

Astri Hoffmann-Tollaas

Aesthetic Alienation in Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*

Estetisk fremmedgjøring i Thomas Manns *Doktor Faustus*

Bachelor's project in Comparative Literature

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The author is responsible for the accuracy of all content in this thesis.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to analyze the various levels of ‘aesthetic alienation’ in Thomas Mann’s novel *Doktor Faustus*, first published by Beermann-Fischer Verlag in 1947. Instead of explaining Adrian Leverkühn’s rise as a composer through the socio-political lenses of German national socialism, as many scholars have already done, I want to show that Mann’s *Doktor Faustus* thematizes the crisis of modern art regardless of its socio-political background. As a product of regular exchange of ideas between Thomas Mann and his colleague Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, *Doktor Faustus* in fact contains fragments of both aesthetic views: By answering the question how Mann’s view on ‘aesthetic alienation’ is presented in his novel and how it dramatically *differs* from Adorno’s, I want to show that the crisis of modern art is a central issue in Mann’s novel. When confronted with Adorno’s philosophy of music, Thomas Mann was forced to create a unique blend of his own decadent views on the fate of aesthetics, substantially influenced by Richard Wagner, Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, and Adorno’s more optimistic understanding. By taking Jay Bernstein’s definition of the ‘aesthetic alienation’ term as my starting point, my analysis will show that Adrian Leverkühn’s tragic downfall impersonates the ominous fate of modern art.

Abstrakt

Formålet med denne oppgaven er å undersøke forskjellige aspekter av ‘estetisk fremmedgjøring’ i Thomas Manns roman *Doktor Faustus* fra 1947. I stedet for å forklare Adrian Leverkühn sitt avansement som komponist som allegorisk parallell til nasjonalsosialismens dominans i Tyskland og Europa, noe mange forskere allerede har gjort, vil jeg vise at *Doktor Faustus* tematiserer den moderne kunstens krise helt uavhengig av romanens sosiopolitiske bakgrunn. Som et resultat av et intensivt samarbeid mellom Thomas Mann og hans kollega Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, inneholder romanen faktisk deler av begge estetiske syn: Ved å svare på spørsmålet hvordan Mann sin estetiske forståelse er presentert i romanen og på hvilken måte den skiller seg fra Adornos, vil jeg vise at den moderne kunstens krise er et sentralt tema i *Doktor Faustus*. Da Mann ble konfrontert med Adornos musikkfilosofi, var han nødt til å skape en unik blanding av både sitt eget dekadente kunstsyn og Adornos mer optimistiske forståelse. Ved å ta Jay Bernsteins definisjon av ‘estetisk fremmedgjøring’ som mitt utgangspunkt, vil jeg vise at Adrian Leverkühns tragiske fall representerer den moderne kunstens tragiske skjebne.

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1. Introduction

Denn wer den Schatz, das Schöne, heben will,
Bedarf der höchsten Kunst: Magie der Weisen.

-Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust II*, vv. 6315–16

For over 400 years the legend of Doktor Johann Faust has been one of the most widespread literary themes in European culture. Starting as a collection of stories and anecdotes in 1587, the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* was quickly picked up by writers, painters and composers all over Europe. While the first Faust stories had strong Christian connotations, admonishing its readers to live a pious life in God, the myth developed in many different directions over time, evolving both utterly comical and deeply tragical traits. Today the legend has penetrated most cultural spheres, including fiction, drama, poetry, opera, ballet and painting, and it has been the subject of dozens of films.

The most influential interpretation of the Faust legend was without question written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in the beginning of the 19th century. With his *Heinrich Faust*, Goethe created the ultimate modern human being, an individual driven by his unquenchable thirst for knowledge, a desire for prestige, and an unappeased hunger for money and love. It is therefore no surprise that the exiled German Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann just about 100 years later, in the middle of German national socialism, decided to use just the Faust myth in order to depict the spirit of his own time. In *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus* from 1949, a book containing important autobiographical references and commentaries on the origins of *Doktor Faustus*, Thomas Mann writes:

Ein einsamer Denker und Forscher, ein Theolog und Philosoph in seiner Klausur, der aus Verlangen nach Weltgenuss und Weltherrschaft seine Seele dem Teufel verschreibt, - ist es nicht ganz der rechte Augenblick, Deutschland in diesem Bilde zu sehen, heute, wo Deutschland buchstäblich der Teufel holt? (Mann, 1996, p. 264).

To solely understand Thomas Mann's novel as an allegory of the rise of German fascism though, as many scholars have done (Vaegter, 2006, pp. 21–48), is in my view not enough in order to grasp the full dimension of *Doktor Faustus*. As a product of intense collaboration between Thomas Mann and his German colleague Theodor Adorno, Mann's novel from 1947 also thematizes another important subject matter: The fate of aesthetics in the modern world.

In this study I would like to show how two totally different views on progressive

modernism, that of Thomas Mann and that of Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, have found their way into *Doktor Faustus*: I want to answer the question how Thomas Mann's view on 'aesthetic alienation' is expressed in *Doktor Faustus* and how it dramatically *differs* from Adorno's. I will show that while the Faustus author, deeply inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, depicts art as being alienated from reality and therefore being forced to express both self-denial and negation of life, Adorno regards art's alienation as an opportunity, a tool for potential reconciliation. By taking American philosopher Jay Bernstein's definition of the term 'aesthetic alienation' as my starting point, I will reveal in which way *Doktor Faustus* contains fragments of both aesthetic views.

Among the huge amount of earlier research done on Thomas Mann, I was not able to find any direct linkage connecting Mann's literary work with Bernstein's 'aesthetic alienation' term. It is therefore about time to do a direct comparison between Mann's and Adorno's views on 'aesthetic alienation' as they are expressed in *Doktor Faustus*. To me this topic is of particular interest because of my personal background: As a cellist with a master's degree in music performance, growing up in Berlin with a strong interest in 20th century German literature, I am happy that I finally can combine my two greatest passions.

2. Mann and Adorno: An abyss of philosophical differences

With the rise of the Nazi regime both Thomas Mann and Theodor Adorno faced increasing difficulties staying in Germany. Because of his father's Jewish family roots, Adorno's right to teach was revoked in 1933. Nevertheless, it took him five more years to finally decide to leave his home country (Wesche, 2018, p. 7). Like many German intellectuals, Adorno finally settled in a neighbourhood in Los Angeles in 1941 where figures like Bertolt Brecht, Arnold Schönberg and the entire Frankfurt School, including his former colleague Max Horkheimer, already lived (Wesche, 2018, p. 8).

When Adorno met Mann for the first time in July 1943, the widely celebrated author had just started working on his new novel *Doktor Faustus*. Already in the very beginning of his writing process, Mann encountered difficulties in writing a "Musik-Roman" (Mann, 1976, p. 707), without having sufficient music-theoretical knowledge, as he explains in *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus*: "Ich fühlte, dass ich dazu der Hilfe von außen, des Ratgebers, des fachkundigen und zugleich der Absichten meiner Dichtung kundigen und wissend mitimaginierenden Instructors bedurfte [...]" (Mann, 1976, p. 707).

To what extent Adorno contributed to the construction of *Doktor Faustus*, is a question still widely disputed among scholars (Vaegert, 2006, p. 385). To find a satisfying answer is made

increasingly difficult by the fact that Mann's collaboration with Adorno was predominantly based on frequent consultations and discussions, not merely on the provision of concrete philosophical texts and essays, as Adorno explains in a letter to his parents:

[M]orgen Abend sind wir ganz allein zum Diner bei Thomas Mann. Er hat meine „Philosophie der Neuen Musik“ gelesen und ist so begeistert davon, dass er es im Detail mit mir durchsprechen und mir aus seinem neuen Roman vorlesen will, einem Musikerroman (die Hauptfigur ist irgendwie nach Schönberg gebildet), zu dem er gern meine Meinung hätte (Adorno, 2003, p. 218).

What we know is that Adorno and Mann stayed in close contact for many years, even after Adorno decided to return to Germany when the war was over, as frequent letters between 1943 and 1955 confirm (Adorno & Mann, *Briefwechsel 1943–1955*, 2002).

Even though the collaboration between Adorno and Mann showed promising results, the process was nevertheless marked by both discord and frustration (Vaget, 2006, p. 384). In his work *Seelenzauber* the German philologist Hans Rudolf Vaget notes quite sharply:

Ihre Zusammenarbeit war, nüchtern betrachtet, ein Zweckbündnis zu beider Vorteil über einen tiefen Graben philosophischer und weltanschaulicher Differenzen hinweg, unerachtet der mannigfaltigen Beteuerungen gegenseitiger Verehrung in ihrem Briefwechsel (Vaget, 2006, p. 384).

It is this deep abyss of philosophical differences, manifested in *Doktor Faustus*, which I would like to explore in this study.

3. Thomas Mann: The significance of music in his earlier works

In a speech at Princeton University about his *Zauberberg*, Thomas Mann states: “Was mich betrifft, muss ich mich zu den Musikern unter den Dichtern rechnen. Der Roman war mir immer eine Symphonie, ein Werk der Kontrapunktik, ein Themengewebe, worin die Ideen die Rolle musikalischer Motive spielen” (Mann, 1974, p. 611). From the very beginning of Mann's literary career, music was always both thematic and technical inspiration. The allegory of music permeates many of his most well-known works from *Buddenbrooks* (1901) to *Der Zauberberg* (1924) and *Doktor Faustus* (1947).

Deeply inspired by his musical idol Richard Wagner, Mann often constructs his works following Wagner's grand style, integrating linguistic *Leitmotivs* similar to Wagner's musical

ones, as Volker Mertens observes in his book *Mann und die Musik* (Mertens, 2006, p. 11). Thomas Mann's biblical tetralogy *Joseph und seine Brüder*, published between 1933 and 1945, is maybe the most striking example of Thomas Mann's epical writing style: The book series shows an analogue construction to Wagner's complex Ring-tetralogy (Mertens, 2006, p. 11). In his essay *Die Sendung der Musik* from 1944, Thomas Mann writes:

Groß ist das Geheimnis der Musik – sie ist ohne Zweifel die tiefsinnigste, *philosophisch alarmierendste* [...], die faszinierendste Erscheinung der Kultur und Humanität. Von jung auf habe ich dem Rätsel ihres Wesens nachgehungen, sie belauscht, sie zu ergründen gesucht, bin als Schriftsteller ihren Spuren gefolgt, habe unwillkürlich ihrer Wirkungsart Einfluss auf mein eigenes Bilden und Bauen gewährt [...] (Mann, 1996, p. 239, italics mine).

As Mann underlines, to him music has a dangerous potential, it is “philosophisch alarmierend” (Mann, 1996, p. 239). When taking a closer look at musical motives in Mann's literary work, this is undoubtedly true.

Already in his 1901 novel *Buddenbrooks* Thomas Mann describes a tragic fate of musical indulgence: The young Hanno Buddenbrook, fleeing his surroundings by seeking refuge in musical experience, dies in the attempt. It is Hanno's addiction to the powerful effects of music which leads to the downfall and ultimate decay of the entire Buddenbrook family. Like in his novella *Der Tod in Venedig* (1911), Thomas Mann equates the aesthetic with decadence and destruction: “Die Hingabe an die Musik [...] ist der seelischen Gesundheit nicht zuträglich. Die Musik ist die Macht, die der Lebenskraft entgegenwirkt” (Mertens, 2006, p. 23), Volker Mertens remarks. The authorial narrator's depiction of Hanno's last musical experience in *Buddenbrooks* shows this equation very clearly:

Es lag etwas Brutales, etwas Stumpfsinniges [...], etwas wie *Wille zur Wonne und Untergang* in der Gier, mit der die letzte Süßigkeit aus ihr [der Melodie] gesogen wurde, bis zur Erschöpfung, bis zum Ekel und Überdruß, bis endlich, endlich in Ermattung nach allen Ausschweifungen ein langes, leises Arpeggio in moll hinrieselte, um einen Ton emporstieg, sich in dur auflöste und mit einem wehmütigen Zögern erstarb (Mann, 2020, p. 750, italics mine).

Thomas Mann's expression “Wille zur Wonne und Untergang” (Mann, 2020, p. 750) makes it virtually impossible to ignore Mann's Schopenhauerian origins. Many scholars have examined Arthur Schopenhauer's influence on Thomas Mann (Klugkist, 2000, pp. 9–21) and, as most of them, the German literary scholar Hans Wysling states: “Schopenhauer ist der

Philosoph, dem Thomas Mann die gewichtigsten philosophischen Einsichten verdankt” (Wysling, 1983, p. 61). Mann himself remembers in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* from 1920:

Das kleine, hochgelegene Vorstadtzimmer schwebt mir vor Augen, worin ich, es sind sechzehn Jahre, tagelang hingestreckt auf ein sonderbar geformtes Langfauteuil oder Kanapee, ‚Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung‘ las. Einsam-unregelmäßige, welt- und todsüchtige Jugend – wie sie den Zaubersaft dieser Metaphysik schlürfte, deren tiefstes Wesen Erotik ist und in der ich die geistige Quelle der Tristan-Musik erkannte! So liest man nur einmal. Das kommt nicht wieder (Mann, 1974, p. 72).

Only few philosophers form a sharper contrast to Adorno’s existentialism than Arthur Schopenhauer. Mann was therefore forced to create a unique blend of them both, mostly at the expense of Adorno, as this essay will show.

4. Aesthetic Alienation: Jay Bernstein and *The Fate of Art*

In order to thoroughly explore the different levels of ‘aesthetic alienation’ in Thomas Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, I would like to consider Jay Bernstein’s definition of the term as my starting point. In his study *The Fate of Art*, published in the UK in 1992, the American philosopher explores four major thinkers, more specifically Immanuel Kant, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida and Theodor Adorno, in their search for the meaning of art in modern society.

In arguing that art, facing the growth of modern technology, reason and science, is degraded to a separate and autonomous sphere, Bernstein defines ‘aesthetic alienation’ as “the experience of art having lost or been deprived of its power to speak the truth” (Bernstein, 1992, p. 4). To him the Nietzschean “discordance of art and truth” (Bernstein, 1992, p. 1) lies in considering art as merely aesthetical and thereby disconnecting it from questions of truth, reason, and morality. Here Immanuel Kant’s statement in *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, namely that “works of art are purposeful in themselves” (Bernstein, 1992, p. 3), is for Bernstein the foremost manifestation of a categorical fragmentation of society which to him is constitutive of modernity:

Modernity is the separation of spheres, the becoming autonomous of truth, beauty and goodness from one another, and their development into self-sufficient forms of practice: modern science and technology, private morality and modern legal forms, and modern art. This categorical

separation of domains represents the dissolution of the metaphysical totalities of the pre-modern age (Bernstein, 1992, pp. 5–6).

As Bernstein underlines in *The Fate of Art*, an awareness of the ambivalence of the aesthetic was already pronounced by Georg Friedrich Hegel in his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*. Hegel declares that art has lost its capacity to speak the truth: “Uns gilt die Kunst nicht mehr als die höchste Weise, in welcher die Wahrheit sich Existenz verschafft” (Hegel, 1970, p. 140). To Hegel the moment of art’s loss of its truth function correlates with art’s separation from Christianity and its resulting acquisition of autonomy:

So haben z. B. die historischen Elemente des Christentums, Christi Erscheinen, sein Leben und Sterben, der Kunst als Malerei vornehmlich mannigfaltige Gelegenheit sich auszubilden gegeben, und die Kirche selbst hat die Kunst großgezogen oder gewähren lassen; als aber der Trieb des Wissens und des Forschens und das Bedürfnis innerer Geistigkeit die Reformation hervortrieben, ward auch die religiöse Vorstellung von dem sinnlichen Elemente abgerufen und auf die Innerlichkeit des Gemüts und Denkens zurückgeführt (Hegel, 1970, p. 142).

Since Hegel post-aesthetic philosophers, like the German philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno, have conceived art as having suffered a loss, and as Bernstein underlines, their work therefore always embodies both remembrance, grief and mourning (Bernstein, 1992, p. 4). This intense notion of longing is expressed by both Adorno and Mann, even though in a totally different manner. Let us now take a look at Mann’s *Doktor Faustus* and see how the novel thematizes the ambiguity of music’s alienation.

5. Analysis: *Doktor Faustus*

Already the full title of Mann’s novel, *Doktor Faustus. Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn erzählt von einem Freunde*, anticipates an important fact: Leverkühn’s life story will not be told by a distant objective narrator. In fact, it is Adrian’s childhood friend Serenus Zeitblom, classical philologist and teacher at a grammar school in Bavarian Freising, who intends to write a “gewiss sehr vorläufige Biographie des teuren, vom Schicksal so furchtbar heimgesuchten, erhobenen und gestürzten Mannes und genialen Musikers” (Mann, 2012, p. 11).

Zeitblom wants to tell Leverkühn’s story without drawing too much attention on himself, as he explicitly underlines in the very first sentence of his work (Mann, 2012, p. 11). That he in fact does the exact opposite from the very beginning becomes clear in many ways:

Zeitblom is distracted and has to start anew several times, “- ich bitte wieder ansetzen zu dürfen” (Mann, 2012, p. 11), in order to organize his thoughts. He is unsure, “ob ich meiner ganzen Existenz nach der rechte Mann für diese Aufgabe bin“ (Mann, 2012, p. 11), and interrupts himself regularly „mit dem beschämenden Gefühl artistischer Verfehlung” (Mann, 2012, p. 13). Inevitably, the reader becomes gradually aware of Zeitblom’s insecurity and starts to question the narrator’s reliability, especially when Zeitblom presents himself as “Nachfahre der deutschen Humanisten” (Mann, 2012, p. 12) and notes:

Das Dämonische, so wenig ich mir herausnehme, seinen Einfluss auf das Menschenleben zu leugnen, habe ich jederzeit als entschieden wesensfremd empfunden, es instinktiv aus meinem Weltbilde ausgeschaltet und niemals die leiseste Neigung verspürt, mich mit den unteren Mächten verwegen einzulassen, sie gar im Übermut herauszufordern, oder ihnen, wenn sie von sich aus versuchend an mich herantraten, auch nur den kleinen Finger zu reichen (Mann, 2012, p. 12).

It becomes clear that Zeitblom will tell his readers a horrific story full of “Einsamkeit” (Mann, 2012, p. 11) and “Kälte” (Mann, 2012, p. 15) from which he explicitly wants to dissociate himself. Full of horror, he even mentions „die Ausübung eines grässlichen Kaufvertrages” (Mann, 2012, p. 13), indicating that Adrian Leverkühn just like his famous precursor Faust signed a deal with the devil himself.

5.1 Adrian’s intoxication

In his essay *Schopenhauer-Leser Thomas Mann* from 1983, the German literary scholar Hans Wysling emphasizes the importance of the *Leitmotiv* of intoxication in many of Mann’s works (Wysling, 1983, p. 63). As an example Wysling focuses on Thomas Buddenbrook’s death vision, a lifechanging dream Thomas experiences right after reading the second part of Schopenhauer’s *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. The book has an intoxicating effect on him, triggering a dream about death as a form of liberation of the Self:

Er fühlte sein ganzes Wesen auf ungeheuerliche Art geweitet und von einer schweren, dunklen Trunkenheit erfüllt; seinen Sinn umnebelt und vollständig berauscht von irgendetwas unsäglich Neuem, Lockendem und Verheißungsvollem, das an erste, hoffende Liebesehnsucht gemahnte (Mann, 2020, p. 655).

This Schopenhauerian experience Hans Wysling describes as a typical motive in Thomas Mann's literary work. Every time the intoxication produces intense feelings of satisfaction while denying life and its corresponding challenges. Wysling writes:

Ob sie nun mit Zigarettenrauch, Alkohol, Krankheit oder andern Zaubermitteln intoxikieren: immer führt solche Vergiftung zu einer Entgrenzung der Individualität, zu einem lustvollen Abgleiten ins Raum- und Zeitlose, und immer ist solches Versinken mit einem tiefen Glücksgefühl verbunden. Im Tod zerbricht der Mensch die Schranken des *principii individuationis*, geht er ein, geht er zurück in das Reich des allgegenwärtigen Willens (Wysling, 1983, p. 63).

In Mann's *Doktor Faustus* there can be found several such instances of intoxication. A more subtle one, is the moment Adrian starts indulging into music:

[D]enn tatsächlich war es um sein vierzehntes Jahr, zur Zeit beginnender Pubeszenz also und des Heraustretens aus dem Stande kindlicher Unschuld [...], dass er auf eigene Hand begann, mit der Musik pianistisch zu experimentieren. Übrigens war dies auch die Zeit, in der die ererbte Migräne anfang, ihm böse Tage zu machen (Mann, 2012, pp. 52–53).

It is when Adrian plays on his piano for the first time, that he starts developing headaches (Mann, 2012, p. 53). This migraine worsens overtime, congruent with Adrian's growing ambitions to delve into the secrets of music. In the very same sentence quoted above, Zeitblom also connects music to the loss of innocence, "des Heraustretens aus dem Stande kindlicher Unschuld" (Mann, 2012, p. 52). Music is thereby from the very beginning associated with both illness and dishonour, two central motives closely related to decadence and decline.

After moving to Leipzig in order to start his music studies with Wendell Kretzschmar, Adrian Leverkühn meets a mysterious man, "ein Kerl, einen Strick um den Leib, mit roter Mütze und Messingschild, im Wetterumhang, teuflisch redend" (Mann, 2012, p. 207) who shows him around and finally, without preparing Adrian, brings him to a brothel. There Adrian meets his Esmeralda, "eine Bräunliche, in spanischem Jäckchen, mit großem Mund, Stumpfnase und Mandelaugen" (Mann, 2012, p. 209) who touches his arm after Adrian played a few chords on a nearby standing piano. Totally overwhelmed, Adrian flees the brothel. It took him a year before he finally returned to meet Esmeralda: "Ein ganzes Jahr lang behauptete sich der Stolz des Geistes gegen die empfangene Verwundung" (Mann, 2012, p. 224). This time Adrian deliberately infects himself with syphilis, sleeping with Esmeralda despite her warnings

(Mann, 2012, p. 225). Again it was music which led to a disaster: It was only after Adrian played the piano that Esmeralda touched his arm, causing the fatal intoxication.

By describing Adrian's return to the brothel as an "Erliegen vor dem nackten Triebe, der ihn hämisch berührt hatte" (Mann, 2012, p. 224), Esmeralda is associated with the unescapable drive of the will, described in Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* from 1819. In this work Arthur Schopenhauer argues that the world of objects only exists in representation, "in unserer Vorstellung" (Schopenhauer, 1960, p. 31): Even though the world appears to a subject's mind, it cannot be considered real. The only existing essence, the "Ding an sich" (Kant, 2016, pp. 17) as Immanuel Kant calls it in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, lying behind all phenomena of life, is the aimless striving will (Schopenhauer, 1960, p. 33). This *Wille* is due to Schopenhauer the true source of human suffering, only temporarily escapable through the experience of art:

So viel leistet ganz allein die innere Kraft eines künstlerischen Gemütes: aber erleichtert und von außen befördert wird jene rein objektive Gemütsstimmung durch entgegenkommende Objekte, durch die zu ihrem Anschauen einladende, ja sich aufdringende Fülle der schönen Natur. Ihr gelingt es, sooft sie mit einem Male unserm Blicke sich auftut, fast immer, uns, wenn auch nur auf Augenblicke, der Subjektivität, der Sklavendienste des Willens zu entreißen (Schopenhauer, 1960, p. 281).

Adrian as a human being, existing in time and space, never had a chance to escape from the grip of the all-determining will as Zeitblom states: "Denn schmerzlich und beschämend – außer etwa für die Bosheit – ist der Gedanke, dass Reinheit dem Leben im Fleische nicht gegeben ist, dass der Trieb den geistigsten Stolz nicht scheut" (Mann, 2012, p. 216). It was Schopenhauer's *Wille*, personalized by the prostitute Esmeralda, that took away Adrian's "Harnisch von Reinheit, Keuschheit, intellektuellem Stolz [und] kühler Ironie" (Mann, 2012, p. 216) and initiated Adrian's contact with the dark forces.

5.2 Wendell Kretzschmar and Theodor Adorno: Questions of hope

Just like Gustav von Aschenbach and Hanno Buddenbrook in *Der Tod in Venedig* and *Buddenbrooks*, Adrian Leverkühn turns towards the aesthetic for temporary relief. In fact Leverkühn's decision to study composition must be seen as a Schopenhauerian "Verneinung des Willens zum Leben" (Schopenhauer, 1960, p. 457), a denial of life itself. Especially later in the novel, when the devil forces Adrian to live an ascetic life without ever being able to

experience love and affection, thereby connecting music to the denial of earthly delights, this fact becomes evident. Schopenhauer writes in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*:

Daher ist freiwillige und durch gar kein Motiv begründete Entsagung der Befriedigung jenes Triebes [des Geschlechtstriebes] schon *Verneinung des Willens zum Leben*, ist eine [...] freiwillige Selbstaufhebung desselben; demgemäß stellt solche Verneinung des eigenen Leibes sich schon als ein Widerspruch des Willens gegen seine eigene Erscheinung dar (Schopenhauer, 1960, p. 457, italics mine).

Adrian Leverkühn tries to escape the aimless striving will by making music become a contemplative but, at the same time, fragile way of life.

This impulse did not however come naturally to him: On the contrary, it was his later teacher Wendell Kretzschmar who first aroused Adrian's interest in music when Adrian reached puberty. Before teaching composition at the Leipzig Conservatory of Music, the American organist from Pennsylvania gave regular lectures at the town hall of Kaisersaschern, lectures which both Leverkühn and Zeitblom attended (Mann, 2012, p. 76).

Kretzschmar was "ein Mann von großem, drängendem Gedankenreichtum" (Mann, 2012, p. 77) but had severe difficulties in expressing himself because of his excessive stuttering, especially, as Zeitblom underlines, when pronouncing the words 'death' and 'music' (Mann, 2012, p. 82). While incessantly trying his best, "mit der unheimlichen Leichtigkeit, die das Leiden verleugnen und in Vergessenheit bringen möchte" (Mann, 2012, p. 77), Kretzschmar holds his lectures in front of empty seats with only a handful of attendees:

[S]ei es [...], dass plötzlich seine Atmung in heillos hapernde Unordnung geriet [...] – mit den gefeuchteten Augen dazu lachend, das ist wahr, er selbst schien die Sache heiter zu nehmen, aber nicht für jedermann war das ein Trost, und im Grunde war es dem Publikum nicht zu verargen, dass es diese Vorlesungen mied (Mann, 2012, p. 77).

As the German literary scholar Thomas Klugkist notes in his study *Sehnsuchtskosmogonie*, Wendell Kretzschmar gives the overall impression of a demoniac, being "auf die Folter gespannt, mit seinem rot anschwellendem Gesicht" (Mann, 2012, p. 77; Klugkist, 2000, p. 153). With his Kretzschmar character Thomas Mann consciously defines music as a destructive force, subtly alluding to the moment when Leverkühn himself will sign a deal with the devil.

5.2.1 The Beethoven lectures

In chapter eight Zeitblom tells his readers about Kretzschmar's lectures on Beethoven, highlighting especially Kretzschmar's talk on the question "warum Beethoven zu der Klaviersonate opus 111 keinen dritten Satz geschrieben habe" (Mann, 2012, pp. 78–79). In his passionate performance, both playing the piano and heavily gesticulating, Kretzschmar outlines the exceptionality of Beethoven's late style. In *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus* Thomas Mann underlines the immense importance of Adorno's helping hand when writing the chapter on Kretzschmar's Beethoven lectures:

Dann spielte mir Adorno, während ich zuschauend bei ihm am Flügel stand, die Sonate opus 111 [von Beethoven] vollständig und auf höchst instruktive Art. Ich war nie aufmerksamer gewesen, stand am nächsten Morgen früh auf und widmete drei Tage einer eingreifenden Um- und Ausarbeitung des Sonatenvortrags, die eine bedeutende Bereicherung und Verschönerung des Kapitels, ja des Buches selbst bedeutete (Mann, 1976, pp. 711–712).

Even though Thomas Mann "quotes" extensively from Adorno's 1934 essay *Spätstil Beethovens* when forming Kretzschmar's lectures, Kretzschmar's decadent conclusions could not be further away from Adorno's initial intentions. For Kretzschmar Beethoven has exhausted the sonata form, most evidently through the completeness of its thematic variation in the arietta movement (McFarland, 2007, p. 122): "Ein dritter Satz? Ein neues Anheben – nach diesem Abschied? Ein Wiederkommen nach dieser Trennung? Unmöglich! Es sei geschehen, dass die Sonate im zweiten Satz, diesem enormen, sich zu Ende geführt habe, zu Ende auf Nimmerwiederkehr" (Mann, 2012, p. 85).

In *Spätstil Beethovens* Adorno too defines Beethoven's late style as the end of a musical era, highlighting Beethoven's renunciation of subjectivity: "Die Gewalt der Subjektivität in den späten Kunstwerken ist die auffahrende Geste, mit welcher sie die Kunstwerke verlässt. Sie sprengt sie, nicht um sich auszudrücken, sondern um ausdruckslos den Schein der Kunst abzuwerfen" (Adorno, 1982, p. 15). To Adorno, the law of form resists being subsumed by subjective expression which is why Beethoven's listeners will encounter forms that are distant, seemingly devoid of expression (Adorno, 1982, p. 13). While highlighting music's relationship with death, Adorno does not, like Mann, regard death as the completion of something but rather as the emergence of objectivity in the subject: "Vom Tode berührt, gibt die meisterliche Hand die Stoffmassen frei, die sie zuvor formte; die Risse und Sprünge darin, Zeugnis der endlichen Ohnmacht des Ichs vorm Seienden, sind ihr letztes Werk" (Adorno, 1982, p. 15). To Adorno,

it is music's proximity to death which disrupts the beautiful *Schein* of the work of art as a totality in Beethoven's late work. It is here Adorno sees Beethoven's genius as a source of hope:

Jeglicher Ausdruck von Hoffnung, wie er von den großen Kunstwerken noch im Zeitalter ihres Verstummens mächtiger ausgeht als von den überlieferten theologischen Texten, ist konfiguriert mit dem des Menschlichen; nirgends unzweideutiger als in den Augenblicken Beethovens (Adorno, 2003, p. 389).

In fact to Adorno it is art's newly achieved autonomous form which gives it the possibility of persistently changing people's distorted attitudes (Adorno, 2019, p. 9). Because of art's inherent contingency, art cannot force but only inspire people to take better decisions. It is Adorno's belief in the fulfilment of reason, "die Erfüllung des Aufklärungsversprechens" (Wesche, 2018, p. 197) which motivates him to hope for a gradual improvement of society. To Adorno art is therefore always closely connected to the situation of society in general, as the American musicologist Rose Rosengard Subotnik underlines in her essay *Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition* from 1976:

Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), an outstanding musical scholar, philosopher, and critic who developed some provocative theories of art: that Western art has tended toward increasing autonomy from society; that the more autonomous the work of art is, the more deeply it embodies the most profound social tendencies of its time; and that proper analysis can decipher the social meaning of artistic structure so as to criticize art and society simultaneously (Subotnik, 1976, p. 242).

Even though Adorno agrees with Hegel and Bernstein on the fact that art's autonomy caused a loss of truth function, he also sees art's autonomy as a new opportunity.

Thomas Mann on the other hand perceives Beethoven as a composer having reached a form of terminal exhaustion. Death to Mann means completion or as Wysling calls it "das Reich des allgegenwärtigen Willens" (Wysling, 1983, p. 63). Beethoven has reached a limit which composers after him will never overcome. Mann thematizes music's loss of subjectivity just like Adorno but at the same time translates Adorno's thoughts into something mystical and transcendent. Wendell Kretzschmar explains:

Das Charakteristikum des Satzes ist ja das weite Auseinander von Bass und Diskant, von rechter und linker Hand, und ein Augenblick kommt, eine extreme Situation, wo das arme Motiv einsam

und verlassen über einem schwindelnd klaffenden Abgrund zu schweben scheint – ein Vorgang bleicher Erhabenheit, dem alsbald ein ängstlich Sich-klein-Machen, ein banges Erschrecken auf dem Fuße folgt, darüber gleichsam, dass so etwas geschehen konnte (Mann, 2012, p. 84).

Leverkühn's following indulgence into twelve-tone serialism as provoked by the devil in chapter 25 is for Mann not only a necessary development of modern music, but most of all a horrible symptom of art having lost its vital connection to reality. Leverkühn's downfall is to Mann an inevitable consequence of an indulgence into "art [which has lost] its capacity to speak the truth concerning our most fundamental categorical engagements and commitments" (Bernstein, 1992, p. 5).

5.3 Adrian Leverkühn and the devil

The famous "Zwiegespräch" (Mann, 2012, p. 323) between Leverkühn and the devil is the only scene in the entire *Doktor Faustus* which is narrated by Adrian himself. Zeitblom shares a chronicle with his readers, a written record of Adrian's meeting with the devil, which he found in Leverkühn's belongings after his death three years ago:

Der biographische Augenblick seiner [Adrian Leverkühns] Einschaltung ist gekommen. Da ich seinem eigenwillig gewählten, mit dem Schlesier geteilten Refugium, worin ich ihn aufgesucht, im Geiste wieder den Rücken gekehrt habe, setzt meine Rede aus, und unmittelbar vernimmt in diesem fünfundzwanzigsten Kapitel der Leser die seine (Mann, 2012, p. 323).

Adrian recounts a meeting which was both "unerwartet und doch längst erwartet" (Mann, 2012, p. 324), subtly alluding to the fact that he already did evil deeds through his various attempts of achieving musical progress at a time when the self-contained *Schein* of music had become impossible: "Gewisse Dinge sind nicht mehr möglich" (Mann, 2012, p. 352), the devil states, starting a complex assessment of modern art's decadent fate. Again Thomas Mann draws heavily from Adorno, especially quoting his manuscript of *Philosophie der neuen Musik* which Mann received as early as 1943 (Adorno, 2003, p. 218).

In his introduction to *Philosophie der neuen Musik* Theodor Adorno argues that modern music had to undergo a radical process of autonomization as a necessary way of reacting to the rising commercialization of art, "die Ausbreitung der Kulturindustrie" (Adorno, 1990, p. 15): "Jene Abwendung der modernen Malerei von der Gegenständlichkeit, die dort den Bruch bezeichnet wie hier die Atonalität, war bestimmt von der Defensive gegen die mechanisierte Kunstware [...]" (Adorno, 1990, p. 15). Only by rejecting established aesthetic conventions, art

had a chance to dissociate itself from both mass production and mass distribution: “Was vor dem Bruch galt, die Konstitution musikalischen Zusammenhangs durch Tonalität, ist unwiederbringlich dahin” (Adorno, 1990, p. 16).

Just like Adorno the devil in *Doktor Faustus* states that earlier conventions have to be discarded in order to produce ingenious art: “Der Anspruch, das Allgemeine als im Besonderen harmonisch enthalten zu denken, dementiert sich selbst. Es ist geschehen um die vorweg und verpflichtend geltenden Konventionen, die die Freiheit des Spiels gewährleisten” (Mann, 2012, pp. 352–353). The devil promises Adrian Leverkühn a release from the “unüberwindlichen Schwierigkeiten heutigen Komponierens” (Mann, 2012, p. 353). He tempts Adrian with luscious prospects:

Du wirst führen, du wirst der Zukunft den Marsch schlagen, auf deinen Namen werden die Buben schwören, die dank deiner Tollheit es nicht mehr nötig haben, toll zu sein. Von deiner Tollheit werden sie in Gesundheit zehren, und in ihnen wirst du gesund sein (Mann, 2012, p. 355).

With this statement Thomas Mann clearly distances himself from Adorno’s philosophy. By associating the genius of the artist with the fatal state of sickness, Mann again associates music with destruction and decadence:

Und ich will’s meinen, dass schöpferische, Genie spendende Krankheit, Krankheit, die hoch zu Ross die Hindernisse nimmt, in kühnem Rausch von Fels zu Felsen sprengt, tausendmal dem Leben lieber ist, als die zu Fuße latschende Gesundheit. [...] Eine ganze Horde und Generation empfänglich-kerngesunder Buben stürzt sich auf das Werk des kranken Genius, des von Krankheit Genialisierten, bewundert, preist, erhebt es [...] (Mann, 2012, pp. 354–355).

Adrian’s infection with syphilis is confirmed as a symbol of the acquisition of musical genius, a gift by Schopenhauer’s *Wille* which is doomed to cause Leverkühn’s downfall. The devil even admits that he was the one causing Adrian’s intoxication and that it was through the syphilis infection that the contract between him and the devil was sealed: “So richteten wir’s dir mit Fleiß, dass du uns in die Arme lieferst, will sagen: meiner Kleinen, der Esmeralda, und dass du’s dir holtest, die Illumination [...]. Wir sind im Vertrage und im Geschäft, - mit deinem Blut hast du’s bezeugt” (Mann, 2012, p. 362).

5.3.1 Twelve-tone serialism as a last resort

“Ordnung ist alles” (Mann, 2012, p. 278), Adrian already states before meeting the devil in chapter 25. The deal with the devil is thereby indeed only an affirmation of Adrian’s inner tendencies which he already explored as a teenager. In his meeting with Adrian, the devil confirms this assumption: “[D]ie Kleinen machen nichts Neues und Fremdes aus dir, sie verstärken und übertreiben nur sinnreich alles, was du bist” (Mann, 2012, p. 364).

In fact, Adrian already philosophizes about twelve-tone-serialism when studying music in Leipzig. When taking a walk with Zeitblom, Adrian expresses the necessity of organizing music in a new way, by an “Unterordnung unter Gesetz, Regel, Zwang, System” (Mann, 2012, pp. 277–278). The rational organisation of twelve-tone serialism is to Adrian a new possible way of reimposing the power Beethoven lost in his late years:

Man müsste [...] aus den zwölf Stufen des temperierten Halbton-Alphabets größere Wörter bilden, Wörter von zwölf Buchstaben, bestimmte Kombinationen und Interrelationen der zwölf Halbtöne, Reihenbildungen [...] Jeder Ton der gesamten Komposition, melodisch und harmonisch, müsste sich über seine Beziehung zu dieser vorbestimmten Grundreihe auszuweisen haben. Keiner dürfte wiederkehren, ehe alle anderen erschienen sind (Mann, 2012, p. 280).

The equivalent excerpt from Adorno’s *Philosophie der Neuen Musik* shows how excessively Mann quotes from his colleague. Similar to Mann, Adorno writes:

[D]ass kein Ton wiederkehre, ehe die Musik alle anderen ergriffe hat; dass keine Note erscheine, die nicht in der Konstruktion des Ganzen ihre motivische Funktion erfüllt; dass keine Harmonie verwendet werde, die nicht eindeutig an dieser Stelle sich ausweist. [...] Die totale Rationalität der Musik ist ihre totale Organisation. Durch Organisation möchte die befreite Musik das verlorene Ganze, die verlorene Macht und Verbindlichkeit Beethovens wiederherstellen (Adorno, 1990, pp. 69–70).

The similarities between these two excerpts are remarkable: Both Adorno and Mann declare twelve-tone serialism as an inevitable development of modern music. Only by following stricter rules than ever before, music has the possibility to gradually develop. There is still one striking difference which cannot be ignored: Thomas Mann associates twelve-tone serialism with an evil and destructive force: It is the devil’s work. Right before his breakdown in the end of the novel Adrian declares: “Es ist die Zeit, wo auf fromme, nüchterne Weis, mit rechten Dingen,

kein Werk mehr zu tun und die Kunst unmöglich geworden ist ohne Teufelshilf und höllisches Feuer unter dem Kessel” (Mann, 2012, p. 723).

5.3.2 Music as the most Christian form of art

Already when taking a closer look at Adrian’s course of study, music’s close connection to theology becomes evident. It is no coincidence that Adrian chose theology before starting his music studies, and what is even more important: It is no coincidence that he gives up theology in favour of music. Just like art achieved its autonomy through its separation from Christianity, as stated by Hegel in his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Adrian gains independence by leaving theology behind. This independence is not resulting in new positive opportunities though, as it would have for Adorno, in contrary Adrian’s rejection of religion is treated as another act of evil. Adrian himself confesses to his friends the day of his final breakdown: “Merkt es nur [...] sondern achtbare liebe Freunde, dass ihrs mit einem Gottverlassenen und Verzweifelten zu tun habt, dessen Leichnam nicht an geweihten Ort gehört, zu frommen abgestorbenen Christen, sondern auf den Schindwasen zu den Kadavern verreckten Viehes” (Mann, 2012, p. 722). Adrian was born to be evil, he confesses, or in other words: He was born to be a musical genius. Alluding to his affair with Esmeralda, Adrian states: “Denn schon lange bevor ich mit dem giftigen Falter koste, [...] war meine Seel in Hochmut und Stolz zu dem Satan unterwegs gewesen. [...] [I]ch war zur Höllen geboren” (Mann, 2012, p. 722).

That theology would not have been a more pious alternative to music, is pronounced clearly by both the devil and Adrian. The devil defines music as the most Christian form of art, “eine hochtheologische Angelegenhet, die Musik – wie die Sünde es ist, wie ich es bin” (Mann, 2012, p. 353), while Adrian defines his theology studies as the very beginning of the satanic deal (Mann, 2012, p. 723). Even Adrian’s theology professor Dr. Eberhard Schlepffuß notes “dass die Theologie ihrer Natur nach dazu neigt und unter bestimmten Umständen jederzeit dazu neigen muss, zur Dämonologie zu werden” (Mann, 2012, p. 147). Due to Schlepffuß God gave human beings the freedom of will in order to enable them to commit sins, as he explains in one of his lectures: “Freiheit ist die Freiheit zu sündigen, und Frömmigkeit besteht darin, von der Freiheit aus Liebe zu Gott, der sie geben musste, keinen Gebrauch zu machen” (Mann, 2012, p. 150). Schlepffuß’ claim can thereby easily be transmitted to art and its newly achieved power of autonomy: Just like the freedom of will necessarily results in the commitment of sins, art’s autonomy inevitably has to end in destruction and despair.

To Mann music and theology are thereby still heavily intertwined and form a crucial part of each other’s existence. As the American literary scholar George Schoolfield states in his

study *The Figure of the Musician in German Literature* to Mann “music is at once knowledge (in the theological sense) and decay” (Schoolfield, 1956, p. 173).

6. Aesthetic Alienation in *Doktor Faustus*: A new focus

Thomas Mann’s immanent urge to depict art, and especially music, as the key source of destruction has been a centre of interest for scholars throughout the literary world for years. When examining the various potential allegories in Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, earlier scholarship has shown a tendency to impose some kind of hidden meaning on to Mann’s novel, a fact which Thomas Klugkist heavily criticizes in his study *Sehnsuchtskosmogonie*:

Untersuchungen, die den *Doktor Faustus* nicht vor allem als eine verhüllte These auffassen, sich nicht fragen, ob die in dieser These enthaltene Ansicht auf die Wirklichkeit „zutrifft“, mit ihr „übereinstimmt“ und somit „richtig“ ist, die nicht prüfen, ob eine offenkundig verwendete Quelle auch „korrekt“ verwendet wurde, als müssen man dem Roman seine Unwissenschaftlichkeit erst beweisen, sind bis heute rar (Klugkist, 2000, p. 13).

From the 1950s onwards, Mann’s *Doktor Faustus* is generally viewed as a poetic composition which in its essence conveys Mann’s already well-known political views on Germany’s fatal conduct during the Second World War (Klugkist, 2000, p. 13). This fact is hardly remarkable when reading Mann’s speech *Deutschland und die Deutschen* from 1945. Here Mann writes:

[D]er Teufel, Luthers Teufel, Faustens Teufel, will mir als eine sehr deutsche Figur erscheinen, das Bündnis mit ihm, die Teufelsschreibung, um unter Drangabe des Seelenheils für eine Frist alle Schätze und Macht der Welt zu gewinnen, als etwas dem deutschen Wesen eigentümlich Naheliegendes (Mann, 1996, p. 264).

Especially Thomas Mann’s controversial belief in Germany’s *Kollektivschuld*, its collective guilt for penetrating the Holocaust and starting the Second World War, a view which was heavily criticized by Mann’s fellow expat Bertolt Brecht, has been regarded as a key point in understanding Mann’s novel (Klugkist, 2000, pp. 9–10). Even when directly comparing Theodor Adorno’s music philosophy with Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, as I have done in this study, scholars often emphasize the novel’s socio-political context:

One example is Evelyn Cobley’s multifaceted essay *Avant-Garde Aesthetics and Fascist-Politics: Thomas Mann’s Doctor Faustus and Theodor W. Adorno’s “Philosophie of Modern Music”*, published in *The New German Critique* in 2002. To her Mann’s *Doktor*

Faustus addresses first of all the problem of the extent to which Germany can or cannot be exonerated from guilt (Cobley, 2002, p. 49). She writes: “Leverkühn’s fate marks Mann’s despair over the redemptive qualities of art in the face of fascist totalitarianism” (Cobley, 2002, p. 48). Due to Cobley it is Adorno’s insistence that art “can alert us to the *untruths* blinding us to our social and cultural situation” (Cobley, 2002, p. 54), which Mann incorporates into his novel. She thereby emphasizes art’s awareness of the “untruth of society” (Cobley, 2002, p. 54) which allowed fascism to establish itself.

With this statement Evelyn Cobley subtly touches the aesthetic problem of the modern age depicted by Jay Bernstein in *The Fate of Art*. While also emphasizing the growing autonomy of art as a central aspect in *Doktor Faustus*, Cobley still connects its depiction to socio-political conditions: “When Mann has Leverkühn go insane, he seems to suggest that the autonomous subject cannot withstand the pressures of the socio-political world” (Cobley, 2002, p. 51).

Even though the socio-political background of course is a crucial part of Mann’s novel, maybe even the most important one, I tried to show how Thomas Mann thematizes the aesthetic problem regardless of the threatening rise of fascist totalitarianism. The fact is, that music has negative connotations not only in Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, but also in literary works written long before the rise of German national socialism. Consequently the aesthetic crisis of modernity must have been something Mann was aware of already from the very beginning of his literary career.

7. Aesthetic Alienation in *Doktor Faustus*: A conclusion

Due to Jay Bernstein the relegation of art and aesthetics to what is outside truth and goodness “occurred as a consequence of a double isolation: first through the diremption of the question of moral value from questions of truth and falsity [...] and secondly, through the separation of artistic worth from moral worth” (Bernstein, 1992, p. 2). While defining the growing separation of spheres as a symptom of modernity, Bernstein asks his readers some challenging questions:

What can we make of a domain in which questions of truth, goodness, efficacy, even pleasure [...] are eliminated at the outset? What sort of beast might beauty be if in considering it we are not considering how the world is (truth), how we do or should comport ourselves in the world (morality), or what might be useful or pleasurable to us? (Bernstein, 1992, p. 3).

I believe that Thomas Mann's novel *Doktor Faustus* can be regarded as a devastating answer to Bernstein's burning questions: Adrian Leverkühn is precisely this "beast" (Bernstein, 1992, p. 3), finding himself trapped in the modern world where truthful artistic exertion has become impossible. Like art itself, having gradually evolved into an autonomous sphere, Adrian isolates himself from his surroundings, first by substituting theology with music and then by voluntarily accepting the devil's demand to never love again.

Adrian's self-imposed syphilis infection through his relationship with Esmeralda must be viewed as a Schopenhauerian *Verneinung des Willens zum Lebens*, initiating Adrian's total indulgence into music. It is through this intoxication, so representative for Mann's literary work, that Adrian seals the deal with the devil and turns towards a totally new, and as presented in the *Doktor Faustus*, a totally devilish composition style: Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique. Only by following stricter rules than composers have ever done before and thereby forcing himself to uncompromising subjugation, Adrian has a relevant possibility to practice his art. In concordance with Schopenhauer's definition of art as being the only possible way to temporarily escape the aimless striving will, Adrian's musical indulgence necessarily has to end in suffering: Adrian gradually goes insane and finally dies at the age of 55.

In order to convincingly construct his *Musikerroman*, Thomas Mann received regular advice by Theodor Adorno. As this study has shown, Mann quotes excessively from Adorno's writings, incorporating Adorno's music philosophy into his novel. Even though Mann occasionally chooses to transmit entire sentences from Adorno's work, Mann's general conclusions are remarkably far away from Adorno's:

Theodor Adorno's notion of hope for initial reconciliation is in no respect part of Mann's aesthetic understanding. It is most of all Mann's Schopenhauerian roots which make Adorno's optimistic perspectives impossible. To Mann, art has lost its vital connection to reality and is therefore forced to express both self-denial and destruction. Just like art, Adrian Leverkühn is deprived of essential key values like goodness, truth and morality because of his isolation from the surrounding world due to his musical genius. This genius is portrayed as a form of sickness which clearly separates Adrian from other people. Adrian's tragic downfall impersonates the ominous fate of modern art: Instead of Adorno's reconciliation, the reader of *Doktor Faustus* witnesses both growing separation and segregation. Art's aesthetic alienation is by Thomas Mann depicted as insuperable.

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