

Infectious wishes. On projection and transference in Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*

1. Projection and transference

„Projektion ist das Verfolgen eigener Wünsche in anderen.“ With this concise definition, close to an aphorism (and, I add, another demonstration of Freud's brilliant literary capacities), Freud opens the dialectic of inside-outside that determines the psychoanalytical notion of projection. In Freud's terms, projection functions as a kind of inversion, a turning things upside down or inside out.¹ In his reflections on an autobiographical case of paranoia, Freud describes projection as follows: „Eine innere Wahrnehmung wird unterdrückt und zum Ersatz für sie kommt ihr Inhalt, nachdem er eine gewisse Entstellung erfahren hat, als Wahrnehmung von außen zum Bewußtsein“ (GS VIII, 303). A common example in Freud's argumentation is the conversion of the unconscious feeling „I hate him“ into the conviction „he hates me“, which authorizes the pursuit of the so called enemy. Paranoia not only goes along with a strong aggressive tendency and with a sort of auto-authorisation of the use of violence, but also with a fundamental form of ignorance, as Laplanche and Pontalis have worked out. They define projection as the „opération par laquelle le sujet expulse de soi et localise dans l'autre, personne ou chose, des qualités, sentiments, des désirs, voire des 'objets', qu'il méconnaît ou refuse en lui. Il s'agit là d'une défense d'origine très archaïque et qu'on retrouve à l'œuvre dans la paranoïa mais aussi dans des modes des pensées 'normaux' comme la superstition.“² Laplanche and Pontalis describe ignorance or a refusal to acknowledge as fundamental parts of projection. Projection as a technical term implies a form of ignorance that corresponds to the psychoanalytical supposition of the unconsciousness as an instance that will never be accessible to the claims of rationality.

In accordance with Freud, Horkheimer and Adorno recognise in the psychoanalytical term of projection a dialectic of inside and outside that forms an opposite to the Aristotelian notion of mimesis: „Wenn Mimesis sich der Umwelt ähnlich macht, so macht falsche Projektion die Umwelt sich ähnlich.“³ The notion of false projection is derivated from the idea of an authentic form of mimesis as an intelligent technique of survival. While mimesis implies intelligence and ruse, false projection, understood as failure of reflection, is linked on the

¹ Laplanche/Pontalis define projection as „l'opération par laquelle un fait neurologique ou psychologique est déplacé et localisé à l'extérieur, soit en passant du centre à la périphérie, soit du sujet à l'objet.“ Jean Laplanche/J.-B. Pontalis: *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, Paris 1997, S. 343.

² Ebd., S. 344.

³ Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno: *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, S. 196.

contrary with blindness and stupidity. Paranoia, antisemitism and all kinds of regression into archaism and primitivism testify to the fatal consequences of false projection. Horkheimer and Adorno's opposition between good mimesis and false projection raises of course the question whether a distinction between false and good projection as well as between good and bad mimesis is possible. Is there anything like good projection? Horkheimer and Adorno don't answer this question. What they do, instead, is establish a link between projection and transference: „Die psychoanalytische Theorie der pathischen Projektion hat als deren Substanz die Übertragung gesellschaftlich tabuisierter Regungen des Subjekts auf das Objekt erkannt.“⁴ The link between projection and transference stated by Horkheimer and Adorno seems to be narrow. Psychoanalytic theory itself already referred to the notion of transference to explain the phenomenon of projection. The link between projection and transference seems to be so close that Laplanche and Pontalis even warn against confounding the two terms. In their eyes, projection can play an important role in transference, but is not a constitutive part of it.⁵ No matter how one defines the relation between projection and transference, both terms are founded in a certain kind of refusal of recognition: „Il s'agit toujours de rejeter au-dehors ce qu'on refuse de reconnaître en soi-même ou d'être soi-même.”⁶ With these words, Laplanche and Pontalis stress the interplay of ignorance and projection. Ignorance not only plays a central role in projection, but also in transference. The well-known fact of transference as an ambiguous part of the psychoanalytic cure, the amorousness of the patient seems, on the one hand, to be grounded in a projection that confounds the psychoanalyst with the image of the father, brother or friend. On the other hand, the transference resides in a subtle game of betrayal. If transference implies the repetition of infantile mechanisms, its aim lies in deceiving the psychoanalyst. The talking cure in psychoanalysis is determined by mutual trials of betrayal, finding its end in the ultimate form of transference, in love. The so called „Übertragungsliebe”, love-transference, is nothing but a desperate way to deceive the psychoanalyst and to avoid the painful process of healing. In this sense, love seems to be nothing but an act of seduction, aiming to hide what the patient does not want his interlocutor to see.

If projection and transference represent similar terms that imply a fundamental form of ignorance, the aim of this investigation can not be to draw a sharp distinction between

⁴ Ebd., S. 201.

⁵ „On notera encore qu'un psychanalyste n'assimilera pas le transfert dans son ensemble à une projection; en revanche, il reconnaîtra comment la projection peut y jouer un rôle. Par exemple, il dira que le sujet projette sur son analyste son surmoi et trouve dans cette expulsion une situation plus avantageuse, un soulagement à son débat intérieur.” Jean Pontalis/J.-B. Pontalis: Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse, S. 349.

⁶ Ebd.

projection and transference. Of course, the dialectic of inside and outside doesn't play the central role in transference like it does in projection. In a certain way, the notion of projection concerns all forms of perception – „In gewissem Sinne ist alles Wahrnehmen projizieren”⁷, state Horkheimer and Adorno – and seems to be wider than the notion of transference. But on the other hand, the notion of transference as a poetic act of creating metaphorical analogies seems to be wider than that of projection. My interest in the following lines lies not in the attempt to draw a valuable distinction between both terms, but to look at their interplay in a novel that discusses all forms of archaism, primitivism and regression, commonly linked with projection, a novel, that at the same time tries to give an explanation of the foundation of modern art. Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus* offers an insight not only into the combination of projection and love, but also into ignorance as the common ground of projection and transference. I will therefore first try to determine the modernity of Thomas Mann's novel in regard to the abounding intertextual dimension that characterizes the text, and then closely examine the central scene of the novel, the confrontation between Adrian Leverkühn and the obscure figure of the devil.

2. The myth of Faust

When Thomas Mann started to compose his *Doktor Faustus*, he was aware that the subject he treated had more than one model. It seems to be evident that especially Goethe's *Faust* represented for Thomas Mann a pattern with whom he had to deal in the double sense of recognition and anxiety of influence, as worked out by Harold Bloom. Bloom also stresses that with Faust Goethe created a last myth in modern literature. „Goethe is, from a Western perspective, an end rather than a beginning“⁸, notes Harold Bloom in regard to the second part of Goethe's *Faust* as a „Countercanonical Poem“. In the first part, Goethe was fighting against his own genius, in the second part against the whole tradition of literature from the Greeks through Dante and Shakespeare up to Milton. Thomas Mann's lifelong struggle with Goethe is in this sense at same time a struggle with all the influences that Goethe already had to fight against. Like Paul Valéry, Thomas Mann demonstrates in his adaptation of the Faust-myth that to be modern means to overcome Goethe.⁹ For Paul Valéry, the modernity of Faust

⁷ Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno: *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, S. 196.

⁸ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon. The Books and Schools of the Ages*, New York 1984, S. 190.

⁹ „Beiden Faustfiguren – dem Thomas Mannschen ‚Musiker‘ und dem Valéryschen ‚Schriftsteller‘ – geht es in ihrer ästhetischen Produktion um das paradoxe Experiment eines absoluten ‚Durchbruchs‘“, states Christine Lubkoll: ‚Und wär's ein Augenblick‘. Der Sündenfall des Wissens und der Liebeslust in Faustdichtungen von der ‚Historia‘ bis zu Thomas Manns ‚Doktor Faustus‘, Rheinfelden 1986, S. 237.

resides only in one thing: „Tout ce que Goethe a ignoré”¹⁰. In Thomas Mann’s late novel, most of the critics tried to discern an attempt avert Goethe. The text that represents the model for Thomas Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*, seemed not to be Goethe’s tragedy, but the Volksbuch from 1587. In a most remarkable way Thomas Mann finds his inspiration in the anonymous text of the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, edited by Johann Spieß in Frankfurt. Already the self-portrait promoted by the hero of the novel, Adrian Leverkühn, follows the *Historia* in a very close way:

Er habe von Gott einen versatilen Verstand zur Gabe erhalten und von seinen kindlichen Tagen auf ohn sonderbare Mühe alles aufgefaßt, was die Erziehung ihm dargeboten – zu leicht wohl eigentlich, als daß irgend etwas davon bei ihm zu rechtem Ansehen hätte kommen können. Zu leicht, als daß Blut und Sinn sich um eines Gegenstandes willen und durch die Bemühung um ihn je recht hätte erwärmen sollen. ‚Ich fürchte’, schrieb er, ‚lieber Freund und Meister, ich bin ein schlechter Kerl, denn ich habe keine Wärme. Es heißt zwar, verflucht und ausgespien seien die, die weder kalt noch warm, sondern lau sind. Lau möchte ich mich nicht nennen; ich bin entschieden kalt, - aber in meinem Urteil über mich bitte ich mir Unabhängigkeit aus von dem Geschmack der Segen und Fluch verteilenden Macht.’¹¹

Already the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* glorified the scholar’s „trefflich ingenium vnnd memoriam”¹² while criticising at the same time his lack of faith: „Jitem/ da die Freundt seinen geschwinden Kopff gesehen haben / vnd er zu der Theologia nicht viel Lust gehabt”¹³ Even before the famous question of Goethe’s Gretchen, the versatile mind of Faustus seems to resist the claims of religion. Inspired by the moral critique of modern curiosity, the *Historia* can’t help itself from presenting the clever mind as well as a dull head: „Daneben hat er auch einen thummen / vnsinnigen vnnd hoffertigen Kopff gehabt”¹⁴.

Thomas Mann closely follows the Volksbuch in underscoring the extraordinary smartness of Faust. He relates the cleverness of Faust to the motive of Satan’s coldness. Only coldness can protect him against the heat of hell. Leverkühn is crowned with an aura of coldness by Thomas Mann that goes along with a praise of solitude, inspired by Nietzsche.¹⁵ If the lack of

¹⁰ Quoted and commentated by Hans Robert Jauss: *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, Frankfurt am Main 1991, S. 514.

¹¹ Thomas Mann: *Große kommentierte Frankfurter Ausgabe. Werke – Briefe – Tagebücher. Band 10.1. Doktor Faustus. Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde*. Herausgegeben und textkritisch durchgesehen von Ruprecht Wimmer unter Mitarbeit von Stephan Sachorski, Frankfurt am Main 2007, S. 191.

¹² *Historia von D. Johann Fausten. Text des Druckes von 1587. Kritische Ausgabe*, hrsg. von Stephan Füßel und Hans Joachim Kreuzer, Stuttgart 1988, S. 13.

¹³ Ebd., S. 14.

¹⁴ Ebd.

¹⁵ Adorno recognizes in solitude one of main subjects of the novel. „Die ‚einsame Rede’ spricht mehr aus von der gesellschaftlichen Tendenz als die kommunikative.“ Theodor W. Adorno: *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, Frankfurt am Main 1975, S. 48.

social contact is a central experience of Adrian Leverkühn, his solitude is also the hidden background of his pact with the devil. Leverkühn is lonesome, because he rejects all kind of social obligations, concentrating only on the artistic realm of music. Solitude in *Doktor Faustus* is not only a result of the inhuman coldness of the scholar, due to the devil, but also the pathological ground of love and creation as well as of projection and transference.

3. Love and transference: Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*

In spite of the fact that Thomas Mann keeps his adaptation of the Faust-myth close to the *Volksbuch*, he introduces a clause in the contract with the devil that neither the *Historia* nor Goethe knew: the prohibition of love:

Ich (äußerst kalt angeweht): ‚Wie? Das ist neu. Was will die Klausel sagen?‘

Er: ‚Absage will sie sagen. Was sonst? Denkst du, Eifersucht ist nur in den Höhen zuhause und nicht auch in den Tiefen? Uns bist du, feine, erschaffene Creatur, versprochen und verlobt. Du darfst nicht lieben.‘ (10.1, 363)

The interdiction of love that Thomas Mann introduces in his novel doesn't go back to the myth of Faust, but to a completely different source, to Shakespeare's Comedy *Love's Labour's Lost*. An important part of the comedy of love in Shakespeare's drama plays on the tie between transference and ignorance. Even Goethe presented Faust as a sentimental lover and as well as a fool of love. The existence of a strong tie between love and stupidity has already been stressed by Avital Ronell: „Love indicates one of the few sites where it is permitted publicly to be stupid.”¹⁶ Love and stupidity form a couple. In Shakespeare's comedy, the stupidity of love is balanced by the question of wit and its metaphorical representation in the „discours amoureux” that Roland Barthes pointed out: „Tout est parti de ce principe: qu'il ne fallait pas réduire l'amoureux à un simple sujet symptomal, mais plutôt faire entendre ce qu'il y a dans sa voix d'inactuel, c'est-à-dire d'intraitable.”¹⁷ Not to reduce the language of love to a symptom signifies the necessity of going back to the play of projection and transference that characterizes the blindness of love. If Roland Barthes underlines that in the discourse of love something is speaking without being heard, the subject of love and stupidity seems to be a genuine comic theme. One of the hypothesis that Jacques Lacan articulated in his interpretation of the Platonic *Symposion* is the fact „que l'amour est

¹⁶ Avital Ronell: *Stupidity*, Urbana and Chicago 2002, S. 89.

¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*, Paris 1977, S. 7.

un sentiment comique.“¹⁸ If the phenomenon of love is stupid and comic at the same time, its representation in Shakespeare’s drama is not only funny, but also sign of wit as an artistic counterpart to stupidity. Shakespeare gives a proof of it by making the fall into love to the very fall into stupidity. Not being allowed to love opens the door for projection and transference as the basis of love. All their wit can’t protect Berowne and his friends before the abyss of stupidity and love. In the context of a „civil war of wits“¹⁹ between Berowne und Rosaline, the cunning mind of the scholar finds his limit in the fact that he loves:

What! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,
And never going aright, being a watch,
But being watch’d that it may still go right!
Nay to be perjur’d, which is worst of all;
And among three, to love the worst of all;
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow;
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay and by heaven, one that will do the deed
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:
And I sigh for her! to watch for her!
To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan:
Some men must love my lady, and some Joan. (III/1, 182-198)

„A woman that is like a German clock“: Berowne presents a caricature of ideal love. If ideal love, as Niklas Luhmann has shown in his treatise on *Love as Passion*, is grounded in the idea of „Vollkommenheit des Gegenstandes“ – Liebe ist demnach eine Perfektionsidee, die sich von der Perfektion herleitet, durch sie nahezu erzwungen wird und *insofern* ‘Passion’ ist“²⁰ – Berowne’s picture of his Joan as a „whitely wanton with a velvet brow“, „With two pitch balls stuck in her face for eyes“, is not only a perversion of ideal love, but also a demonstration that even the witty mind is helpless against the ignorant work of projection and transference. Berowne’s confession therefore is also an ultimate picture of his desperation.

¹⁸ Jacques Lacan, *Le Sémaire*. Livre VIII. Le transfert. 1960-1961, Paris 2001, S. 46.

¹⁹ Shakespeare, William: *The Arden Edition*. *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Edited by Richard David, London 1966, II/1, 225.

²⁰ Niklas Luhmann, *Liebe als Passion*. Zur Codierung von Intimität, Frankfurt am Main 1982, S. 57.

Berowne knows that he is a fool for love, but he can't do anything against it, because the mighty projection presents him with an image of the beloved woman that only corresponds to the wish to love, engendered by the very prohibition of love:

The king is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch, - pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the fool said, and so say I, and I the fool: well proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax; it kills sheep, it kills me, I a sheep: well proved again o' my side! I will not love; if I do, hang me; i' faith, I will not. O! but her eye, - by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. Be heaven, I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here is my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! By the world, I would not care a pin if the other three were in. Here comes one with a paper: God give him grace to groan! (IV/3, 1-18)

The immediate product of the projection that made love possible is not only stupidity but also bad poetry. Berowne's sonnets are a poor example of his deranged mind, no longer able to distinguish between the phantasm of love and the miserable reality behind it. Berowne sees himself as Ajax, not to demonstrate heroism, but to demonstrate shame. His self-portrait turns him into a stupid sheep. What Shakespeare points out in his comedy of stupidity and love, is the fact that the prohibition of love opens the way for desire and that desire is created by the power of projection, presenting a picture of love that has nothing to do with reality but with the wish to see the other as I want to see him.

4. Infection and transference

When Thomas Mann introduces the Shakespearian prohibition of love in his novel, he only makes explicit what corresponds to Leverkühn's solitude: the incapacity to love. In two central scenes of the novel, this incapacity is shaken: by the death of his nephew Nepomuk that drives the artist into his final madness, and by the syphilitic infection that also represents the starting point of the birth of the genius of Adrian Leverkühn. Thomas Mann goes back to the double sense of gift to characterize Leverkühn's commitment to love. The prostitute named Heterae Esmeralda is a gift for Leverkühn, because she gives him the infection that simultaneously brings him the artistic capacities he is seeking. The sympathetic narrator of Leverkühn's fate, Serenus Zeitbloom, offers an interesting theory to explain the idea of a voluntary infection of the artist:

Die Unglückliche warnte den Verlangenden vor ‚sich‘, das bedeutete einen Akt freier seelischer Erhebung über ihre erbarmungswürdige physische Existenz, einen Akt menschlicher Abstandnahme davon, einen Akt der Liebe. Und, gütiger Himmel, war es nicht Liebe auch, oder was war es, welche Versessenheit, welcher Wille zum gottversuchenden Wagnis, welcher Trieb, die Strafe in die Sünde miteinzubeziehen, endlich: welch tief geheimste Verlangen nach dämonischer Empfängnis, nach einer tödlich entfesselnden chymischen Veränderung seiner Natur wirkte dahin, daß der Gewarnte die Warnung verschmähte und auf dem Besitz dieses Fleisches bestand? (10.1, 226)

In this passage, Serenus Zeitblom tries to sell the original sin of his idol Adrian Leverkühn as an act of faith and love. In Zeitblom's paradoxical statement, the rotten body accompanies a purity of spirit that makes the prostitute into a kind of a saint. Zeitblom's explication is not only the exact reversal of Shakespeare's representation of love, but also a pure act of projection that turns the physical disease into a sublime symbol of spirituality. In ironically citing Clemens Brentano's poem ‚O lieb Mädels, wie schlecht du bist‘, Thomas Mann exposes this point of view to ridicule, showing that poetry is not a result of projection, but works against projection. The wounds of love that Brentano evokes in his poem are understood by Thomas Mann in their literal sense. With Nietzsche, the romantic idea of a pure realm of spirituality finally shows up as a purely physiognomic principle. In the words of Clemens Brentano: „Es hat sich an der Wunde / die Schlange festgesaugt, / hat mit dem giftigen Munde / den Tod in mich gehaucht.“ Thomas Mann's literal interpretation of Brentano's poem shows that modern art, like Martin von Koppenfels has shown on behalf of Flaubert, is to a large extent concerned with the problem of infection and immunity.²¹ In moving towards new artistic horizons, Adrian Leverkühn's immune system is shot through with the double sense of gift/poison that simultaneously makes him a genius and a victim of the devil.

5. Projection and the devil

„Die Geister und Dämonen sind [...] nichts als die Projektionen seiner Gefühlsregungen“ (GS IX, 113), says Freud in regard to the spirit of primitivism. In this sense, the famous dialogue with the devil that stands in the exact middle of the novel, is nothing but a projection of Adrian Leverkühn. Of course, from the very beginning, the devil is at the heart of all projections, embodying everything that one can't accept in one's own person and that obliges one to project onto another as the very figure of evil. As for the whole novel, the model was the Volksbuch that established a contract between Faust and the devil with six clauses

²¹ Vgl. Martin von Koppenfels, *Immune Erzähler. Flaubert und die Affektpolitik des modernen Romans*, München 2007.

covering 24 years. But the distance to Goethe's *Faust* that seems to characterize Thomas Mann's novel in the eyes of many critics hides a close ties between Goethe and Thomas Mann.²² Like Goethe, Thomas Mann arranges the pact between Faust and the devil out of a scene of transference in the more precise sense of a translation. More than anything else, the pact in *Doktor Faustus* is a product of translation and an act of writing.

If the pact poses the question of the real state of the devil as it already does in Dostojewskis *The Brother Karamozov*, Thomas Mann enacts „Adrians geheime Aufzeichnung“(10.1, 323) as an act of writing, a dictation with two distinct roles: The devil, projection and dictator at the same time, incarnates the voice of the authority and Leverkühn seems to be nothing but his secretary. There is even no evidence that the dialogue really has taken place. „Ein Dialog? Ist es in Wahrheit ein solcher? Ich müßte wahnsinnig sein, es zu glauben.“ (10.1, 323) If the act of writing belongs undoubtedly to Adrian Leverkühn, it remains dubious who of the interlocutors has to take the responsibility for the pact: Adrian Leverkühn and his projection of the devil or the devil himself. The problem of creation, moral responsibility and artistic copyright presented by Thomas Mann is even doubled by the figure of Serenus Zeitblom who copies the copy of Leverkühn's dialogue with the devil that can also be seen as a monologue of the artist taking voluntary all risks to fulfil his work:

Es versteht sich von selbst, daß ich Adrians Handschrift nicht dem Drucker zu überantworten gedenke. Mit dem eigenen Kiel übertrage ich sie Wort für Wort von dem Notenpapier, das mit seinen schon früher charakterisierten, kleinen und altertümlich schnörkelhaften, tiefschwarzen Rundschriftfederzügen, einer Mönchsschrift, möchte man sagen, bedeckt ist, in mein Manuskript. Des Notenpapiers hat er sich bedient offenbar, weil ihm im Augenblick kein anderes zur Hand war, oder weil der Kramladen drunten am Kirchplatz des hl. Agapitus ihm kein genehmes Schreibpapier bot. Es fallen immer zwei Zeilen auf das obere Fünfliniensystem und zwei auf das Baß-System; aber auch der weiße Raum dazwischen ist durchwegs mit je zwei Schreibzeilen ausgefüllt. (10.1, 323f.)

Thomas Mann not only shows that the report of the dialogue between Leverkühn and the devil is an act of transference as translation. More precisely, there are two distinct forms of translation within the projection of the devil: The first one establishes a tie between the spiritual voice of the devil and the writing of Adrian Leverkühn, the second one between the writing of Leverkühn and its copy by Serenus Zeitblom. As Derrida has shown in the

²² The differences between Thomas Mann and Goethe has been noted by Christine Lubkoll: „Thomas Manns Neufassung stellt so, analog zur ‚Zurücknahme‘ der 9. Symphonie Beethovens durch Leverkühn, eine ‚Zurücknahme‘ der Goetheschen Faustversion dar.“ Christine Lubkoll: ‚Und wär's ein Augenblick‘. Der Sündenfall des Wissens und der Liebeslust in Faustdichtungen von der ‚Historia‘ bis zu Thomas Manns ‚Doktor Faustus‘, S. 245

Grammatology, the origin, the translation of the voice into the graphic is nothing but a simulacrum on the well-known ground of a metaphor. The notion of „Übertragung“ or “transference” to which Thomas Mann refers reveals itself to be nothing but a metaphor that has more than one sense: „Mit dem eigenen Kiel übertrage ich sie Wort für Wort von dem Notenpapier [...] in mein eigenes Manuskript“, explains Zeitblom. The transference is in the literal sense a translation of Leverkühn’s handwriting in that of Zeitblom and in a metaphorical sense a transference of the infection of Leverkühn’s genius onto the narrator and his future readers. In addition to the projection of the devil, a whole chain of transferences between the devil, Leverkühn, Zeitblom and the reader is established by Thomas Mann, a chain that finds its common ground in the interplay of infection, erotic speech and art. The phallic symbol of the „Federkiel“ not only indicates how close Thomas Mann follows the psychoanalytic theory of transference. The term „Übertragung“ allows Thomas Mann to describe the disease of Leverkühn as a medical, psychoanalytical and poetic act, an infection that is an artistic as well as a political act of ignorance.

The aesthetic and political dimension of transference understood as ignorance is summarized by Thomas Mann in the promise given by the pact: artistic inspiration in the sense of Nietzsche’s praise of enthusiasm: „Wer weiß heute noch, wer wußte auch nur in klassischen Zeiten, was Inspiration, was echte, alte urtümliche Begeisterung ist, von Kritik, lahmer Besonnenheit, tötender Verstandeskontrolle ganz unangekränkelte Begeisterung, die heilige Verzückung?“ (10.1, 346) Nietzsche’s use of the term Inspiration²³ as „unangekränkelte Begeisterung“ already shows the ambivalence of the project. The devil, portrayed as „wahren Herrn des Enthusiasmus“ (10.1, 347) is, like his instrument Heterae Esmeralda, an „Engel des Gifts“ (10.1, 333). What Thomas Mann tries to discuss in his representation of the pact is the loss of moral control by superhuman inspiration, a loss that produces within the novel monstrous artistic masterpieces like the *Apokalypsis cum figura* and the novel itself as a monstrous biography that ends up in the complete ruin of the artist and his country:

Die contritio ohne jede Hoffnung und als völliger Unglaube an die Möglichkeit der Gnade und Verzeihung, als die felsenfeste Überzeugung des Sünders, er habe es zu grob gemacht, und selbst die unendliche Güte reiche nicht aus, seine Sünde zu verzeihen, – erst das ist die wahre Zerknirschung, und ich mache euch darauf aufmerksam, daß sie der Erlösung am allernächsten, für die Güte am allerunwiderstehlichsten ist. Ihr werdet zugeben, daß der alltäglich mäßige Sünder der Gnade nur mäßig interessant sein kann. In seinem Fall hat der Gnadenakt wenig Impetus, er ist nur eine matte Betätigung. Die Mittelmäßigkeit führt überhaupt kein

²³ Friedrich Nietzsche, KSA 6, S. 339.

theologisches Leben. Eine Sündhaftigkeit, so heillos, daß sie ihren Mann von Grund aus am Heile verzweifeln läßt, ist der wahrhaft theologische Weg zum Heil. (10.1, 334)

The genius of art is a genius of sin. The inspiration that goes back to the literal and metaphorical principle of infection excludes mediocrity and thus authorizes the subject to transgress the limits of good and evil. Within this hallucinating apocalyptic logic, great works can be done and great wars can be won. It is pure projection that enables Leverkühn to step into his personal apocalypse as the phantasmatic path from hopelessness into the religious and political hope, a projection of salvation that reveals itself to be nothing but condemnation. Adrian Leverkühn's infectious wishes are based on a form of projection that opens the way for a process of destruction and auto-destruction, described by Thomas Mann in an allegorical sense as a poetic and political apocalypse that haunts Serenus Zeitblom and his country at the end of the novel.

6. The ends of projection

„In der Geschichte von Kunst sind Spätwerke Katastrophen.“²⁴ With this remark, Theodor W. Adorno closes his reflections on the late Beethoven. The connection between late work and allegory established by Walter Benjamin in the notion of the expressionless is used by Thomas Mann in the context of a tragic parabola of the fall of Germany. The tragic dimension of the myth of Faust has been rejected by such a prominent critic as Friedrich Nietzsche. On the subject of Goethe's *Faust*, he writes:

Die Faust-Idee. – Eine kleine Näherin wird verführt und unglücklich gemacht; ein grosser Gelehrter aller vier Facultäten ist der Uebelthäter. Das kann doch nicht mit rechten Dingen zugegangen sein? Nein, gewiss nicht! Ohne die Beihülfe des leibhaftigen Teufels hätte es der grosse Gelehrte nicht zu Stande gebracht. – Sollte dies wirklich der grösste deutsche ‚tragische Gedanke‘ sein, wie man unter Deutschen sagen hört? – Für Goethe war aber auch dieser Gedanke noch zu fürchterlich; sein mildes Herz konnte nicht umhin, die kleine Näherin, ‚die gute Seele, die nur einmal sich vergessen‘, nach ihrem unfreiwilligen Tode in die Nähe der Heiligen zu versetzen; ja selbst den grossen Gelehrten brachte er, durch einen Possen, der dem Teufel im entscheidenden Augenblick gespielt wird, noch zur rechten Zeit in den Himmel, ihn ‚den guten Menschen‘ mit dem ‚dunklen Drange‘: dort im Himmel finden sich die Liebenden wieder. – Goethe sagt einmal, für das eigentlich Tragische sei seine Natur zu conciliant gewesen. (KSA 2, 606)

²⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, Spätstil Beethovens, in: Musikalische Schriften IV. Moments musicaux. Impromptus, Frankfurt am Main 1982, S. 17.

Nietzsche's laconic résumé of the myth of Faust returns the tragedy to the comedy of love that Shakespeare elaborated in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* from 1587 presented the fate of the famous scholar as the history of a „Zauberers vnnd Schwerztkunstlers“²⁵, serving „der gantzen Christenheit zur warnung“²⁶. In Goethe's *Faust*, the „volonté de savoir“ that Michel Foucault worked out in his history of sexuality has become the common ground of modern mankind. What Nietzsche recognizes as the simple „Konzilianz“ of good old Goethe is the result of a historic process that can be described as the fall of all knowledge into ignorance: „Habe nun, ach! Philosophie, / Juristerei und Medizin, / Und leider auch Theologie / Durchaus studiert, mit heißm Bemühn. / Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor, / Und bin so klug als wie zuvor!“²⁷ The result of his lifelong studies is pitiable: It's nothing more than the knowledge, „daß wir nichts wissen können!“²⁸ Goethe's *Faust* begins with the confession of ignorance as the starting point of the tragedy.²⁹ In Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, the genius of Adrian Leverkühn turns out to be a result of a form of ignorance that is inherent to projection. What transference can do against the poetic and political impact of ignorance is to turn the tragedy into comedy, as Nietzsche shows in his brief commentary to Goethe's *Faust*.

²⁵ *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, S. 5.

²⁶ Ebd.

²⁷ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, Vers 354-359.

²⁸ Ebd., Vers 364.

²⁹ „Sollte es ein Drama des reinen Wissens geben, dann, so scheint es, müßte Faust sein Protagonist sein“. Stanley Cavell: *Der Anspruch der Vernunft. Wittgenstein, Skeptizismus, Moral und Tragödie*, Frankfurt am Main 2006, S. 721.