan und Isolde, love and death are inseparably bound in a single desire. This section also has some of the same sense of building, of mounting passion, and of final release of the Liebestod. This effect is created partially because the conversation is conducted in French and partially because of the voluptuous nature of the conversation.

As Hans Castorp's intellectual and psychic development progress, he is more and more drawn to music. He has five favorite selections among the records at the sanatorium, each having a symbolic significance for him. The first four, Aida, Carmen, Faust, and the prelude to L'Après-Midi d'un Faune, have to do with the honor-abandonment theme, which runs throughout the novel, but the fifth record, Schubert's The Linden Tree, stands for death. Although there is no work by Wagner listed among Hans' favorites, The Linden Tree is in the spirit of Wagner. Joseph Gerard Brennan contends that Wagner is the composer hinted at in the closing paragraph of the chapter, "Fulness of Harmony": 7 "One need have no more genius, only

much more talent, than the author of the 'Lindenbaum,' to be such an artist of soul-enchantment as should give to the song a giant volume by which it should subjugate the world." 8

Indeed, the spirit of Wagner is reflected in many areas of *The Magic Mountain* even though the composer is not explicitly called by name. In the chapter "Politically Suspect," Herr Settembrini launches an invective against music that is reminiscent of Nietzsche's execrations against the music of Wagner:

Music? It is the half-articulate art, the dubious, the irresponsible, the insensible. Perhaps you will object that she can be clear when she likes. But so can nature, so can a brook—what good is that to us? That is not true clarity, it is a dreamy, inexpressive, irresponsible clarity, without consequences and therefore dangerous, because it betrays one into soft complacence.—Let music play her loftiest role, she will thereby but kindle the emotions, whereas what concerns us is to awaken the reason. Music is to all appearance movement itself—yet for all that I suspect her of quietism. Let me state my point by the method of exaggeration; my aversion from music rests on political grounds. 9

The fears that Wagner's music aroused in Nietzsche were the same that Mann's Settembrini entertained toward music in general. Settembrini reverences the word, as did Nietzsche, as the way of reason; his fear of music originates in its inarticulate emotionalism. Nietzsche saw in the popular capitulation to Wagner a threat to the intellectual progress of Germany, and he denounced this capitulation as "the German

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hostility to Enlightenment." Settembrini, the Italian ambassador of enlightenment, is in concurrence with this view. In Hans, Settembrini sees the same weakness that is generally characteristic of the German people; therefore, his warning against music is not only a personal one for Hans Castorp, but a warning to the whole of Germany.

Perhaps the most pertinent substantiation of Settembrini's words is a reflection upon the nature of music made by Wagner himself:

Music, no matter how infinitely it soar, always remains mere feeling. It presents itself in company with moral activity, but not as that activity itself. It can range feelings and moods alongside of one another, but it cannot evolve one mood as succeeding another by necessity:—It lacks moral will. Although Wagner's observation cast suspicion upon the moral value of music, it is necessary to note that Wagner was referring to absolute music, that is, to "music lacking the interpretive support of words." Settembrini, however, does not make an exception of programmatic music (music connected with the idea and the word) in his indictment, and one has the feeling that he might fear the supremacy of emotionalism over intellect when the two reside together.

In "Richard Wagner and the Ring," Mann includes a discussion of Wagner's treatment of the myth as subject matter.

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10 Brennan, Thomas Mann's World, p. 106.
12 Ibid., p. 114.
In constructing the colossal mythos of the Ring cycle, Wagner proved himself an able psychologist. Although others in Europe were producing works of art on an epic scale that dealt with themes of social criticism in the Nineteenth Century, the German spirit was essentially unsocial in character and turned inward to its own mythology as a subject most suitable to art. Mann himself writes:

The only true material is the mythical, the purely human, the unhistorical, timeless primeval poesy of nature and the heart; it is truly the flight from the social and the antidote for all its corruption; from its depth the German spirit creates what is perhaps the loftiest, most compelling art the century has to offer.13

Wagner's sentiments were rooted in the Folk, which is the basis of myth. By choice and treatment of subject matter, Wagner tapped and exploited the depths of the Germanic Folk-soul.

Mann was intrigued by Wagner's frank juxtaposition of myth and psychology. Yet myth is not used overtly in The Magic Mountain, with the possible exception of Hans' vision in the snow in which he sees a Doric temple and two priestesses dismembering a child. Henry Hatfield has interpreted this scene from Greek mythology to mean the following:

The world of high classicism exists simultaneously with the cult of death; beneath civilization lies "Kultur" in Naphta's sense. The "People of the Sun" live with such exquisite humanity and form because they realize the

power of death but do not abdicate before it; they create form because they are aware of the strength of dissolution.\textsuperscript{14}

The Magic Mountain, if not mythical in theme, does nonetheless make certain use of mythical technique. Myth necessarily deals with archetypes rather than personalities; thus Hans Castorp is an "Everyman,\textsuperscript{15}

Settembrini and Naphta are symbolic of Western Humanism and protest against bourgeois ideology respectively, and Clavdia Chauchat is representative of Asian thought. These characters function mythically. The myth, too, is based in infra-rationality, as exemplified by the concept of\textit{hubris} in Greek thought; Hans' preoccupation with death, disease, and mysticism constitutes his odyssey in the sphere of the infra-rational.

The Magic Mountain may well be the most musical in form of all Mann's works. Mann himself describes it thus: "To me, the novel is like a symphony. There are the themes, first presented in simple form. These are the characters. The themes are then woven together and developed contrapuntally in ever-increasing complexity."\textsuperscript{16} The entire work is a "musical" synthesis of themes which Mann describes as a "thought-texture woven of different themes, as a musically

\textsuperscript{14} Hatfield, \textit{Thomas Mann}, pp. 79-80.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 81.

\textsuperscript{16} Brennan, \textit{Thomas Mann's World}, p. 104.
related complex. As the novel progresses, each theme begins to be blended and contrasted with others. The effect produced is remarkably similar to the tapestry-like impression which Wagner's music creates in the intricate weaving of thematic strands.

As noted earlier, Mann made use of the leitmotif early in his writing career; it was in The Magic Mountain, however, that he developed the method into its most complex literary application.

The leitmotif functions first in The Magic Mountain as it did in Buddenbrooks to furnish a characteristic identifying label for the characters. Claudia's "Kirghiz" eyes and Settembrini's checkered pants are examples. The leitmotif also functions more subtly, as it does in Wagner's later works. It is less explicit and more suggestive. Its associations may occur in numerous contexts rather than having a specific object of identification, and its connotations are like echoes of the past. Like Wagner, Mann never forgot anything he had written, and at any given moment could call up all the emotions, thoughts, and associations of a previously introduced theme. One example among many of this type of leitmotif will serve as illustration: Behrens and Hans Castorp are both addicted to cigar smoking, and Behrens' description of his favorite cigar could almost be a sensual

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17 Ibid., p. 103.
description of a woman. Cigar smoking thereby is linked with physical eroticism. Behrens also links the cigar to disease by describing his adverse reaction to a particular brand of cigars, thus associating lust with disease. Hans remarks in one instance that he has great sympathy with men who take large quantities of tobacco with them to help sustain the rigors of a polar expedition. The phrase "polar expedition" reappears as Hans, while listening to a concert, muses that people everywhere and in all kinds of situations make music—"on polar expeditions too, in all probability."18 The suggestion is implicit that music has a drug-like effect similar to that of tobacco for Hans, and the previous associations of sensuality and disease are also recalled. The theme is further extended when Herr Settembrini comes upon Hans' party sitting at a table in a cafe and greets them with the phrase, "Beer, tobacco, and music . . . . Behold the Fatherland!"19 All the former associations are carried over, and the suggestion is further added that the stupefying effect of music and tobacco (and alcohol) on the intellect is a contributing factor to national dissolution. The leitmotif, then, in this expanded function, weaves many lesser themes into the broader theme of moral decay.20

19 Ibid., p. 112.
20 Weigand, Study of Mann's Novel, pp. 93-94.
The leitmotif as it functions in The Magic Mountain recalls Wagner's use of anticipations and suspensions, although these devices in Wagner's music are limited to the chord structure and are not connected with the leitmotif per se. Mann introduces a word or phrase which is "held over" into a later statement, thought, or discussion. In this way, the leitmotif "anticipates" a theme or "suspends" it through later action.

Hermann Weigand has said of The Magic Mountain:

The interpenetration of themes forms so close a web that the whole of the "Zauberberg" tends to be present at every moment of the flow of its narrative. . . . I doubt whether any other book in the world's literature is so perfectly integrated. Certainly, no other novel has ever aspired, in any way comparable to that of the "Zauberberg," to be "all there" at any given moment.

The overall effect of The Magic Mountain is somewhat reminiscent of Wagnerian opera in the intensities and lulls of its dramatic flow. There are lengthy sections of dialectical discourse and passages of static description and humdrum activity which build to peaks of maximum tension. The same is true to some extent of Wagner's works, especially Der Ring des Nibelungen. In this cycle there is a highly complex plot structure, and considerable time is allotted to the development of background and the interrelationships between characters to prepare for the moments of dramatic climax.

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21 Cf. Chapter II, p. 15.
22 Weigand, Study of Mann's Novel, p. 91.
The periods of lull in both of these works are not extraneous, however, but are integrated both thematically and structurally through the leitmotif and careful arrangement.
CHAPTER V

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

The story of Doctor Faustus, published in 1948, brings music into even greater prominence than it had been accorded in previous works of Mann. It is not used merely as accompaniment or symbolically alluded to, but incorporated in the central theme of the book. Music, daemony, and disease are inseparably related. They are more than three allied themes; they are three aspects of a single theme.

Doctor Faustus is the biography of a fictional contemporary German composer, Adrian Leverkuhn. The narrator is Serenus Zeitblom, a scholar who was devoted to Leverkuhn from the days of their boyhood together in Kaisersaschern. Zeitblom's account of Leverkuhn's life, begun in 1945, two years after the composer's death, is interspersed with his voluminous apologies which smack of false modesty and with his comments about Germany, the Third Reich, and the war, which runs concurrent with the novel.

Adrian Leverkuhn's father was a simple, friendly man, whose pleasures included studying eccentricities of nature and reading an old Bible which contained notes by Luther. Adrian's mother was likewise a plain woman with a singularly
attractive manner of speech. Adrian and Serenus learned together as children to sing old German folk songs taught them by an ignorant maid of the household.

Adrian early showed great capacity for scholarship, and it was taken for granted that he would follow an academic career. But when he was in adolescence he began to experiment with composition. At this time he went to live with an uncle, who was a violin-maker; here he had the opportunity to pursue his musical interests and studied with a tutor, Wendell Kretzschmar. Adrian had an original and quick mind, and made remarkable progress. He was also interested in mathematics, a study which he found complementary to musical theory.

When Adrian graduated from the gymnasium, he decided to study religion with the idea of becoming a theologian. In keeping with his Lutheran background, he considered music to be the servant of theology. Zeitblom was concerned by Adrian's generally ironic attitudes at this time; it seemed to him that there was a dangerous, even daemonic, element in the affinity between theology and irrationality. Zeitblom's fear seemed to be strengthened by two of Adrian's professors, Schleppfuss, who maintained that evil was necessary to the existence of good, and Kumpf, who threw rolls at the Devil.

Adrian's old teacher, Kretzschmar, took a position in Leipzig and urged Adrian to join him there to continue his study of music. Adrian hesitated before giving up theology,
but in the end, he went to Leipzig. Upon his arrival in that city, he was led by a porter to what he thought was a restaurant. In reality, it was a house of prostitution. Adrian had always been chaste, and he was terrified by the situation in which he found himself. He made for the piano, played a few chords, and fled—but not before one of the girls, whom he later nicknamed Hetaera Esmeralda, touched his cheek with her bare arm. He later returned to the brothel to see her, but she had gone to Hungary. He followed her to Pressburg. When he found her, she warned him that her body was diseased, but he insisted on having intimate relations with her, thereby choosing to infect himself with syphilis.

In the next several years, Adrian composed extensively and worked on a new theory of atonal music. He made friends with Rüdiger Schildknapp, a translator, and later, in Munich, with Rudi Schwerdtfeger, a violinist. For a time he lived at the home of Frau Rodde and her two daughters, Ines and Clarissa, which was frequently the scene of artistic soirées.

Leverkühn and Schildknapp spent some time in Italy, living in Palestrina and spending the winters in Rome. Here Adrian wrote *Love's Labour's Lost*, a work which, like those previously, was characterized by a parodic style. While in Palestrina, Adrian wrote an account in his diary of a conversation with the Devil, or Shemmael, who told Adrian that he was bound to the world of daemonology and that as his
syphilitic infection invaded his brain he would soar to heights of genius. This alliance with the Devil, however, precluded any human warmth or affection in Adrian's life. From that time on, Adrian's every attempt to love ended in disaster. When he entrusted his best friend, Rudi, to present his proposal of marriage to Marie Godeau, she decided to marry Rudi instead. Rudi, in turn, was shot by his jealous sweetheart, Ines (Rodde) Institore. Adrian's love for his little nephew, Echo, was curtailed by the child's unreasonable, painful death. Adrian had always been cold and inclined toward mockery; the few instances of his affection for others were his attempts to establish contact with other human beings.

After finishing his Lamentation of Doctor Faustus, Adrian called together all of his old friends and acquaintances. He confessed to them his unholy alliance with daemony and told them that his genius was the result of this pact. With the first few chords of his Lamentation, he fell to the floor. He never fully regained his consciousness and was cared for by his mother until his death ten years later in 1940.

There are numerous direct references to Wagner and his music in Doctor Faustus. Adrian Leverkühn, as a composer, stood at the end of a tradition in music, and it is inevitable that his work should be discussed with reference to his musical predecessors. Adrian was basically a twelve-tone
composer, and the nearest parallel to his compositional style is that of Arnold Schönberg, who was the innovator of the twelve-tone system. Wagner, of course, as an arch-romantic composer did not stand within this modern tradition, but there is ground for the argument that he prepared the way for twelve-tone (or atonal) music through his endless chromatics and enharmonic key changes, which succeed one another with such rapidity as to tend toward destruction of any feeling of key. Mann calls Wagner a "bold musical pioneer, who in Tristan stands with one foot already upon a-tonal ground."\(^1\)

Advanced as it was in its day, Wagner's music could certainly not be considered radical when compared to that of Leverkuhn. On evenings when Adrian participated in musical soirees at the Schlaginhaufens', Wagner was frequently played and "respect was paid it, the more readily because there were already newer works which went still further, so that one could reject them, and play off Wagner against them as a conservative."\(^2\)

One of the most significant parallels between Leverkuhn and Wagner, especially for the student of literature, is the opinion of both composers that music and speech essentially

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belong to the same sphere. Mann was attracted by the "literary" quality of Wagner's music:

But he \(\text{Wagner}\) was not only a poet but a musician, and on top of that not one alongside of and outside of the other, but both at once in primitive unity; he was musician and poet and poet as musician, so that his language was forced back by music into a primitive state, while his dramas without music were only half-compositions. 3

The description of the interrelationship between music and the word given by Mann's narrator, Serenus Zeitblom, is remarkably similar:

Music and speech, he \(\text{Adrian}\) insisted, belonged together, they were at bottom one, language was music, music a language; separate, one always appealed to the other, imitated the other, used the other's tools, always the one gave itself to be understood as substitute of the other. 4

Such an alliance of speech and music was understandable, according to Adrian, its justification lying in the "fact that the whole development of music in Germany strove towards the word-tone drama of Wagner and therein found its goal." 5 It is important to note, however, that Adrian's projected work at the time of this remark—an opera based on Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost—was to be in the farcical, parodic style of opera buffa. Such a work would be highly un-Wagnerian in


4 Mann, Doctor Faustus, p. 163.

5 Ibid., p. 164.
the sense that the majority of Wagner's themes involved myth and daemony, although early in his career Wagner did write an opera, *Das Liebesverbot*, based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*.

While Adrian was at work on the *Apocalypsis cum figuris* suite, he sent to Zeitblom a letter which was signed "Perotinus Magnus." Zeitblom explains that the signature, that of a twelfth-century composer, was "a suggestive joke and playful identification full of self-mockery." The incident reminds Zeitblom of a similar joke by Richard Wagner, who, during the composition of *Parsifal*, signed a letter to Nietzsche with the title "Member of the High Consistory" beneath his name.

Zeitblom comments:

For a man who is not an artist the question is intriguing: how serious is the artist in what ought to be, and seems, his most pressing and earnest concern; how seriously does he take himself in it, and how much tired disillusionment, affectation, flippant sense of the ridiculous is at work? If the query were unjustified, how then could that great master of the musical theatre, at work on his most consecrated task, have mocked himself with such a title? Zeitblom's concern is whether that which is serious, ascetic, and consecrated can remain free of the barbarous, profane, and demonic elements inevitably present in the parodic spirit of art itself. The illustration of *Parsifal* is well chosen. The words used by Erich Kahler to describe Leverkühn's basic paradox might aptly be applied to *Parsifal* and the seduction

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of the pure knight Amfortas by Kundry, who is alternately a Circe-like temptress and a devout penitent. Kahler writes, "The Devil resides in God and God in the Devil. Sublimest chastity becomes the easiest prey of the whore." Hetaera Esmeralda, Adrian's prostitute, was the agent of the Devil, just as in Parsifal Kundry acted under Klingsor's evil spell. Actually, Adrian's Devil resided in himself. Although he had previously remained chaste, he was dominated by his inner demon; his union with Esmeralda was essentially a sacramental act of worship of Satan.

The Devil appeared before Adrian in many guises, projections of the demon within himself. He lurked in the figures of Waltpurgis, the servant girl, the dog Kaschperl (a nickname of the Devil), in the two professors of divinity, Kumpf and Schleppfuss, in the porter who guided him to the brothel, and in many others. The most striking manifestation of Satan, however, was his undisguised appearance before Adrian in Palestrina. During their conversation, the Devil took several shapes, ranging from red-haired rowdy to polished music-critic.

In Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen, one of the principal figures of evil is Alberich, the Nibelung dwarf who steals

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the hoard of gold from the Rhinemaidens at the bottom of the Rhine. He has been told that whoever forges the gold into a ring may possess the power to control the world, but only he who forever renounces love can forge the ring. Alberich is extremely ugly, and his suit of the Rhinemaidens has been rejected. Feeling that he has nothing to lose, he renounces love and snatches the gold, which he forges into a ring and a magic tarnhelm (or helmet) that enables him to change his shape at will. Through the magic of the tarnhelm he assumes such shapes as that of a dragon and a toad. The Devil and Alberich both are able to appear in many forms. There is a difference in their capacity for metamorphosis, however: Alberich is able to transform himself through the magic of the tarnhelm, an external medium. On the other hand, the shape of the Devil, since he existed within Adrian, was determined by Leverkühn's own personality. As the Devil told him, "As you see me, so I exist to you."  

The conditions by which Alberich forges the ring and Leverkühn received intellectual power are the same: both must reject love. Adrian was promised by the Devil that the syphilis he had contracted would invade his brain, bringing him illumination and heightened creative powers:

Know, then, we pledge you the success of that which with our help you will accomplish. You will lead the way, you will strike up the march of the future, the

10Mann, Doctor Faustus, p. 242.
lads will swear by your name, who thanks to your madness
will no longer need to be mad.  

There is, of course, a price for Adrian's success, and it is
this: "Love is forbidden you, in so far as it warms. Thy
life shall be cold, therefore thou shalt love no human being." 

According to Bernhard Blume:

The pact with the devil in Doctor Faustus signifies
that aesthetic existence is viewed under the aspect of
guilt. Yet it does not mean that music, regarded in the
Reflections as a gift of God, is now, as Holthusen puts
it, "briefly and crudely put, possessed by the devil."
Rather, it partakes of both realms; music is an instru-
ment which belongs to the higher and lower powers and
therefore is ambiguous; everything depends on the spirit
of the man it serves. 

Blume's qualification that "everything depends on the spirit
of the man [or power] it serves" provides the key to music
not only in its relation to Adrian Leverkühn, but also in its
relation to Mann (himself an ambiguous personality), and its
relation to Germany.

In a speech delivered at the Library of Congress in 1945,
Thomas Mann asserted:

Music is a daemonic realm; it is the most calculated
order and chaotic antireason at once, rich in gestures
of conjuration and incantation; it is the magic of numbers.
simultaneously the art farthest from reality and yet the most passionate, abstract, and mystic.\textsuperscript{14}

In the same speech, Mann also made the statement, "If Faust is to be representative of the German soul, he ought to be musical."\textsuperscript{15} Mann's Doctor Faustus, Adrian Leverkühn, is unquestionably both musical and daemonic, and as such, he is representative of the German soul. It is no accident that Adrian's biography is paralleled by Zeitblom's commentary on Germany, the Third Reich, and its involvement in World War II.

For many years Mann strove to remain apolitical, but as Germany's direction became unmistakably clear, he found that he could not remain aloof. For many years, Mann, though he regarded Nazism as totally abhorrent, did not connect Wagner with the political philosophy of the Third Reich. Rather, he looked upon Wagner's art as springing from "pure and spiritual sources."\textsuperscript{16} In the 1933 essay on Wagner, Mann's attitude toward Wagner's nationalism is clear:

It is thoroughly inadmissible to ascribe to Wagner's nationalistic attitudes and speeches the meaning they would have today. That would be to falsify and misuse them, to besmirch their romantic purity.

The national idea, when Wagner introduced it as a familiar and workable theme into his works--that is to


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 123.

\textsuperscript{16} Mann, "Sufferings and Greatness," p. 346.
say, before it was realized—was in its heroic, historically legitimate epoch. It had its good, living and genuine period; it was poetry and intellect, a future virtue."

As atrocities of the Third Reich mounted, however, the evidence of Nazism's Wagnerian roots became too overwhelming, even for Mann. Peter Viereck had written two articles for Common Sense magazine in November and December of 1939, in which he stated his case against Wagner as a precursor of National Socialism in Germany. Mann, known as an avid admirer of Wagner, was invited to respond. The expected defense of Wagner was not forthcoming, however, and Mann reluctantly replied:

I go a little farther than Peter Viereck. I find an element of Nazism not only in Wagner's questionable literature; I find it also in his work, similarly questionable, though in a loftier sense—albeit I have so loved that work that even today I am deeply stirred whenever a few bars of music from this world impinges upon my ear. The enthusiasm it engenders, the sense of grandeur that so often seizes us in its presence can be compared only to the feelings excited in us by Nature at her noblest, by evening sunshine on mountain peaks, by the turmoil of the sea. Yet this must not make us forget that this work, created and directed "against civilization," against the entire cultura[ sic]/ and society dominant since the Renaissance, emerges from the bourgeois-humanist epoch in the same manner as does Hitlerism. With its Nagalaweia and its alliteration, its mixture of roots-in-the-soil and eyes-toward-the-future, its appeal for a classless society, its mythical-reactionary revolutionism— with all these, it is the exact spiritual forerunner of the "metapolitical" movement today terrorizing the world.18

17 Ibid.
The admiration—the love—for Wagner's music remained, but a reasonable evaluation of Wagnerism in modern times could only bring Mann to an admission that the latent dangers he had long recognized in the dark regions of Wagnerian Romanticism had come to terrible fruition.

Mann has described Wagner's music as "daemonic." This description may aptly apply to the intoxicating, morally enervating effects of Wagner's music and its hostility to a disciplined past or culture exemplified by such figures as Siegfried or Tristan and Isolde, who act against all tradition and law. Mann's objections to the Third Reich were essentially based on the same grounds. In *Doctor Faustus* Zeitblom's first optimism about Germany and the war faded into fear and grave apprehension. Mann's attitude underwent similar disillusionment; and, insofar as Mann regarded Wagner as most typically representative of the German spirit, Wagner was indissolubly allied with the political destiny of Germany. Mann associated Germany's moral dissolution with the cult of darkness, death, and disease that had been exhumed from the Middle Ages by German romanticism. According to Mann,

> Wagner is German, he is national, in the most exemplary, perhaps too exemplary, way. For besides being an eruptive revelation of the German nature, his work is likewise a dramatic depiction of the same;

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Mann also speaks of the

reactionary traits in Wagner, traces of reversion and
sult of the dark past; we might interpret in this sense
his love of the mystical and mythological . . . . his
general fondness for the Middle Ages, for the life of
kings and princes, for miracles and perfervid faith. 21

This description has much that is characteristic of Leverkuhn
as well as Wagner. Leverkuhn was dominated by an irresistible
bent toward mockery, or burlesque. Irony, so Mann intimates,
is the natural sphere of one possessed by the Devil, even in
his most serious enterprises. Likewise, Leverkuhn's work was
highly intellectual (twelve-tone music is based on complex
mathematical relationships) and mystic; also the majority of
his themes were taken from the Middle Ages.

Of all Leverkuhn's works, the one that is discussed most
fully in terms of its thematic content is the fifth Middle
Age myth of his *Apocalypsis cum figuris* suite. It is the tale
of Holy Pope Gregory, later expanded by Mann into a separate

The story concerns a child who was the result of an
incestuous relationship between the twin brother and sister
rulers of a small kingdom. The father-uncle of the child is

killed on a journey of atonement, and the baby is put to sea in a small cask with a jeweled tablet written by his mother that explains his strange origins. The names of the parents, however, are not revealed. The baby's tiny vessel washes ashore on a distant island, where it is found by two fishermen. The child is reared and educated by the Abbot, who gives him his own name: Gregorius. Eventually young Gregory is told of his origins, and he determines to redeem himself by becoming a holy knight. By accident, his first encounter is in a kingdom which is being warred upon by a cruel neighboring duke who wishes to marry the queen. Although the queen has taken a vow not to marry, she gives her hand to Gregory when he defeats the duke. The couple are very happy and have two beautiful children before the truth is discovered: the queen, Gregory's wife, is his mother and aunt. Gregory, overwhelmed by his unspeakable sin, renounces his throne and departs on a penitential pilgrimage. At a fisherman's hut, he learns of a craggy rock sixteen miles out in the ocean; he entreats the fisherman to carry him there and chain him to the rock. The fisherman does so and throws the key into the ocean. There Gregory remains doing penance for seventeen years, sustained only by the grace of God. At the end of this period, the Pope in Rome dies. It is revealed in a dream to two churchmen that Gregory should be the next Pope. Led by the instructions of their vision, the two seek and
find Gregory. He is escorted back to Rome, where he becomes Pope Gregory.

This legend bears some similarities in plot to Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. In this cycle, Wotan creates the Walsungs, a fair-haired chosen race (the Aryan prototype) which is superior to the rest of mankind. Siegmund, a Walsung, meets Sieglinde (who is actually his twin sister) on his travels, and requests shelter for the night. Her husband, Hunding, grudgingly agrees, and Sieglinde, who is afraid for the stranger, gives Hunding a sleeping potion. Siegmund and Sieglinde fall in love and discover that they are both Walsungs. Moreover, they discover that they are twins. Sieglinde had been captured by Hunding's tribe when she was a child. The two escape together, and Sieglinde becomes Siegmund's bride. The Walsung blood flourishes, and a child, Siegfried, is born. Siegfried is strong and fearless; and in the third music-drama of the cycle, he breaks through the ring of fire that surrounds Brünnhilde, his aunt, to make her his bride.

Siegmond and Sieglinde, twins of a chosen race, correspond to the young prince and princess, also twins. Both produce a male child of extraordinary abilities. The products of incest, both Siegfried and Gregory themselves commit incest: Siegfried with his aunt, Brünnhilde, and Gregory with his mother, who is also his aunt. In the instance of both sets of twins, the
cause for their incestuous relationship is the same: they are guilty of hubris, the sin of pride. Both are extraordinary, beautiful, and set apart from the rest of humanity by their birth. They demand mates who are equal to them in rank and breeding.

In *Doctor Faustus* Mann develops the theme of sensual love versus spiritual love. In *The Holy Sinner* (both as a separate novel and as a part of *Doctor Faustus*) sensual love is equated with sin and is disastrous in its results. On the other hand, through spiritual love and sacrifice Gregory gains salvation and even glory. In *Doctor Faustus* sensual love is also disastrous for Leverkuhn. By his fateful act with Hetaera Esmeralda he not only contracts disease but forever cuts himself off from any love that may be pure and redeeming.

The structure of *Doctor Faustus* is, like *The Magic Mountain*, characterized by extensive and complex use of the leitmotif. As the content of the novel is musical, so does the structure invite musical analogies. Erich Kahler, impressed by the music-like complexity, comments:

> It *Doctor Faustus* is almost--if we may apply musical terms to a literary composition--what Adrian calls a "strict movement." It is a structure in which each detail has an exact symbolic reference, a structure of utter complexity, in which not only the various dimensions and layers, but within these each submotif and minor variation, is related to the rest and back to the fundamental motif. In spite of the semblance of ease in both invention and narrative, nothing here is accidental, nothing stands for itself alone; everything refers to everything else, each detail is
determined by the whole. Correspondences run backwards and forwards, between beginning and end, upper and lower levels, in a kind of labyrinthine mathematics.22

The typical leitmotif in Doctor Faustus is less dependent upon recurrent words and phrases than upon association and recurring themes. This may in part be accounted for by the fact that Leverkühn's story is related by a participating narrator rather than by an omniscient author. Of course, motifs such as Hetaera Esmeralda recur throughout the book, but the recurrence of the motif cited here is given substantiation by the highly symbolic significance of the name (Hetaera Esmeralda is a species of beautiful but very poisonous moth which Leverkühn learned about from his father), and it is the only name by which Adrian's seductress is known. For this reason the recurrence of the name does not become labored or artificial, but the connotative value of the motif remains. In a similar manner, the motif of the devil is absorbed into the narrative flow. He is suggested in many characters, in music, in situations, but always with an infinite variety that makes the motif both credible and pervasive.

This book, one of the last great works of Mann, is monumental in its magnitude and a worthy representative of his art reflecting his mature thought and genius. It assimilates the themes with which Mann was concerned throughout

his life, all the paradoxes that fascinated and plagued him, and treats them with great depth of psychological insight. In this respect, Doctor Faustus shares a place with Parsifal, the last work of Wagner. The composer, too, chose the thematic content of theology, daemony, disease, sensual and spiritual love in his later years; and his treatment of these themes reflects the perception of a man who had lived and wrestled with the antitheses inherent in his material.
CHAPTER VI

THE SHORTER FICTION: "TONIO KRÖGER"; "TRISTAN"; DEATH IN VENICE; "BLOOD OF THE WALSUNGS"; "LITTLE HERR FRIEDEMANN"

The short stories and novellas of Thomas Mann belong to the early part of his career; the twenty-four stories contained in the volume Stories of Three Decades were all written between the years of 1896 and 1929. During these years, Mann's fascination with Wagner was at its height, and the influence of the composer is more directly apparent in certain of these works than in any of the author's longer novels, with the possible exception of Buddenbrooks. In his later fiction, the Wagnerian elements are generally more subtly incorporated into plot, character, or theme.

The sources of Mann's admiration for Wagner may be traced to the novelist's own personality. Mann, aware of the paradoxes in himself, discerned a marked dualism in Wagner with which he felt a kinship: passion versus rationality, bohemianism versus the bourgeois respectability, life versus death.

Mann's dualistic personality may, in some measure, be accounted for by his heritage. He was the son of a bourgeois
North German grain merchant and his Brazilian wife, the Creole-Germanic daughter of a Bohemian orchestra conductor. His mother was a very musical person in her own right and was full of exuberance and the joy of living. Mann seems to have inherited almost equally the characteristics of both his parents, for his rebellious artist-nature was constantly in conflict with the paternal bourgeois conversatism and love of order. This disparity, embodied in his single person, provided a source of thematic material for many of his writings.

One sees in Mann the pull toward life, the desire to be a participating member of the human race, to experience the vitality of life but at the same time to remain aloof, detached, for the purposes of art. As an artist, Mann insisted upon a view too large to be personal. His is the dilemma of the artist-nature divided against itself. Alluding to his concept of the artist, Mann says in "Tonio Kröger" (1903):

The artist must be un-human, extra-human; he must stand in a queer aloof relationship to our humanity; only so is he in a position, I ought to say only would he be tempted, to represent it, to present it, to portray it to good effect. The very gift of style, of form and expression, is nothing else than this cool and fastidious attitude toward humanity; you might say there has to be this impoverishment and devastation as a preliminary condition.¹

Mann deplored this condition of aloofness at the same time that he recognized it as essential to the artist. But it would have been approved by Schopenhauer, whose philosophy profoundly affected Thomas Mann as well as Richard Wagner. Schopenhauer considered the function of art to be a means of contemplating absolute truth because art frees knowledge from its servitude to the will. Art, in short, is an intellectual activity entailing an aesthetic transcendence of self.

Tonio Kroger, protagonist of the short story, possesses the same duality that Mann recognized in his own personality, and the pull of the sensual in Tonio's nature denies him the peace that might come from total surrender of the will. Friedrich Nietzsche, another influence common to both Mann and Wagner, well understood both the element of detachment essential to the artist and the longing for real experience as depicted in "Tonio Kroger":

It is understandable that sometimes the artist should tire, to the point of desperation, of this eternal "nonreality" and falseness of his inner existence, and try to venture into the most forbidden territory—the real, try in fact to exist in earnest. How successfully? One may guess ... .

Tonio Kroger's cry of anguish at life's being withheld from him by his muse is curiously reminiscent of the complaint issued by Wagner himself. In a letter to Liszt in his

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2Friedrich Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke (Munich, 1926), XV, 376, cited in Erich Heller, Thomas Mann, The Ironio German (Cleveland, 1961), p. 81.
thirty-ninth year he wrote:

I decline more from day to day. I lead an indescribably worthless life. Of real enjoyment of life I know nothing; for me enjoyment, love are imaginary, not experienced. My heart had to be absorbed in my brain, my life had to become artificial; now I can only live as "artist," all the human being is absorbed in that.\

Although Wagner's personal accounts must be accepted with reservation, the above excerpt indicates that Richard Wagner's art was to some extent an artificial paradise, his idealized substitute for life itself. Surely his own dualism was prominent in his mind when he created Tannhäuser, with the voluptuous attractions of the Venusberg and the opposing pull of the mortal world. Tannhäuser is motivated and torn by love: the lush, enticing, sensual love of Venus and a purer, more spiritual love symbolized by Elisabeth.

Love in Wagner is the means of redemption. But love is also closely connected with death, and reaches its highest culmination in release from life— that is, the moral, physical, and intellectual limitations of life—for love transcends death in imperishable and inviolable union.

Schopenhauer conceived of two courses by which one might escape the futility of the human will: by objectifying the will in works of art (the personal solution of both Wagner and Mann) or by allowing the will to find peace and quietude in Nirvana or death.

The combination of the love (redemption) and the death (release) found thematic expression in Wagner's famous Liebestod (love-death) from Tristan und Isolde. One recalls also the duet between Senta and the Dutchman in the second act of Der fliegende Holländer:

The glow that warms my heart with strange emotion,
Can I, accurs'd one, call it love's devotion?
Ah no, 'tis yearning blest repose to gain,
That such an angel might for me obtain!

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Ah, if redemption still be mine to hope for,
Heaven grant that she my saviour be!

The Dutchman's hope for salvation and his love are fused into a single emotion, and his redemption comes only when Senta sacrifices her life out of love for him. In Tristan und Isolde the passion of the two lovers is aroused by a love-potion given them by Brangane instead of the death-potion ordered by Isolde. Thus the love-death idea is introduced. Because of Isolde's betrothal to King Marke, the lover's passion can only be fulfilled through the night of death. But it is not fated that they should die together. In another country, separated from Isolde, Tristan, wounded, awaits his love. But Tristan dies as Isolde comes to him. As she bends over his body, she sings the rapturous Liebestod:

How he rises ever radiant steeped in starlight
... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
From his lips in heavenly rest sweetest breath

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he softly sends.
Harken friends! Hear and feel ye not?
Is it I alone am hearing strains so tender and
endearing?

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Brighter growing, o'er me flowing, are these breezes
airy pillows?
Are they balmy beauteous billows? How they rise and
gleam and glisten!

Shall I breathe them? Shall I listen?
Shall I sip them, dive within them,
To my panting breathing win them?
In the breezes around, in the harmony sound,
In the world's driving whirlwind be drowned—
And sinking, be drinking—
In a kiss, highest bliss! 5

Isolde is joined eternally with Tristan.

The Liebestod motif is recurrent in the works of Thomas
Mann: love is allied with the wish to die. Herr Friedemann
and Gabrielle Klöterjahn, the heroine of Mann's "Tristan"
(1902), are both destined to untimely death. Mann uses music
to turn the approach of death into a period of ecstasy, and
thoughts and emotions that might otherwise remain obscure are
allowed to take form in the consciousness. Here life negates
itself in romantic ecstasy and moves toward self-destruction
or transfiguration. In both stories Mann introduces reference
to the music of Wagner as an accompaniment to death and
spiritual transcendence.

Frau Klöterjahn knows of the danger of music; she has
been warned by her doctor not to play. Music is hostile to

5 Richard Wagner, Tristan und Isolde. The Authentic
Librettos of the Wagner Operas (translator not given) (New
life; but Herr Spinell's insistence dissolves Frau Klöterjahn's resolution, and she plays, moving irresistibly from Chopin to the Sehnsuchtmotiv (desire motif) of Tristan und Isolde thence to the Liebestod and a complete immersion in aesthetic eroticism. As Frau Klöterjahn plays, Mann's prose swells in rapturous accompaniment, an incantation to death and deliverance.

The experience, as expected, over-taxes Frau Klöterjahn's strength, and the love-death is fulfilled in a re-telling of Wagner's myth. Frau Klöterjahn, Herr Spinell's Isolde, is estranged from her banally normal family; and, significantly, her death is precipitated by symbolic union in the Liebestod.

Mann and Wagner both exhibit a tendency to link love with disease and death; and Mann, who suspected music and art as contributing to degeneration and self-destruction, comes to equate music also with death and disease. Thus the bourgeois family of Frau Klöterjahn is threatened by illness of the heroine in "Tristan," an illness that, linked with music and eroticism, brings about her death.

Little Herr Friedemann, in the story by the same name (1897), is a musical dilettante marked for death—a suicide by water, which is a Wagnerian symbol of release. At a performance of Lohengrin Herr Friedemann's passion for Gerda von Rinnlingen is aroused, and again, the music of Wagner serves as a prelude to death and assumes a sinister implication. In Lohengrin water is the transporting element that brings Gottfried to
Brabant in the guise of a swan. When the spell is broken, the swan sinks into the water and Gottfried appears in its place. Just as Gottfried is released from the evil spell, Friedemann is released by drowning from hopeless passion and an unhappy life.

Herr Friedemann may also be compared to Alberich in Das Rheingold. Alberich, like Herr Friedemann, is a hunchback; he is scorned by the Rhinemaidens in the depths of the Rhine. Friedemann is rejected by Gerda beside the river in which he drowns himself.

The Liebestod is also echoed in Death in Venice (1911) and is linked with the portentous qualities of disease. Gustave Aschenbach is drawn to Venice, which, as Erich Heller points out, is the inevitable location for Aschenbach's doom. It is the city where Wagner died; the city that inspired the Liebestod; the city of Platen's "Tristan," which promises death for whoever beholds beauty. It is "a city built by the very Will to Power in honor of Death."^6

Prior to the Venetian journey, Aschenbach has rejected Dionysian art, giving his allegiance to that of Apollo. But his rejection is not so complete as he thinks. His unconscious longing for ecstatic experience leads him to Tadzio, a young boy whose physical form is of a perfection that belongs to the realm of art. Aschenbach falls under the spell of the boy's

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^6Heller, Thomas Mann. The Ironic German. p. 105.
beauty and tumbles headlong into the dreaded abyss. His detached, classical attitude toward Tadzio passes into infatuation, then love, then abandonment in degradation, and ultimately, death. As Aschenbach's orgiastic passion, accompanied by his disintegration, progresses, the heat of the season increases, and disease spreads over the city. Still, in spite of the danger, Aschenbach remains in order to be near his love. Disease and death are the inevitable outcome. In this novella, art, represented by Tadzio, provides an irresistible sensual attraction, the nature of which is essentially evil, and the only possible culmination of which is death.

Music for Mann was above all the music of Wagner, and the Wagnerian spell was linked with the artist-nature, which one side of Mann regarded with distrust. But it was also the side of his nature dearest to him. It is precisely this aspect of himself that Mann combats in *Death in Venice*:

As Poets we can be neither wise nor worthy, we are fated to go astray and be destroyed. Mastery of style is a snare and a delusion. Education through art is a risky undertaking which should be forbidden. For what use in education is a thing which by its very nature tends irresistibly toward the abyss?7

In an article entitled "Papa," Monika Mann recalls her father:

Music is the only weakness Papa has. He regards it with a mixture of adoration, envy and disdain. "They" have

a better life than I, he might think—although this might be but another rendering of his artistic longing, an incitement for the unobtainable, for the sublime. Music is known to be the most beautiful Muse—and you musicians are happier than I. And yet I might have had the power to be one, and not a bad one either, God forbid. But I didn't want to. Ecco! I had my reasons. And it is just as well. But it gnaws at me all the same. . . . And nearly always when Papa is listening to music he arouses in me the idea that he is more musical than most musicians taken together but that, had he chosen it or been chosen by it, he would have fallen into an abyss. Its inarticulateness would have corrupted him and delivered him to the devil. He is too fully and wholly the man of the word—of the prosaic, the intrinsic, the ascetic—so that music for him is somehow linked with sin. For all that, it may be a divine sin, and no small stimulus to his own art. Shouldn't the divers arts long for each other? (What could be more ideal and fruitful than a poet possessed by music?)

Mann has made clear his suspicion of the corrupting influence of music. Mann's recognized fascination with musical structure and his attitude toward the dubious aspects of music invite a critical approach that links his work with musical form. In a discussion of *Death in Venice*, Vernon Venable has observed:

One is reminded of the musical form known as the passacaglia, where a ground bass, repeating the same theme over and over again for progressive variations in the upper register, occasionally emerges into the treble itself, with the effect of affirming emphatically the singleness of the thematic material in both registers.

In *Death in Venice*, the treble is the simple narrative sequence of Aschenbach's voyage, his life on the Lido, his love for the boy Tadzio, and his death. The ground bass is the "life and death" theme repeated as a sort of

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undertone to the story by those characters who seem to have no very obvious connection with the proper narrative content.

Before attempting to understand how the symbols of the bass are related to those of the treble, it should be remarked that despite the almost mathematical precision with which the intricate associations are accomplished, they are not meant to be understood. To be free from artificiality, from the appearance of tour de force, such a highly complicated formal pattern must gain its effectiveness immediately; that is, not through rational processes. This is a comparatively easy accomplishment for the musician, whose medium does not involve meaning, but it demands rare subtlety from a writer. Mann's deftness is, of course, prodigious, and he contrives to keep his formalized meanings from the explicit attention of the reader largely by the simple technical expedient of hiding them from Aschenbach himself.9

The "ground bass" figures which remind Venable of the lower register of a passacaglia may just as easily be described as leitmotif figures. The mysterious stranger that Aschenbach sees before going to Venice, the grotesque dandy on the boat, the gondolier, and the street singer all have common characteristics: snub noses, fair or red hair, rakishly placed hats, similar dress. They may all be taken as figures of a leitmotif anticipating Aschenbach's approaching death. And, to carry the analogy a step further, since Aschenbach's death is brought about by his own moral disintegration, these grotesque and shadowy figures may be considered caricatures of Aschenbach himself. This association links the narrative of Aschenbach's activities with the questionable characters who appear sporadically throughout the novella but do not seem to

have a direct bearing on the narrative content. These characters prepare the way for Aschenbach's degeneration and death; for example, the hideous old fop with the painted face anticipates Aschenbach's own later resorting to cosmetics in his frantic desire to be attractive to Tadzio, and the gondolier whose black gondola suggests a coffin is a Charon-like pre- vision of the death that Aschenbach is to meet in Venice.

The ominous, daemonic quality that Wagner's music held for Mann is vividly clear in "The Blood of the Walsungs" (1905), the title of which is borrowed from Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen. The Walsungs are a race of half-human, half-god people that were fathered by Wotan as he wandered the earth disguised as a mortal. Siegmund and Sieglinde and their child, Siegfried, are members of the superior Walsung race.

The twin brother and sister of "Blood of the Walsungs" are likewise named Siegmund and Sieglinde. They are remarkably attached to one another and are always seen hand in hand. Sieglinde is engaged to a prosaic businessman, Von Beckerath, who corresponds to Hunding, Sieglinde's despised husband in Die Walküre. This is further made apparent when Siegmund and Sieglinde request Von Beckerath's permission to see a last performance of the opera together before the wedding, and their brother, Kunz, drums the Hunding motif on the tablecloth. The opera is a cause for agitation, especially for Siegmund. He is disturbed that he amounts to nothing more than a pampered,
exquisitely groomed dilettante, and, inspired by the opera, he reaches the conclusion "that creation was born of passion and was reshaped anew as passion. He saw the pale, spent woman [Sieglinde] hanging on the breast of the fugitive [Siegmond] to whom she gave herself, he saw her love and her destiny and knew that so life must be to be creative." Once again at home, the brother and sister re-enact the Wagner myth. Like their operatic counterparts, they compare their features—they are the same. Their customary caresses pass over into passion, and the pair, alike in appearance, alike in blood and birth, are incestuously united.

The parallel between Mann's Siegmund and Sieglinde and their Wagnerian ancestors in Die Walküre is too obvious to require elaboration; however, there is another similarity between these comparable works of Wagner and Mann in their treatment of the thematic material. Mann admired Wagner's use of myth and psychology, and the same elements he incorporates into his own work:

What is it that raises the works of Wagner to a plane so high, intellectually speaking, above all older musical drama? Two forces contribute, forces and gifts of genius, which one thinks of in general as opposed; indeed, the present day takes pleasure in asserting their essential incompatibility. I mean psychology and the myth. Indeed, psychology does seem too much a matter of reason to admit of our seeing in it no obstacle at all on the path into the land of myth. And it passes as the

antithesis of the mythical as of the musical—yet precisely this complex, of psychology, myth, and music, is what confronts us, an organic reality, in two great cases, Nietzsche and Wagner. A book might be written on Wagner the psychologist, on the psychology of his art as musician not less than as poet—in so far as the two are to be separated in him.

The technique of using the motif as an aid to memory had already been employed on occasion in the old opera; it was now gradually built up, by the profoundest virtuosity, into a system that made music more than ever the instrument of psychological allusion, association, emphasis. Wagner's treatment of the love-potion theme /in Tristan/, originally the simple epic idea of a magic draught, is the creation of a great psychologist. For actually it might as well be pure water that the lovers drink, and it is only their belief that they have drunk death that frees them from the moral compulsion of the day.\footnote{Mann, "Sufferings and Greatness," p. 311.}

In the case of Siegmund and Sieglinde, it is their narcissistic view of themselves, given veracity by their twinhood and belief in their superiority over the rest of humanity, that leads them to their incestuous act. Mann, a great admirer of Sigmund Freud, peopled his stories with characters that could comprise a casebook in abnormal psychology, and it is not surprising that the characters from Die Walküre and the other Wagner music-dramas should be intriguing to him. Almost always the leading figures of Wagner's operas stand in opposition to the conventional world.

The juxtaposition of psychology and myth in Wagner's works attests the composer's capacity to encompass both the intellectual and the emotional. Again, here is evidence of
Wagner's dualism, the common wellspring of art and philosophy which Mann shared with Wagner. Thus Wagner's "mingling of the daemonic and the bourgeois"\textsuperscript{12} had profound influence not only upon Mann's thought but also upon his method.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 237.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

From the preceding analysis it is obvious that Wagnerian elements exist demonstrably in many areas of Mann's art. Likenesses have been noted in philosophy, plot, theme, character, symbol, and structure.

Mann's use of Schopenhauerian philosophy closely resembles that in the works of Richard Wagner, especially Tristan und Isolde. The strongest verification that Mann assimilated the Wagnerian interpretation of Schopenhauer into his own work is found in Buddenbrooks: Thomas Buddenbrook adapts Schopenhauer to suit his own purposes exactly in the manner that Wagner adjusted the philosophy to conform with his own views.

The similarities in plots are more subtle than striking. In this respect the most closely related works are Die Walküre and "The Blood of the Walsungs," which is a modern adaptation of the myth. To a slightly lesser degree The Holy Sinner, which first appeared as a segment of Doctor Faustus, may also be compared with Die Walküre. The Magic Mountain bears certain similarities to Tannhäuser, and Doctor Faustus shares some likenesses with Das Rheinzold.

More numerous are the instances of Wagnerian themes in Mann. Among these is the Liebestod (or love-death) theme from
Tristan und Isolde, which is central to Death in Venice. "Tristan," Buddenbrooks, and The Magic Mountain. Renunciation of love is a key theme of Doctor Faustus, and redemption by spiritual love is hinted in The Magic Mountain. This latter idea is also found in Doctor Faustus, although redemption by love is denied to Adrian Leverkühn. The theme of sensual love, which opposes redemption by love, is prominent in all of the works considered, with the exception of "Tonio Kröger," where it is present by association. It is important to note the difference between these two love themes. Sensual love is connected with dissolution, moral, and often physical decay; whereas spiritual or sacrificial love is a means of salvation, both in Mann and Wagner. Thus, although the theme of sensual love may be dominant in a work, the theme of redemption by love is often implicit as an antithesis. Darkness, death, and disease recur often in Mann's work as they do in themes that run throughout Wagner's.

Mann's characters are often closely patterned after those of Wagner. Christian Buddenbrook, for example, shares Amfortas' psychic wound; Hans Castorp, like Tannhäuser, experiences the lure of Venus, whose counterpart in the novel is Clavdia Chauchat; Adrian Leverkühn's Devil, like Alberich, is capable of changing form; Little Herr Friedemann resembles the scorned, hunchbacked Alberich; and Frau Klöterjahn is Herr Spinell's Isolde. Also, Gregorius corresponds to Siegfried, and his
parents to Siegmund and Sieglinde, as do Siegmund and Sieglinde Aarenhold.

Wagner's use of water as a symbol of freedom is adapted in *Death in Venice* and "Little Herr Friedemann," where it accompanies death and release from passion or, in Schopenhauerian terms, from the Will.

The structure of Mann's novels and novellas is characterized by his use of musical devices and patterns; his work has frequently been compared to musical forms such as the sonata and the symphony. The single most characteristic feature of Mann's method, however, is the leitmotif, which he used with increasing subtlety and complexity, as Wagner used it to construct elaborate mental and emotional associations in his music. Early and late passages are skillfully bound together by subtle incidental repetition of word or phrase or idea in character portrayal, in scene, and in plot. Mann thus achieves the effect of an elaborately woven tapestry, rich and voluptuous but semi-stylized and almost medieval, with a haunting spirituality.

The student of the Mann-Wagner relationship must exercise caution in the temptation to over-simplify his findings. It must be remembered that Mann, although his debt to Wagner is freely acknowledged, brought his own thought and attitudes to his art; and therefore, though some aspects of his work reveal their Wagnerian inspiration, there are also many subtle differences.
Mann indulged many romantic tendencies, but he was at the same time highly analytical. For this reason he often plumbed depths that were, at most, only vaguely implied in his model. The effect of Mann's work is that of a highly-wrought synthesis of many elements, each indivisible from the other.

The comparison between Wagner and Mann leads to the conclusion that the primary basis for the attraction of Wagner for Mann was the polarity in each of them. Mann, in writing about Wagner, continually emphasized the combination of antithetical qualities in Wagner's thought and art: the intellectual versus the emotional; the daemonic versus the bourgeois; the sensual versus the spiritual. Mann's affinity for these contrary elements is verified by his incorporating them into his own fiction. Indeed, it would be difficult to name a single story by Mann not characterized by this polarity. And, of course, it is readily understandable that a man with a predilection for music such as Mann would be doubly enchanted when attitudes so near his own were couched in the beloved language of music.
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