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From Holy German Art to Degenerate Art: Nazi Ideology and Opera

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From Holy German Art to Degenerate Art:

Nazi Ideology and Opera

Senior Project submitted to The

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of Bard College

by

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Introduction

Music in the first half of the twentieth century had gone through dramatic changes in Germany. After the defeat in the First World War, people were rethinking the meaning and value of the arts and they wished to overturn what was seen as the romantic old order and embrace the new, modern era. From 1918 to 1933, during the Weimar Republic, different kinds of arts flourished. Despite the political instability and financial crisis, people were welcoming the emergence of all genres and movements, including both serious and popular music, for example, atonal and twelve-tone compositions, jazz, *Zeitoper*, Expressionism, and the New Objectivity [Neue Sachlichkeit] movement. Some leading composers at the time included Schoenberg, Hindemith, Krenek, Weill, Webern, and Berg.

However, such diversity was strangled after the Nazis came to power. The totalitarian state controlled every aspect of people's lives, and art became one of the victims. They dictated what kind of music the citizens could hear and they decided whether a piece of music is good or bad. They adopted the term "degeneracy" from critic and author Max Nordau in his 1892 book *Entartung*. It was a medical term used during the second half of the nineteenth century to identify the condition of those who deviated from what was considered "normal" because of shattered nerves, inherited abnormalities, or behavioral or sexual excess. And the Nazis used it to describe any art that is "un-German" and therefore, harmful to the "Volksseele."

In 1938, the Nazis held an exhibition of degenerate music in Düsseldorf. The vilified genres included Schlager, operetta, atonal music, jazz, and especially music

by Jewish composers.¹ The curator of the exhibition, Hans Severus Ziegler, described the exhibition as “das Abbild eines wahren Hexensabbath und des frivolen-künstlerischen Kulturbolschewismus” and “Abbild des Triumphes von Untermenschentum, arroganter jüdischer Frechheit und völliger geistiger Vertrottung.”² The Nazis associated Modernist art with Jewishness and Bolshevism, and condemned it as degenerate. The cover page of the brochure for the exhibition featured a virulently racist illustration of Krenek’s opera *Jonny spielt auf* (more on this point in chapter 1 below). Ernst Krenek was an Austrian-American composer; he was born in Vienna and was of Czech origin. He wrote *Jonny spielt auf* in 1926, and the opera became very popular in the Weimar Republic after its premiere in 1927.

The opera tells the story of the romantic composer Max who meets Anita, a singer, during an excursion to the Alps. They fall in love and soon after, Anita leaves Max and goes to Paris alone to perform Max’s opera. In Paris, she meets the famous virtuoso violinist Daniello, with whom she commits adultery. In the hotel, there is a black jazz fiddler Jonny who shows interest in Daniello’s Amati violin. He steals the violin, hides it in Anita’s banjo case, and follows her home where he successfully retrieves the violin. After learning of Anita’s unfaithfulness, Max is extremely depressed and goes back to the Alps and tries to commit suicide. However, he is deterred when he hears Anita singing an aria from his opera, broadcast on the hotel radio. In the meantime, Daniello figures out that it is Jonny who stole his violin. And Jonny is planning to go to America. In the train station, in order to escape from the police, Jonny puts the violin in the luggage of Max and Anita, who are also going to America. Max is arrested and when Daniello tries to stop them from leaving, he falls

¹ Pamela Potter, "Defining 'Degenerate Music' in Nazi Germany," The OREL Foundation, http://oreloundation.org/journal/journalArticle/defining_8220degenerate_music8221_in_nazi_germany.

² Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik - Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S.Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Völkischer Verlag, 1938), 16

under a train and is killed. Escaping from the police, Max is reunited with Anita and they set out for America. In the end, Jonny assumes the role of a leader playing the violin, with everyone dancing to his tune.

From 1927 to 1928 the opera appeared on 50 European stages; it celebrated more than 70 performances until 1930.³ It is considered to be one of the “Zeitoper,” which means, it reflected the politics and arts of the Weimar Republic. Furthermore, it also belongs to the New Objectivity movement, which, generally speaking, rejects the old Romantic tradition and Expressionism by presenting two clashing worlds—the old Romantic world and modern society—but without taking sides.

However, the Nazis saw in it a prototype of degenerate art, mainly because the main character is a black musician and there are a lot of jazz elements in the opera. Even before Hitler came to power, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei organized a mass protest in Vienna to boycott the performances of *Jonny spielt auf*. On the poster announcing the protest, it says:

Die Zersetzung und Vergiftung unserer bodenständigen Bevölkerung durch das östliche Gesindel nimmt einen gefährdenden Umfang an. Nicht genug, daß unser Volk durch die Geldabwertung einer durchgreifenden Ausplünderung zugeführt wurde, sollen nun auch alle sittlich-kulturellen Grundfesten unseres Volkstumes zerstört werden.

Unsere Staatsoper, die erste Kunst- und Bildungsstätte der Welt, der Stolz aller Wiener, ist einer frechen jüdisch-negerischen Besudelung zum Opfer gefallen. Das Schandwerk eines tschechischen Halbjuden ‚Jonny spielt auf!‘ in welchem Volk und Heimat, Sitte, Moral und Kunst brutal zertreten werden soll, wurde der Staatsoper aufgezwungen. Eine volksfremde Meute von Geschäftsjuden und Freimaurern setzt alles daran, unsere Staatsoper zu einer Bedürfnisanstalt ihrer jüdisch-negerischen Perversitäten herabzuwürdigen. Der Kunst-Bolschewismus erhebt frech sein Haupt. Die Schamröte muß jedem anständigen Wiener ins Gesicht steigen, wenn er hört, welch ungeheuerliche Schmach und Demütigung der berühmten Musikstadt Wien durch volksfremdes Gesindel angetan wurde.

³ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf*. Booklet. *Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 28

The vocabulary in this poster is nauseatingly offensive; it is directed against some specific groups--Jews, Freimauer, Czechs, Negros and Bolsheviks. The Nazis provided a juxtaposition between “them” and “us”—the groups that are just mentioned and the Germans, specifically, “östliches Gesindel,” “volksfremde Meute,” “Bedürfnisanstalt,” “Perversitäten,” as opposed to “Heimat,” “Volk,” “bodenständig,” “Volkstum.” The Nazis portrayed the German as victim, who suffered from the “Zersetzung,” “Vergiftung,” “Ausplünderung,” “Verseuchung,” caused by this single opera.

But how did the Nazis come to condemn a single opera with these terms? Krenek was not Jewish and Czechoslovakia did not exist as a country when Krenek was born in Vienna; although Jonny is black, he is neither Jewish nor Bolshevik. Neither is there a Freemason reference in the whole opera. Nonetheless, the Nazis used this one opera to attack five different groups that they believed were inferior to them. They linked them with jazz music, which they considered a threat to pure German art, or Holy German art, as it is described by Hans Sachs in Wagner’s opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*(1867).

In addition to *Jonny spielt auf*, many other atonal pieces were banned. While *Jonny spielt auf* was seen as a “jazz opera,” Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck* could be considered serious music as opposed to popular music; it is also regarded as a work of Expressionism, which aims at impacting the audience emotionally rather than intellectually (as New Objectivity does). Berg composed it in 1922 and the original play *Woyzeck* (1836) was by Georg Büchner. The opera premiered two years before *Jonny spielt auf* in 1925. It was also once really popular; from 1925 to 1932, *Wozzeck* was performed 163 times, 130 of these performances taking place in Germany.⁴

⁴ Patricia Hall, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship* (New York: Oxford UP, 2018), 2.

However, it shared the same fate as *Jonny spielt auf* and was labeled degenerate. After its premiere in 1925, the *Trierische Landeszeitung* criticized *Wozzeck* because of its atonality:

Atonality is slowly beginning to be a danger to our German cultural music, and it is high time that those still healthy progressive thinking musicians in Germany give everything to energetically confront this sinister movement. If jazz bands and nigger tunes invade our German cultural music, atonal hubbub on the other, both working off texts with no foundation, then the situation is indeed serious.⁵

Jazz and atonal music became two enemies that would undermine and invade German music and both of them were linked to “Jewish” and “foreign.” Unlike Krenek, Berg tried very hard to please the Nazis in order to survive under their censorship. He tried hard to prove himself and his music to be German: “My international recognition makes it impossible to supply a motive, that one calls the music I write somewhat romantic, or Slavic or oriental or in some other way exotic, in a word un-German.”⁶ He even made a chart and listed the Jewish versus Aryan conductors and directors for past performances of *Wozzeck*, and provided his own family tree to prove that he couldn’t be foreign.⁷ However, despite his efforts, Berg and his *Wozzeck* were still banned. On the final page of Ziegler’s booklet, *Wozzeck* appears with “Wer von Juden isst, stirbt daran” written next to it.



⁵ Hall, *The Oxford*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid*, 4

⁷ *Ibid*, 3

These two products of the cultural prosperity of the Weimar Republic were different but equally popular. Despite the fact that neither composer is Jewish but rather Aryan, *Wozzeck* and *Jonny spielt auf* were both considered to be degenerate. Therefore, the pieces themselves were problematic to the Nazis despite the “proper” ethnicity and race of the composers. So did the Nazis ban those pieces just because their musical style was jazzy and atonal? Why did they hate modernity so much? Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* (1936)—which the Nazis advocated—also has many modern elements. So why would they ban *Wozzeck* but not *Carmina Burana*? Are there any specific rules that the Nazis gave to composers to compose? Are there similarities between these works of degenerate music, and how does degenerate music differ from Holy German music that the Nazis advocate? These are some of the questions that this project will explore.

In 1938 Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, issued “Ten Commandments” for proper German music. The declaration sounded like the new bible for music, and it included: “the nature of music lies in melody,” “all music is not suited to everyone,” “music is rooted in the folk, requires empathy rather than reason, deeply affects the spirits of man, and is the most glorious art of the German heritage,” “musicians of the past must be respected.”⁸ Goebbels points out that music can take various forms and shapes but is not neutral; it can be unsuitable and dangerous. People should let the Nazis decide what fits their doctrine. However, they were quite vague when they tried to describe the “suitable music,” but the ten commandments did “preach” some important points that the Nazis valued a lot, for example, empathy (as opposed to reason), tradition (as opposed to modernity) and “völkisch” (as opposed to foreign).

⁸ Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 1998), 17.

Taking into consideration Goebbels's commandments and guided by the questions raised above, this essay will take a close look at the "degenerate" *Jonny spielt auf* and *Wozzeck*, and compare them with two pieces that the Nazis advocate—*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* by Richard Wagner, which is Hitler's favorite opera, and *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff, a work that was composed during the Nazi era and that has survived in the international repertory. To begin this essay, we will have a look at what the Nazis meant when they labeled an opera "German" or "un-German."

Chapter 1: Nazi Ideology of Art: German vs Un-German

After the defeat in the First World War, many Germans believed that German music could help them regain national pride. As Ziegler pointed out, music is “einer der heiligsten Bezirke unseres ganzen inneren Daseins als völkische Menschen.”⁹ German music is the most precious and sacred treasure for the “Volk.” After the Nazis came to power, in order to differentiate Germany from other European countries, such as England, France, and Italy, they were looking purposefully for art that was, in their view, traditionally and purely German, with no foreign influence. Such pure art is described by Hans Sachs as “Holy German Art” in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, which was also Hitler’s favorite opera:

“Drum denkt mit Dank ihr dran zurück,
wie kann die Kunst wohl unwert sein,
die solche Preise schliesset ein?
Das uns're Meister sie gepflegt
grad' recht nach ihrer Art,
nach ihrem Sinne treu gehegt,
das hat sie echt bewahrt:
blieb sie nicht adlig,
wie zur Zeit,
da Höf' und Fürsten sie geweiht,
im Drang der schlimmen Jahr'
blieb sie doch deutsch und wahr;
und wär' sie anders nicht geglückt,
als wie wo alles drängt und drückt,
ihr seht, wie hoch sie blieb im Ehr':
was wollt ihr von den Meistern mehr?
Habt Acht! Uns dräuen üble Streich':
zerfällt erst deutsches Volk und Reich,
in falscher wälscher Majestät kein Fürst bald mehr sein Volk versteht,
und wälschen Dunst mit wälschem Tand
sie pflanzen uns in deutsches Land;
was deutsch und echt, wüsst' keiner mehr,
lebt's nicht in deutscher Meister Ehr'.
Drum sag' ich euch: ehrt eure deutschen Meister!
Dann bannt ihr gute Geister;
und gebt ihr ihrem Wirken Gunst,
zerging' in Dunst das heil'ge röm'sche Reich,
uns bliebe gleich die heil'ge deutsche Kunst!”¹⁰

⁹ Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik - Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S.Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Völkischer Verlag, 1938), 6

¹⁰ "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" by Richard Wagner libretto," DM's opera site, http://www.murashev.com/opera/Die_Meistersinger_von_N%C3%BCrnberg_libretto_English_Act_3.

It's interesting to note the different adjectives Wagner uses to describe Holy German Art: "wert," "treu," "adlig," "deutsch," "wahr," "echt," and "heilig." There are also some nouns and verbs which have similar meanings such as "weihen" and "Ehr." They all show that German art is supreme, true, worthy, noble and religious. Among those words, there are two groups of parallel words—"deutsch und wahr" and "Volk und Reich," which more directly emphasize the quality that is needed for German Art. Wagner, as well as the Nazis value "das Volk" greatly; it not only means the ordinary German and Aryan people but also their nationalist belief. Wagner writes to his wife Cosima: "I am the most German being. I am the German spirit."¹¹ He also writes to his friend Liszt: "It is with a real sense of horror that I now think of Germany...if I am 'German', it is no doubt because I carry my Germany around with me."¹²

Wagner's strong nationalism also affects his view of German Art. He writes in his essay "Judaism in Music" (1850): "Our luxury arts may float in nothing but the air of our arbitrary imagination, but they retain a certain connection with their natural soil, the real spirit of the people."¹³ Holy German Art is pure and supreme and can only be created by German people on German soil.

However, pure German art is also under threat from foreign influence. Note the words that are used to describe foreign influence "unwert," "falsch," "wälsch," as opposed to the adjectives used above to describe German art "wert," "wahr," "heilig." The conflict between German and foreign is strikingly clear in the Nazi poster against *Jonny spielt auf* when "volksfremd," "Perversitäten," "frech," and "Gesindel" is used

¹¹ Blanning, Tim. "RICHARD WAGNER AND THE GERMAN NATION." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (2015): 96. doi:10.1017/S0080440115000043.

¹² Blanning, Tim. "RICHARD WAGNER AND THE GERMAN NATION." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (2015): 96. doi:10.1017/S0080440115000043.

¹³ Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 31.

to describe foreign art and “Volk,” “bodenständig,” and “Volkstum” represent German art.

Sachs says: “und wälschen Dunst mit wälschem Tand sie pflanzen uns in deutsches Land; was deutsch und echt, wüsst' keiner mehr.” The word “wälsch” itself means foreign; it stands for Italy and France, and it could also be read as the Jews, especially by the Nazis. Sachs worried about the decay of Germany if it falls to a false foreign rule, that the foreign would poison pure German art until it is not pure anymore. As a result, no one would know what true German art is and it might gradually disappear.

Wagner also expresses his worries in “Judaism in Music.” He writes: “It was impossible for an element completely foreign to this living organism to take any part in its growth. Only when a body’s inner death is evident can outside elements gain entry, and then only to destroy it. Then the flesh of that body is transformed into a swarming colony of worm.”¹⁴ In Wagner’s point of view, foreign elements and German art cannot live together. Even a tiny worm would lead German art to death. Nowadays some people relate foreigners to cancer, which is an upgraded version of the worm infection of the 19th century. They are both insidious illnesses that lead to death.

1.1: Jonny spielt auf—A Prototype of Degeneracy

The opera *Jonny spielt auf* (1925) can be seen as an example of Wagner’s swarming colony of worms infecting German Art with “wälschem Dunst [und] wälschem Tand.” Jonny, the eponymous hero of the opera, is a Black

¹⁴ Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 38-39.

violinist/saxophonist who plays Jazz. His skin color means that he comes from a non-Aryan race and the jazz he plays comes from a foreign place, America. Pamela Potter explains in her article “Defining ‘Degenerate Music’ in Nazi Germany” that “since the 1920s, the saxophone had symbolized concerns about the invasion of American culture, and the Jewish star supposedly revealed the manipulative power behind the alleged American conspiracy to debase German culture.”¹⁵ A musical instrument alone would stimulate the fear of the Nazis. Furthermore, the libretto uses three different languages; aside from German, there are also some lyrics in French and English. An opera with so many foreign elements is enough for the Nazis to put the tag of “entartet” on it.

Therefore, even though Krenek is ethnically German, the Nazis still labeled him a Jew. In addition to the color of the main character and the foreign instrument and languages he uses, there are more elements in this opera that could be considered degenerate; the character is the most important factor. First of all, the main character Jonny is not a positive role. He shares a lot of similarities with Beckmesser, who is believed to play a negative role in *Die Meistersinger*. Jonny could fall in love in 3 seconds and does not respect women. After he had just flirted with the hotel waitress Yvonne, once he saw Anita, he tried to conquer her in an almost violent way: “Jonny hat sie bis zum Divan gedrängt, sie sinkt auf diesem nieder, er beugt sich über sie.”¹⁶ Jonny completely follows his animalistic instincts. He shows his affection rudely and directly.

It’s also interesting to note the different interactions between man and woman in *Die Meistersinger*, in which Walther sings: “an meiner Seite stand ein Weib,/so

¹⁵ Pamela Potter, "Defining 'Degenerate Music' in Nazi Germany," The OREL Foundation, http://orelfoundation.org/journal/journalArticle/defining_8220degenerate_music8221_in_nazi_germany.

¹⁶ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf. Booklet. Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 115.

hold und schön ich nie gesehn:/gleich einer Braut /umfasste sie sanft meinen Leib.”¹⁷

Instead of being oppressed by the man, the woman in Walther’s song embraces Walther softly. While *Die Meistersinger* tries to provide an ideal image of society, including the relationship between man and woman, *Jonny spielt auf* reveals a real but ugly society.

Similarly, Beckmesser does not respect women either. On the one hand, Beckmesser wants Eva to be his wife, but on the other hand, he also looks down on women. After he finds out that Eva has the choice to be a judge in the song competition, he complains: “Verstünden's die Frau'n; doch schlechtes Geflunker gilt ihnen mehr als all' Poesie!”¹⁸ His contempt for women reveals that he actually has no confidence to win Eva’s heart.

Because Beckmesser feels uncertain about the competition, he “forces” Eva to listen to his song the night before the competition. He keeps playing his lute and singing on the street, no matter whether Eva likes it or not. In contrast to Beckmesser and Jonny, the true German master Hans Sachs gives up his affection for Eva when he realizes that she loves Walther, and he helps Walther to be the Meistersinger. The Nazis in fact emphasized the idea of sacrifice; they demanded their soldiers to sacrifice themselves for the Vaterland, and Sachs would be the noble one who sacrifices himself for German art to blossom. In comparison, Jonny and Beckmesser are vulgar and narrow; while Jonny at least doesn’t hide his desire, Beckmesser is indeed insidious.

Interestingly, Jonny’s desire for women is soon defeated by his desire for money. Because the violinist called Daniello also likes Anita, he offers Jonny 1000 francs and demands him to leave. There is a detailed description of Jonny’s facial

¹⁷ ""Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

¹⁸ Ibid

expression after he sees the money: “Jonny's tierisch-sinnlich-wütende Fratze verwandelt sich in ein breites Grinsen, er nimmt das Geld und betrachtet es fasziniert.”¹⁹ Jonny takes the money and leaves Anita immediately. His desire for money is much stronger than his desire for women, and it's shown so clearly in his facial expression. This description of Jonny in fact can be related to the Jews because “Fratze” often appears in the image of the Jews and the word “grinsen” fits the Jewish stereotype: they are cunning and they are obsessed with money.

Furthermore, by using the word “tierisch,” Jonny is dehumanized as an animal. This image of the “tierische” Jonny wearing a “Fratze” inspired the Nazis to create the poster that they designed for “entartete Musik,” in which Jonny is depicted as a monkey (see below). The demonization and animalization of any non-Aryan race becomes a leitmotif which we will encounter later on in the essay frequently.

It's not very clear if Beckmesser also has a desire for money, but he sings about money and wealth after he sees the wooing-song on Sachs's bench. He thinks Sachs also wants to woo Eva and ridicules him: “Dass sich Herr Sachs erwerbe des Goldschmieds reiches Erbe, im Meisterrat zur Hand auf Klauseln er bestand, ein Mägdlein zu betören, das nur auf ihn sollt' hören, und andren abgewandt, zu ihm allein sich fand.”²⁰ There is an old saying: “It takes one to know one.” If Beckmesser thinks that Sachs wants to marry Eva because of the rich inheritance, it is very possible that Beckmesser is thinking of the inheritance himself. His slander again reveals his own insidious thoughts and it also fits the prejudice against Jews that they intend to steal the money from others, especially, the Germans.

Ironically, before Beckmesser mocks Sachs, his plan is to steal his poem and present it as his own. He sings: “Ein Werbelied! Von Sachs! Ist's wahr? Ha! jetzt wird

¹⁹ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf. Booklet. Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 117.

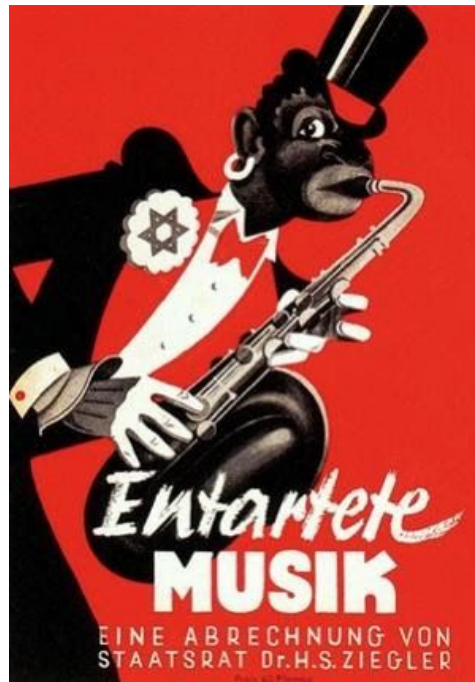
²⁰ “Die Meistersinger,” DM's Opera Site.

mir alles klar! (Da er die Kammertüre gehen hört, fährt er zusammen und steckt das Papier eilig in die Tasche).”²¹ He wants to steal the poem so that he can win the competition. However, his plan is interrupted by Sachs when he suddenly appears and finds him with the poem. Beckmesser becomes irate and slanders Sachs.

Beckmesser tries to steal the poem but he is caught, while Jonny also tries to steal but does so successfully. He is not only fascinated with the money Daniello gives him, but also with the Amati violin Daniello has. Jonny is a jazz violinist and he knows how valuable the Amati violin is. Therefore, he manages to steal the violin. He first puts the violin in Anita’s banjo case, and follows her to her hometown, and finally gets the violin. When he is nearly caught by the police in the train station, he leaves the violin with Max and makes him become the suspect, and he escapes successfully. After Daniello dies accidentally, Jonny comes back and manages to save Max in order to get the violin back, which is now finally in his possession.

Jonny is very cunning; he plans every step carefully with only one aim, which is to get the violin. Similarly, in order to win Eva, Beckmesser’s plan is also sneaky—first, he sings to Eva alone at night and then he steals the poem by Sachs. Those common characteristics—guile, theft, obsession with money—are staples of the Nazi propaganda against Jews. Because of these characteristics, Beckmesser has long been considered to represent a Jew, although there is no direct reference to that effect in *Die Meistersinger*. There is also no reference in *Jonny spielt auf* to Jonny’s racial background, but the Nazis labeled him a Jew nonetheless. It can be seen in the poster the Nazis designed for “Entartete Musik.” In the poster, Jonny becomes a monkey and wears a suit with a Jewish star, and plays the saxophone:

²¹ Ibid



The poster is a clear sign of racism concerning both Jewish and black people, and an incarnation of “wälsch-ness.” The Nazis highlighted the point that Jews and black people—as non-Aryans—are animals. This animalistic leitmotif first appears in Wagner’s essay when he compared the Jews with parrots: “[the language of the Jews] was like that of parrots who repeat human speech, and was just as lacking in feeling and real expression as these foolish birds.”²² Moreover, his metaphor of worms also implies the Jews. The Jews were parrots and worms in 1850, and now the Jew was a monkey in 1938. By adding an animal identity to Jonny, the Nazis connect his negative characteristics to the Jews. *Jonny spielt auf* is not only a victim of degenerate art, but also a perfect tool for Nazi propaganda to legitimize their persecution of the Jews.

However, what is most objectionable to the Nazis is neither Jonny’s non-Aryan skin color nor the personal character traits identifying him as Jewish. From the Nazi point of view, people like Jonny should at least have the same ending as

²² Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 31.

Beckmesser, who gradually becomes isolated, despised, and ostracized by the community. Although Jonny has a lot in common with Beckmesser, he enjoys the same “happy ending” as the *German* Hans Sachs: he becomes “Master.” The term master itself has an ideological echo; the Aryan race is the master race, and all the others are slaves. And right now the “Jewish monkey” becomes the master race. At the end of the opera, the Jewish monkey becomes the ruler of the world (discussed below).

To elaborate, if the images of Jonny and Beckmesser are considered “entartet,” the image of Hans Sachs would be the most “artet.” He is not only the most respectable master among the villagers, but also the person who creates Holy German Art by balancing artistic freedom and rules. Just like Jonny who pulls all the strings in the background in order to get his violin, Sachs also manipulates in the dark in order to help Walther win his Eva. It says in Act 2 Scene 6 when the alley turns into chaos: “Sachs beobachtet noch eine Zeitlang den wachsenden Tumult, löscht aber alsbald sein Licht aus und schliesst den Laden so weit, dass er, ungesehen, stets durch eine kleine Öffnung den Platz unter der Linde beobachten kann.”²³

He hides in the dark and observes everything. When the time is ripe, he comes out and leads the plot. He sings: “Jetzt schaun wir, wie Hans Sachs es macht, dass er den Wahn fein lenken mag, ein edler Werk zu tun.”²⁴ Sachs is always so wise and calm that everything is in his control. He harnesses Walther’s “poetic madness” to fitting formal principles, thus creating an exemplary, that is, “Holy” German Art. After the song is sung by Walther, the villagers are so inspired and they sing:

Ehrt eure deutschen Meister,
dann bannt ihr gute Geister;
und gebt ihr ihrem Wirken Gunst,
zerging' in Dunst das heil'ge röm'sche Reich,

²³ "Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

²⁴ Ibid

uns bliebe gleich die heil'ge deutsche Kunst!
 (Als es hier zu der bezeichneten Schlussgruppe gelangt ist, schwenkt das Volk begeistert Hüte und Tücher; die Lehrbuben tanzen und schlagen jauchzend in die Hände)
 Heil! Sachs!
 Nürnbergs teurem Sachs!²⁵

The whole opera ends with “Heil! Sachs! Nürnbergs teurem Sachs!” One can immediately connect it to the famous Nazi salute “Heil Hitler!” The scene of “schwenkt das Volk begeistert Hüte und Tücher; die Lehrbuben tanzen und schlagen jauchzend in die Hände” vaguely resembles a mass rally in Nürnberg and Sachs is highly praised and honored by all the villagers. He has become the hero and star of Nürnberg, and he plays the role of a spiritual leader, who carries forward Holy German Art and prevents it from being polluted by foreign influences. The similarities with Hitler are striking because he saw himself as both a hero from outside (Austria), just like Walther, and a spiritual leader inside, who guides and manipulates the masses. This becomes even a premonition of the future. Both Hitler and Sachs are pied pipers. “Führer” means the leader, although the word is corrupted by the Nazis. He is considered to be the rescuer by his followers; the Nürnberg villagers and Hitler’s blind followers are part of the “Führerkult.”

Ironically, the “worm” Jonny has the same power as Sachs and Hitler. He also has the ability to appeal to the masses. In Scene 7, when Anita’s singing is broadcast in the hotel, the reaction of the hotel guests is quite indifferent: “Man sieht an drei bis vier beleuchteten Tischchen, gespenstisch unbeweglich, Hotelgäste bei Drinks sitzen...auf der Terrasse ein ungeheurer Lautsprecher aufgestellt, in ein gespenstisch violettes Licht getaucht, so oft und ihm etwas erklingt.”²⁶ People are sitting motionless like ghosts when they hear Anita sing Max’s piece. “True” contemporary

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf. Booklet. Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 204.

music brings about a ghostly atmosphere, as if the music came from the underworld.

When Anita is about to sing her cadenza, her voice is interrupted by Jonny's jazz band. The loudspeaker announces: "Achtung! Welle fünfhundertzehn! Jazzband,"²⁷ and Jonny's jazz band is broadcast instead of Max's opera. The audience in the hotel reacts very differently to jazz music. They say "Gott sei Dank," and they "geraten auf ihren Stühlen in rhythmische Bewegungen, ohne zunächst eigentlich zu tanzen. Später fangen manche von den Gästen an, auf der Terrasse zu tanzen...Der Lautsprecher erlischt plötzlich."²⁸ The ghostly purple light disappears after the jazz music is broadcast. The audience acts like they are gradually waking up; by saying "Gott sei Dank," they see Jonny and his jazz as holy as their Lord who brings them back from the realm of the dead.

Furthermore, in the very last scene, Jonny is surrounded by his people like a king. When the clock in the train station strikes 12, its hands suddenly disappear. Jonny jumps on the clock with his violin and descends together with the clock. When they reach the stage, the clock becomes a globe and Jonny is standing right on the North Pole. The stage instruction for the last scene reads:

Der leuchtende Globus beginnt zu rotieren. Jonny steht auf dem Nordpol und spielt die Geige, alles tanzt im Kreis um die Kugel.

And the chorus sings:

Die Stunde schlägt der alten Zeit,
die neue Zeit bricht jetzt an.
Versäumt den Anschluss nicht.
Die Überfahrt beginnt
Ins unbekannte Land der Freiheit

...

So spielt uns Jonny zum Tanz.
Es kommt die neue Welt übers Meer
gefahren mit Glanz
und erbt das alte Europa durch den Tanz

...

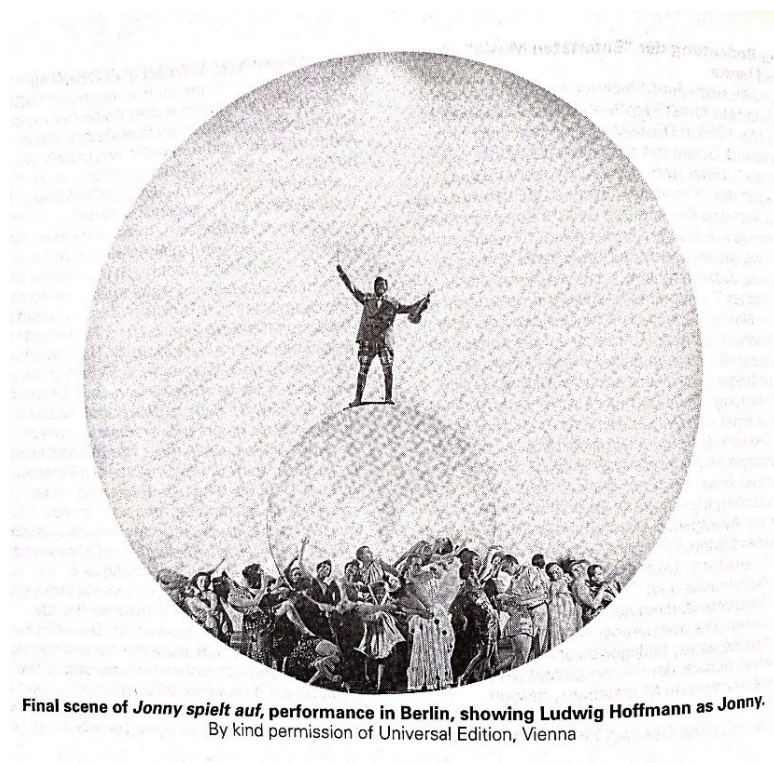
Hat euch dies (Jonny's) Spiel gefallen, dankt es ihm
Begleit euch/ Hört seiner Geige Ton,

²⁷ Ibid, 209

²⁸ Ibid, 208

wohin ihr auch geht
Denn seht er tritt unter euch, und
Jonny spielt auf.²⁹

12 o'clock represents both the old and the new, and Jonny is standing right at this intersection. People believe that Jonny is able to connect the old time and new time together and lead them to the promised land of freedom—America. The stage setting is shown in the picture below:



Just as in the picture, Jonny is being supported and honored by the masses, and they all show gratitude to him and his music. It's very similar to the last scene of *Die Meistersinger*, where Sachs is being honored by the villagers. It is useful to compare the last scenes of these two operas. *Die Meistersinger* ends with "Heil! Sachs! Nürnbergs teurem Sachs" and *Jonny spielt auf* ends with "Denn seht er tritt unter euch, und Jonny spielt auf." They are both the protagonists of the operas and they both have the ability to appeal to and lead the masses. The masses believe and rely on

²⁹ Ibid, 254

them to build a bright future.

The bright future for the people in the twentieth century is to change the old world by welcoming the new world. They sing: “Es kommt die neue Welt übers Meer gefahren mit Glanz und erbt das alte Europa durch den Tanz.”³⁰ They long for the new world because they have experienced the power and charm of jazz—which comes from the new world. However, the old world that they want to change is precisely the pure, precious world that the villagers of Nürnberg want to preserve. They are afraid that the foreign influence, like jazz, will pollute their pure Holy German Art.

Although the Nazis live in the twentieth century, they have the same artistic ideology as the Nürnberg villagers. It is unbearable for the Nazis to see their pure German Art being polluted by jazz, and it is also unbearable for the Nazis to see a person like Jonny, who is black and plays Jazz, to lead and to appeal to the people. They made use of the immorality of Jonny and applied it to the whole opera; they furiously claimed in 1927 that the opera brutally trampled the “Volk und Heimat, Sitte, Moral und Kunst” and portrayed themselves as victims of this “volksfremde Gesindel.”

1.2: *Wozzeck*: Irredeemably “entartet”

If Jonny is the foreign threat that the Nazis fear will pollute Holy German Art and the cultural life of the Aryan race, *Wozzeck* is the domestic element that the Nazis want to eliminate. The main character of the opera *Wozzeck* is neither like the respectable German master, Hans Sachs, nor the shiny jazz king, Jonny. *Wozzeck* is a miserable member of the lower class. He is poor; he has nothing but Marie and his child. He is abused by the Hauptmann and used by the Doctor as a guinea pig for his experiments. He gives the money he earns from working for the Hauptmann and the

³⁰ Ibid, 254

Doctor to Marie, but Marie commits adultery with the Tambourmajor.

Aside from his miserable experiences, and perhaps also because of those experiences, Wozzeck suffers from frightening mental visions. He sees things that could not be seen by normal people: “Hohl! Alles hohl! Ein Schlund! Es schwankt!”³¹ Wozzeck sees a monster approaching him in an empty field, while his friend Andres sees nothing. The doctor diagnoses him: “Wozzeck, Er kommt ins Narrenhaus. Er hat eine schöne fixe Idee, eine köstliche Aberratio mentalis partialis, zweite Spezies!”³² He thinks that Wozzeck belongs in a madhouse, and because Wozzeck suffers from two different symptoms, he is a rare case to experiment with. In addition to the doctor, Marie also thinks that Wozzeck is mad. She says: “Du bist hirnwütig, Franz, ich fürcht' mich [...]”³³ Wozzeck shows episodes of madness, and he is diagnosed with an “Aberratio mentalis partialis.” Even the person whom Wozzeck loves and cares the most about thinks he is insane and is afraid of him.

Therefore, Wozzeck can be seen as an example of what the Nazis considered to be a “life unworthy of life.” The Nazis did not consider the people with disabilities as worthy of the Aryan race, neither physically nor mentally. People like Wozzeck were labeled subhuman; they were “useless eaters” who would “pollute” the pure German blood if they continue to exist. Just like the doctor who does experiments with Wozzeck for his medical fame, the Nazis also experiment on human beings, especially those with disabilities. If Wozzeck lived during the Nazi period, he would be either put in a gas chamber or subjected to deadly experiments by the Nazi scientists. This reads like a premonition of the Nazi euthanasia program.

Wozzeck’s periodic insanity is closely related to the other two main characters in the opera. The Hauptmann and the Doctor represent the military and science, but

³¹ Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, n.d.), 66

³² Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, n.d.), 74

³³ Berg, *Wozzeck*, 89

both of them show the worst side of their professions. The Hauptmann always tries to educate Wozzeck. He does so by saying “ein guter Mensch,” and he ends up saying it 14 times in the opera. However, he is mostly talking nonsense and he contradicts himself:

Wozzeck, Er ist ein guter Mensch,
 (setzt sich in Positur)
 aber ... Er hat keine Moral!
 (mit viel Würde)
 Moral: das ist, wenn man moralisch ist! Versteht Er? Es ist ein gutes Wort.³⁴

On the one hand, the Hauptmann claims that Wozzeck is a good man with a very condescending tone with actually no acknowledgment of Wozzeck’s good character. On the other hand, he accuses Wozzeck of having no moral. “Good man” and “no moral” contradict each other and there is no logic in his speech. He acts superiorly and knowledgeable, but he in fact knows nothing. Take, for instance, Act 2 Scene 2, when the Hauptmann and the doctor together make fun of Wozzeck:

HAUPTMANN
 Er läuft, als hätt' er die Vollbärte aller Universitäten zu rasieren, und würde
 gehängt, so lang noch ein letztes Haar
 [...]
 Ja richtig,
 (pfeift)
 die langen Bärte ... was wollte ich doch sagen?
 (nachsinnend, hie und da in Gedanken pfeifend)
 die langen Bärte ...
 DOKTOR
 (zitierend)
 Ein langer Bart unter dem Kinn' ... hm! ... schon Plinius spricht davon.³⁵

The Hauptmann wants to be ironic; he humiliates Wozzeck by quoting the ancient authority Plinius, but he even fails to recall the entire quote until the Doctor reminds him. As a Hauptmann, he does nothing related to the military in the opera, such as training soldiers; instead, he tries to be a professor and enjoys the feeling of looking down on the uneducated.

³⁴ Berg, *Wozzeck*, 62

³⁵ Ibid, 86

However, it turns out that he is not only a bad “professor,” but also a terrible Hauptmann. He is so weak that he cannot even walk fast. In the same scene, the Hauptmann is trying to catch up with the doctor, who is walking very fast: “Laufen Sie nicht so! Uff! (schöpft tief und geräuschvoll Atem) Laufen Sie nicht! Ein guter Mensch geht nicht so schnell. Ein guter Mensch...”³⁶ It could be inferred that the Hauptmann barely does any exercise and that he is weak and unhealthy. He even tries to rationalize it: “Ein guter Mensch, der sein gutes Gewissen hat, tut alles langsam.” This is the fourteenth time that he uses “Ein guter Mensch” in the opera, and it is obvious by now that this is his “fixed idea,” similar to the Doctor’s diagnosis of Wozzeck’s “insanity.” Had he become a Hauptmann in the Nazi army, he would only lose the battle because he is a leader who has neither brain nor brawn and is unable to fulfill his duty. He would be anathema to the Nazi view of the military and undermining the Nazi image of a glorified military figure, because military officers—the “Befehlsgeber” were the elite revered by the Nazis. The Hauptmann, in contrast to the elite, belongs to the “disabled” just like Wozzeck.

In contrast to the Hauptmann, the Doctor indeed does his job as a doctor and seems to have some achievements. However, the way the Doctor does his experiments is very inhuman—he uses Wozzeck as his guinea pig. He doesn’t see Wozzeck as a human; instead, he sees him as a dog. When he sees Wozzeck coughing on the street, he comments: “Wozzeck, Er hat wieder gehustet, auf der Strasse gehustet, gebellt wie ein Hund!”³⁷ Just because Wozzeck coughs on the street, the doctor calls him a dog and here is another example of the animal leitmotif. Wozzeck explains that it’s nature that dictates the cough, but the doctor insists that one can control nature. He acts elitist, but his hypocrisy and cold-bloodedness are unmasked by the way he talks.

³⁶ Ibid, 83

³⁷ Ibid, 69

In fact, the doctor not only sees Wozzeck as a dog, more importantly, he sees Wozzeck as a “phenomenon.” He says that Wozzeck is “ein Phänomen” and “eine köstliche Aberratio mentalis partialis.” This time, Wozzeck is not even a creature that is alive; he becomes a “delightful” phenomenon, a mere object for research. For the purpose of his experiment, the Doctor decides that Wozzeck eats beans every day:

Hat Er schon seine Bohnen gegessen, Wozzeck? Nichts als Bohnen, nichts als Hülsenfrüchte! Merk' Er sich's! Die nächste Woche fangen wir dann mit Schöpsenfleisch an. Es gibt eine Revolution in der Wissenschaft [...] Oh! meine Theorie! Oh mein Ruhm! Ich werde unsterblich! Unsterblich! Unsterblich! (in höchster Verzückung) Unsterblich!³⁸

It's also quite insane of the Doctor to conduct an experiment in which one could only eat beans. For the Doctor, Wozzeck is merely a tool to advance science and increase his reputation. He believes that his theory and fame could make him immortal, and Wozzeck is a “köstliche” prey on his way to immortality. Wozzeck is nothing but a means to an end. The doctor represents an exemplary Nazi doctor who experiments with human beings. His “unsterbliche” experiments would be very much appreciated by the Nazis. However, his character also reveals the dark side of science which the Nazis do not want their people to see. People must see the brilliant side of science, with scientists hard at work to make the Aryan “Volk” pure, invincible and happy. If his true nature were revealed, the Doctor would be seen as undermining the Nazi cause which may make him “unworthy of life.”

The upper class represented by the Hauptmann and the Doctor in the opera is “disabled” and corrupted. Sadly, the image of the lower class is not any better. People indulge in alcohol and a life of debauchery. While his wife Marie cheats on him with the Tambourmajor, people make fun of Wozzeck, and they are totally indifferent to Wozzeck's misery. In Act 2 Scene 5, when the Tambourmajor insults Wozzeck, the other soldiers including Andres act without sympathy:

³⁸ Ibid, 74

EIN SOLDAT

(auf Wozzeck deutend)

Der hat sein Fett!

(legt sich um und schläft ein)

ANDRES

Er blut' . . .

(legt sich um und schläft ein)

WOZZECK

Einer nach dem Andern!

(Wozzeck bleibt sitzen und starrt vor sich hin. Die anderen Soldaten, die sich während des Ringkampfes etwas aufgerichtet hatten, haben sich nach dem Abgang des Tambourmajors niedergelegt und schlafen nunmehr alle wieder.)³⁹

None of the soldiers stand up to help and defend Wozzeck, including his friend Andres. They are all accomplices of the doctor, the Hauptmann, and the Tambourmajor, who constantly insult and abuse Wozzeck for their own purpose. All of them are to blame for Wozzeck's misery. They all talk to Wozzeck using the pronoun "er," instead of "Sie" or "du" which are personal pronouns. "Er" as a form of address shows that people consider Wozzeck inferior and they are not of the same rank. Moreover, they don't even consider him as a human; he is rather an object. There is no friendship, no love, and consequently no humanity in the whole society.

Furthermore, unlike *Jonny spielt auf* and *Die Meistersinger*, none of the main characters in *Wozzeck* have the ability to appeal to the masses. The Nazis needed blind followers, and they also needed a leader who could guide the blind followers, just like Hitler himself. However, in *Wozzeck*, there is no such character like Jonny or Sachs; neither is there any cohesion among the masses. In *Wozzeck*, people seem to care only for themselves. They only come together for entertainment in the bar where they indulge in dancing and drinking.

Except for the bar scenes, there are only two scenes where people gather, and the two stimuli that attract people are fighting and death. One is the scene that is mentioned above when the Tambourmajor insults and beats Wozzeck. The other

³⁹ Ibid, 98

soldiers gather together and watch the chaos excitedly, and they go right back to sleep after the fight ends. Watching the bullying is also a kind of entertainment for the onlookers. It is nothing but a show amusing the masses and bringing them together, albeit for a brief moment.

In addition to the fighting scene, people gather again in the last scene when they hear the news of Marie's death. The whole opera ends with a bunch of children playing a game, and their game is interrupted by the news of Marie's death. One child says: "Weisst' es nit? Sie sind schon Alle 'naus."⁴⁰ Everyone in the town goes out to see the place of Marie's death and even the next generation is corrupted by the masses. It seems that a scandalous death is much more attractive and powerful than children's play or any kind of adult entertainment. In *Die Meistersinger* and *Jonny spielt auf*, people are attracted and brought together by poetry and music, while in *Wozzeck*, people are attracted and brought together by death.

To conclude, the main characters in *Wozzeck* and *Jonny spielt auf* are both considered the "other" for the Nazis. Jonny is ethnically "inferior" to Germans and is considered the enemy of Germany, the United States. Such a foreign element would be the worm that could destroy pure German art. Furthermore, the worm plays a role as a leader in the opera, just like Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* and this is unacceptable for the Nazis. On the other hand, although *Wozzeck* is ethnically German, he is considered useless to the society; he is an "Untermensch", who is only useful for a deadly experiment. Such a useless eater is at the center of the opera and the whole opera is very dark and hopeless. On the other hand, it also unmasks the cruelty of society, for example the experiment by the Doctor, which would be something that the Nazis pursued but also wanted to hide.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 109

Chapter 2: Dynamic Oppositions in Holy German Art and in Degenerate Art

2.1: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*: Rules vs Freedom

After looking at these two examples of degenerate music, one might wonder what a “proper” musical piece sounds like. The most likely candidate would be Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*. It is not only because of Sachs’s final speech, which pleased the Nazis a lot; there is a “proper” work of art that is born in the opera, namely Walther’s Preislied. The opera mainly discussed the birth of this Holy German Art and the components that are needed to compose it.

First of all, it is important to note that although Walther sings the Preislied and wins the master position in the end, he was not accepted in the beginning. The song Walther sings in the trial doesn’t appeal to the masters. They comment on Walther’s song “Wer nennt das Gesang? Es ward einem bang!” and “Eitel Ohrgeschinder!”⁴¹ Furthermore, the conservative masters consider him a danger because Walther is an outsider and is new to Nürnberg: “Der Fall ist neu: Ein Ritter gar? soll man sich freu'n? Wäre Gefahr?”⁴² As a result, Walther completely sings his chance away in the trial.

Nonetheless, his final song is appreciated by not only the masters, but also the villagers of Nürnberg: “Gewiegt wie in den schönsten Traum, hör' ich es wohl, doch fass' es kaum. Reich' ihm das Reis, sein sei der Preis; keiner wie er so hold zu werben weiss!”⁴³ The morning dream song not only wins Walther the status of Meistersinger, but also Eva.

This major difference is mainly a function of the Table of Rules. It is explained by Kothner in the trial: “Was euch zum Liede Richt' und Schnur, vernehmt

⁴¹ "Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

nun aus der Tabulatur!”⁴⁴ The Table of Rules is very detailed, which includes not only the rules of composing the poetry, but also composing the melody. And only by following all the rules, can one become a Meistersinger.

And Walther’s song in the trial does not obey all of the rules. In fact, Walther learns singing from the birds: “das hört' ich hell erklingen: im Wald dort auf der Vogelweid' da lern't ich auch das Singen.” Walther’s teacher is nature and he is not limited by any rules. In contrast, his singing is full of freedom. He says that: “Fort, in die Freiheit! Dahin gehör' ich, dort, wo ich Meister im Haus.” Freedom means home to Walther; he belongs to it and he has mastered it.

It is interesting that he uses the word “Meister”; one need rules to master something. In fact, Walther does know the rules; his earlier self-introduction “Am stillen Herd” follows the structure of the bar form (Stollen-Stollen-Abgesang). The bar form is part of the rules which is needed to become a Meistersinger. The morning dream song by Walther in the third Act doesn’t follow the bar form and Sachs teaches him the concept of “Stollen-Stollen-Abgesang” in order to modify the song into the bar form. However, at the beginning of the trial, Walther already sings a perfect bar form. Therefore, it could be inferred that Walther already knows the rule by heart without noticing it.

Nonetheless, because Walther sings too freely and does not follow the Table of Rules, he was still criticized by the masters who value the rules greatly. The breaking of rules offends the masters and makes them feel that their authority is being challenged. Nonetheless, even if those masters criticize Walther, their own pieces are not considered to be Holy German Art. In fact, the Table of Rules they value the most is created to remind them of youthful love and passion.

It is explained by Sachs that “Das waren hoch bedürft'ge Meister, von

⁴⁴ Ibid

Lebensmüh' bedrängte Geister: in ihrer Noten Wildnis, sie schufen sich ein Bildnis, dass ihnen bliebe der Jugendliebe ein Angedenken, klar und fest, d'ran sich der Lenz erkennen lässt."⁴⁵ The "Noten Wildnis" means here the wasteland, in which no youthful love exists, and it is the situation of Sachs, Beckmesser and the other masters. It can also refer to the troubles of life from which art can provide an escape into the world of youthful love that these masters have lost. In contrast, Walther is experiencing youthful love; he is passionately in love with Eva.

Youthful love, passion, and freedom constitute the "Wahn" that inspires Walther to create his songs. Having noticed such talents in Walther, Sachs decides to help him with his morning dream song and makes it Holy German Art. Walther sings his morning dream song to Sachs in Act 2, and Sachs comments on his song: "Nur mit der Melodei seid ihr ein wenig frei."⁴⁶ Walther's melody is ingenious, just like he is, and creative power is an indispensable element of Holy German Art.

Therefore, Sachs didn't do much about the melody; the only change is that he deletes the ornaments that Walther used. When Walther sang "wie strahlten die Sterne da schön," he added a group of four sixteenth-notes ornament—which is called a "turn"—to the word "Sterne," and when he sang "umfasste sie sanft meinen Leib," he added the same ornament to the word "sanft." However, in the final Act when Walther sings the same melody, he reduces the "turn" into a two-note ornament.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

Before:

Hob. I. *p* *f* *schr ausdrucksvoll* *p* *cresc.*
 Hr. I. in F. *p* *mf* *p* *zart*
 I. *f* *dim.* *cresc.*
 II. *f* *dim.* *p* *cresc.*
 Br. *f* *dim.* *p* *cresc.*
 W. schön ich nie ge sehn: gleich ei-ner Braut um faß te sie **sanft** mei-nen Leib, mit
 K. B. *f* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

Before:

Fr. in F. *dim.*
 Fag. *f* *dim.* *p*
 Hr. Fe. *p* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*
 I. *f* *dim.* *piu p*
 II. *f* *dim.* *piu p*
 Br. *f* *dim.* *piu p*
 W. süß... ich nie er - lauscht: leuch-tend und hell, wie strahl - ten die **Ster** ne da schön! Zu
 Cl. *f* *dim.* *piu p*
 C. B. *f* *dim.* *piu p*

After:

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. The score is arranged in a system with five staves: Violin I (I.), Violin II (II.), Viola (v.), Voice (V.), and Piano (B.). The voice part has the following lyrics: "hi lachend nunder Quell den Pfad mir wies; die, dort ge - bo - ren, mein". A red box highlights the word "den" in the voice part. The piano accompaniment includes markings such as "p", "dolce", "cresc.", and "pizz.". The score is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

Ornaments are used to decorate the melody and they can be seen as the embodiment of unfettered creativity. The notes of an ornament usually don't belong to the harmony of the chord and they can be seen as outside of the frame. Therefore, it's very possible that Sachs deletes the ornaments because he considers them to be extravagant. Adding the ornament would be superficial, not essential. It's necessary to take liberties, but too much freedom would go beyond the frame and violate the rule. And Holy German Art needs a well-balanced dynamic between rules and freedom.

While Sachs doesn't change the melody a lot, he helps modify the lyrics and the structure of "Stollen-Stollen-Abgesang," which are the rules that Walther lacks. It is interesting to note the changes that Sachs makes to the lyrics. Comparing the original poem by Walther and the final poem as modified by Sachs, one can see that only the first six lines remain the same. Sachs makes a lot of changes; he rewrites the rest of it to turn it into Holy German Art. Overall, the biggest difference is that Walther's poem is more concrete and natural, while Sachs's modification is more spiritual and artistic.

Old poem by Walther:

Morgenlich leuchtend in rosigem Schein,
 von Blüt und Duft
 geschwellt die Luft,
 voll aller Wonnen,
 nie ersonnen,
 ein Garten lud mich ein,
 Gast ihm zu sein

Wonnig entragend dem seligen Raum,
 bot gold'ner Frucht
 hellsaft'ge Wucht,
 mit holdem Prangen
 dem Verlangen,
 an duft'ger Zweige Saum,
 herrlich ein Baum

Sei euch vertraut,
 welch' hehres Wunder mir geschehn:
 an meiner Seite stand ein Weib,
 so hold und schön ich nie gesehn:
 gleich einer Braut
 umfasste sie sanft meinen Leib;
 mit Augen winkend,
 die Hand wies blinkend,
 was ich verlangend begehrt,
 die Frucht so hold und wert
 vom Lebensbaum

Abendlich glühend in himmlischer Pracht
 verschied der Tag,
 wie dort ich lag:
 aus ihren Augen
 Wonne saugen,
 Verlangen einz'ger Macht
 in mir nur wach'.
 Nächtlich umdämmert, der Blick mir sich
 bricht:
 wie weit so nah',
 beschienen da
 zwei lichte Sterne
 aus der Ferne,
 durch schlanker Zweige Licht,
 hehr mein Gesicht.
 Lieblich ein Quell
 auf stiller Höhe dort mir rauscht
 jetzt schwellt er an sein hold Getön',
 so stark und süß ich's nie erlauscht:
 leuchtend und hell,
 wie strahlten die Sterne da schön!
 Zu Tanz und Reigen
 in Laub und Zweigen
 der gold'nen sammeln sich mehr,
 statt Frucht ein Sternenheer
 im Lorbeerbaum

New poem modified by Sachs:

Morgenlich leuchtend im rosigen Schein,
 von Blüt' und Duft
 geschwellt die Luft,
 voll aller Wonnen,
 nie ersonnen,
 ein Garten lud mich ein,
 dort unter einem Wunderbaum,
 von Früchten reich behangen,
 zu schau'n in sel'gem Liebestraum,
 was höchstem Lustverlangen.
 Erfüllung kühn verhiess,
 das schönste Weib:
 Eva im Paradies!

Abendlich dämmernd umschloss mich die
 Nacht;
 auf steilem Pfad
 war ich genaht
 zu einer Quelle
 reiner Welle,
 die lockend mir gelacht:
 dort unter einem Lorbeerbaum,
 von Sternen hell durchschienen,
 ich schaut' im wachen Dichtertraum,
 von heilig holden Mienen,
 mich netzend mit dem edlen Nass,
 das hehrste Weib,
 die Muse des Parnass!

"Huldreichster Tag,
 dem ich aus Dichters Traum erwacht!
 Das ich erträumt, das Paradies,
 in himmlisch neu verklärter Pracht
 hell vor mir lag,
 dahin lachend nun der Quell den Pfad mir
 wies;
 die, dort geboren,
 mein Herz erkoren,
 der Erde lieblichstes Bild,
 als Muse mir geweiht,
 so heilig hehr als mild,
 ward kühn von mir gefreit,
 am lichten Tag der Sonnen,
 durch Sanges Sieg gewonnen
 Parnass und Paradies!⁴⁷

First of all, Sachs modifies the vocabulary in order to polish the original poem.

⁴⁷ Ibid

He gets rid of the repeated adjectives that Walther uses in his poem and substitutes them with other adjectives. For example, Walther likes to use the word “hold” and uses it four times in his poem. In contrast, Sachs never uses the same adjectives more than twice; he follows strictly the rule of art.

In order to solve the problem, Sachs often keeps the words Walther uses, but turns them into another form. Instead of saying “an meiner Seite stand ein Weib/so hold und schön ich nie gesehn”, Sachs uses “das schönste Weib,” “das hehrste Weib,” and “die dort geboren...der Erde lieblichstes Bild.” Every adjective that describes the “Weib” is in its superlative form. Furthermore, Sachs modifies “was ich verlangend begehrt” into “was höchstem Lustverlangen:” “verlangend” and “begehrt” both have the meaning of desire. To avoid the repetition, he adds a superlative adjective (höchst) and a noun (Lust) to enrich the meaning of “Verlangen.” Sachs uses the superlatives frequently in the poem, and this aesthetic ploy accords with the notion of Holy German Art, which the Nazis believed to be the supreme, that is, “superlative” art.

Furthermore, Sachs also turns the singular noun Walther uses into plural form. It says in Walther’s song: “Wonnig entragend dem seligen Raum, /bot gold’ner Frucht.” And Sachs sings that “von Früchten reich behangen, /zu schau’n in sel’gem Liebestraum,/ was höchstem Lustverlangen. /Erfüllung kühn verhieß.” He exchanges the singular form of “Frucht” with its plural form, “Früchte.” And just like the adjective Sachs uses in this sentence—“reich,” he wants to indicate that true art is very rich, and as ripe as the fruits. When Sachs writes “Erfüllung kühn verhieß,” he may imply that true art is so rich that it fulfills people’s life.

Although Sachs emphasizes that his art is rich, the modified version is shorter than the original version. Walther’s poem has a lot of description of nature. Walther

uses different senses when he sings about nature. He provides a lively image of leaves and twigs dancing together like stars: “Zu Tanz und Reigen/ in Laub und Zweigen/ der gold'nen sammeln sich mehr.” Aside from the visual sense, Walther sings about the sound of nature: “Lieblich ein Quell auf stiller Höhe dort mir rauscht jetzt schwellt er an sein hold Getön', so stark und süß ich's nie erlauscht.” Walther creates a nice contrast of sounds between “still” and “rauscht” in this passage.

Furthermore, he uses the sense of smell when he sings about “an duft'ger Zweige Saum, herrlich ein Baum.” And last but not least, Walther uses the sense of touch when he sings about the beautiful woman in nature: “an meiner Seite stand ein Weib, so hold und schön ich nie gesehn: gleich einer Braut umfasste sie sanft meinen Leib.” He feels the touch of nature when the woman touches his “Leib.” By using the four senses, Walther shows how “lively” and “natural” his morning dream is.

However, such detailed descriptions are omitted by Sachs. The dream is edited artistically by Sachs to serve the purpose of becoming a master piece and winning the competition. He ingeniously interrelates dream and reality and directly names the woman Eva, whom Walther encounters in the dream. Moreover, he mentions wooing in the last stanza which brings the dream to the reality of Walther wooing Eva in the contest. Sachs emphasizes: “Das ich erträumt, /das Paradies /in himmlisch neu verklärter Pracht hell vor mir lag.../am lichten Tag der Sonnen, /durch Sanges Sieg gewonnen /Parnass und Paradies.” Parnassus is the mythological home of music and poetry. And by winning “Parnass und Paradies,” Sachs wants to imply that Walther is going to win the master position and Eva together in the competition. If Walther is singing about his morning dream, Sachs’s poem is about a dream coming true.

Nonetheless, although Sach’s modification seems realistic, it is in fact more spiritual. For example, by bringing Greek mythology into the poem, Sachs makes the

poem more transcendent—articulated by the many religious metaphors. There is, for example, the expression “himmlisch neu verklärter Pracht,” which has the prayer-like ring to it that one could hear at a Christian worship in church.

Furthermore, Sachs adds the word “Paradise” to the poem which is never used by Walther. The inspiration might come from earlier when Sachs mentions Paradise in his “cobbler song” from Act II: “Als Eva aus dem Paradies...”⁴⁸ This word appears three times in the poem and is used to describe the garden, which represents nature. Sachs turns a normal garden in Walther’s dream into a religious Garden of Eden. Just like the fire in *Wozzeck* and the glacier in *Jonny spielt auf*, nature is linked with religion and becomes a substitute for religion.

Sachs also creates alliterations and rhymes with this religious vocabulary, for example in “von heilig holden Mienen” and “so heilig hehr als mild.” Alliterating three words, “heilig, hold, hehr,” is all Sachs needs to evoke the “edle” quality that he seeks in a work of art. Another alliteration that appears at the end of the poem, namely “Parnass und Paradies” conflates art and religion. In addition to the alliterations, Sachs also creates rhymes that are imbued with a religious quality, such as “einer Quelle reiner Welle.” The word “pure” can also be related to pure German Art, as opposed to foreign art that is impure and dirty, such as in *Jonny spielt auf*. Sachs continues with “mich netzend mit dem edlen Nass, /das hehrste Weib, /die Muse des Parnass!” One could immediately connect the precious water to the holy water. The “edle Nass” is sprinkled by the Muse of Parnass, thus once again marrying religion and art through rhyme. And Eva is not only a human girl but also a goddess in paradise who gives Walther the inspiration to compose.

In addition to the precious water, there is another important object in the poem which also represents nature—tree. There are three different kinds of trees in the two

⁴⁸ Ibid

poems—“Lebensbaum” in Walther’s poem, “Lorbeerbaum” and “Wunderbaum” in Sachs’s poem. “Lebensbaum” is the tree of life that could represent the growth of life and it is very concrete. In contrast, “Lorbeerbaum” and “Wunderbaum” are more spiritual and religious. “Lorbeerbaum” is also related to Greek mythology just like Parnass and it represents the tree of art. “Wunderbaum” can remind people of the Garden of Eden and it represents religion. Therefore Walther’s poem is more concrete about what he experiences in life and Sachs’s poem combines art and religion and is more spiritual.

To sum up, Walther’s poem is more concrete and more on the side of nature while Sachs’s poem is a combination of art and religion, which is “purified” or “spiritualized” so much that the balance is tipped more toward the side of art. Sachs uses art and religion to purify nature, while religion and nature are both means to produce Holy German Art. And the combination of art and religion fits the Nazi ideology of redemption through art, through Holy German Art.

Borrowing a passage from *Jonny spielt auf*, when Max sings about the glacier: “Er [der Gletscher] ist mir Symbol der Gestalt, der geformten Natur, des gefaßten Lebens.”⁴⁹ Walther provides a “physical” nature, which Sachs turns into an artistically formed nature. By consciously forming nature, Sachs inserts rules into it and therefore, Holy German Art requires a balance between freedom and rule.

As a segue into the next section, it should be noted that Holy German Art also involves a dynamic of old and new because the Preislied is composed by both Walther and Sachs. The old generation is represented by Sachs and the new is represented by Walther. Sachs stands for tradition and he has mastered all the rules, while Walther has youthful love and freedom. They are complementary elements that are all needed

⁴⁹ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf*. Booklet. *Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 84.

for Holy German Art and only by them working together, can they present the final Preislied.

2.2: *Jonny spielt auf*: Old vs. New

Because *Jonny spielt auf* doesn't focus on the process of creating of musical composition, as is the case in *Die Meistersinger*, it is hard to tell the dynamic between freedom and rule in the composition. However, the opera focuses on reflecting contemporary society, for which freedom and rules are indispensable elements. After watching the opera, one realizes how problematic this society is. There are basically no rules in this society. The three clownish policemen fulfill little duty; they catch the wrong criminal—Max, and let him escape successfully. What they did was gossip about the drama between Max and Anita. The protagonist Jonny is the real criminal and he is not subject to punishment by law. He does whatever he wants, and his sense of freedom, seems limitless.

The relationship between new and old is also discussed in *Jonny spielt auf*. There is a huge gap and conflict between the new world, represented by Jonny, and the old world, represented by Max. Max is considered to be a stereotypical Romantic artist figure. It can be seen in his language which, in typical nineteenth-century fashion sounds like this: “O Herz, mein Herz brause noch nicht so wirld, noch muss du mich bei klarem Verstand lassen. Blut, o mein Blut, tose nihct so laut, lass mich noch atmen!...O Freude, töte mich noch nicht, nicht zu früh, lass mich noch leben, lass mich noch diesen Augenblick erleben!”⁵⁰

In addition to the language, Max's personality is also like that of a Romantic artist. Comments Thomas Gayda: “In Max we recognise the descendant of the typical

⁵⁰ Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (London [England]: Routledge, 2017), 114.

Romantic artists, full of self-doubt preferring loneliness to the tumult of society, wavering between longing for a ‘normal’ life and apathy.”⁵¹ Max cannot fit in the modern society and his serious music is not welcomed by the masses.

What appeals to the masses is the new music by the outsider Jonny. Unlike Walther, Jonny is racially an outsider and the jazz he plays represents the new world. And unlike the masses in *Die Meistersinger*, who consider outsiders as a danger, the masses in *Jonny spielt auf* are obsessed with the new, foreign music.

Furthermore, in *Die Meistersinger* there is a collaboration between old and new, but there is barely any collaboration in *Jonny spielt auf*. Unlike Walther, who learns from Sachs, Jonny is not willing to learn from the old and it seems also unnecessary to do so because he already wins the game effortlessly with his new jazz music.

On the other hand, the “old” Max also refuses to come out of his comfort zone—the glacier—but enjoys staying in it until he is rejected by it in Scene 7. He is awakened by Anita’s voice and decides to come back to her; he follows her to the railway station and finally goes to America—the new land—with Anita. This could be seen as a compromise to leave the glacier, give up his old identity, and join the modern society where Jonny and Anita belong.

Another character who represents the old world is Daniello. One can see an even clearer conflict between those two generations in Daniello and Jonny in their fight over the Amati violin. Daniello owns the historical and expensive violin, and Jonny wants to have it for himself. In order to let Jonny own the violin, Krenek not only rationalizes Jonny’s act of stealing, but also lets Daniello fall off the platform and die. More ironically, Daniello even “comes back to life” and joins the chorus in

⁵¹ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf*. Booklet. *Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 30.

the last scene to celebrate the victory of Jonny. Therefore, it could be concluded that the old world must compromise or die in order to let the new world arise and take charge.

It is also suggested by Taylor-Jay that Jonny works closely with the other characters and “sets chains of events in motion rather than merely reacting to outside circumstances.”⁵² After Anita comes to Paris, Jonny is in control of the plot and everyone else reacts to him. Jonny, through his deceitful and manipulative schemes, wreaks havoc in the old world, represented by Max and Daniello. Furthermore, Jonny arrogantly says that “mir gehört alles, was gut ist in der Welt. Die alte Welt hat es [Amati] erzeugt, sie weiß damit nichts mehr zu tun.”⁵³ The old world created the violin and does not know what to do with it anymore, and, therefore, it should be passed on to the new order.

Nonetheless, although it seems that there is a clear-cut conflict between old and new, the situation is actually more complicated. Despite the fact that Max represents a Romantic artist, he is not like Wagner because Max’s music is tonally very unstable; his song “Als ich damals am Strand” constantly shifts from one key to another, and is between atonality and tonality. This is interpreted by Taylor-Jay as Max, the marginalized figure, oscillating between glacier and society.⁵⁴

⁵² Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (London [England]: Routledge, 2017), 112.

⁵³ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf. Booklet. Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 194.

⁵⁴ Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (London [England]: Routledge, 2017), 126.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Als ich damals am Strand" by Paul Hindemith. It consists of three systems of music. The first system is marked "Andante triste" and includes measures 365 and 370. The lyrics are "Als ich da - mals am Strand des Mee - res stand, such - te das Heim - weh - mich". The second system includes measures 375 and 380, with lyrics "he in Ich such - te mein Heim in der Träu - me". The third system includes measures 385 and 390, with lyrics "Land, daß das Weh, - daß das Weh, daß das Weh". The score is written for voice (A) and piano (p).

Furthermore, this song “Als ich damals am Strand” is believed to imitate Schönberg’s 1909 song “Am Strand.”⁵⁵ More obviously, the opera starts with Max singing “Du schöner Berg” and one can immediately relate it to Schönberg.

Therefore, Krenek intentionally creates the character Max to parody Schönberg, and Max is not only a Romantic artist, but also an Expressionist just like Schönberg is. In fact, he does have some characteristics as an expressionist. Douglas Kellner writes in his essay “Expressionism and Rebellion” that “Expressionism was, in part, the revolt of alienated youth and frustrated artists against a society which had in effect ‘marginalized’ them. Many Expressionists were Jews...”⁵⁶ Max is indeed marginalized by society and it is also suggested by the policeman in the opera that he is a Jew.

Kellner further concludes that the “Expressionist artist stands for mysticism, self-examination, contemplation of the other-worldly and speculation on the infinite—expressed in terms of great feeling or emotive tension.”⁵⁷ Max introspects a

⁵⁵ Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (London [England]: Routledge, 2017), 114.

⁵⁶ Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas Kellner, *Passion and Rebellion: The Expressionist Heritage* (South Hadley: J. F. Bergin, 1983), 15.

⁵⁷ Bronner and Kellner, *Passion and Rebellion*, 4.

lot and suffers from his self-examination. It is also believed that Expressionists chose to return to nature in order to heal themselves from their sufferings and Max always goes to the glacier. In Scene 7 he begs the glacier to take him with it: “O nehmt mich auf eurer Bahn! Ich will mit euch ins Dunkel ziehn und nie wieder zu Licht und Leben zurückkehren...Auflösen in die Unendlichkeit!”⁵⁸ The glacier stands for the infinite and Max longs for eternity and stillness. Furthermore, according to Kellner’s description, we can find another Expressionist in this essay, namely *Wozzeck*; both *Wozzeck* and Max always do a lot of self-examination; they are both alienated from society and suffer a lot because of it.

Therefore, the mere presence of Max in this opera adds a lot of complexity to the question of new and old. In him, one can see a combination of new and old—the old Romanticism and the new Expressionism. Although these two movements are in many ways opposites, Max has the personality of both. Furthermore, one needs to bear in mind that Jonny needs the old violin in the last scene to lead the masses to the new land. Therefore, despite the fact that there is much more conflict and opposition than a combination of new and old in *Jonny spielt auf*, new and old cannot simply be separated.

⁵⁸ Ernst Krenek, *Jonny spielt auf. Booklet. Entartete Musik: Music Suppressed by the Third Reich* (London: Decca Record Comp., 1973 [Booklet]), 200.

Chapter 3: Between Enmity and Exploitation: The Nazis' Ambivalence About Contemporary Music

Both *Die Meistersinger* and *Jonny spielt auf* are artist operas which means that the operas tell a story about artists. Tellingly, we witness the creation of art within the operas, such as Walther's Preislied or Max's "Als ich damals am Strand." In light of the oppositions discussed above, the questions to be pursued in this chapter are how much "freedom" did the Nazis accord the artist to compose? What rules had to be observed in order to create? Did their reverence for traditional music preclude the incorporation of modernist elements?

3.1: To Nourish the Soul or to Feed the Mind

Before we analyze the Nazi musical credo, it is necessary to go back briefly to *Die Meistersinger*. Despite the fact that there is a collaboration between new and old in the opera, the old is valued much more than the new. First of all, the root of Walther's art—despite him representing the new—could be traced back to an older time. He sings in the first act: "Herr Walther von der Vogelweid', der ist mein Meister gewesen."⁵⁹ Walther von der Vogelweide is a minstrel from the 12th century who sings about courtly love. The fact that Walther learned from this ancestor tells us that his background is related to the old tradition.

Secondly, although, with Walther, the new generation wins the competition, the old generation is honored at the end instead of the new. The opera ends with people singing: "Heill! Sachs! Nürnbergs teurem Sachs!" It is quite interesting that after Walther wins the competition, his name is not even mentioned by the masses. Instead, Sachs's name is mentioned several times when people thank him and praise him. Sachs even gives a speech about Holy German Art after Walther wins and the

⁵⁹ "Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

final speech by Sachs is abused by the Nazis for their propaganda.

This perfectly conforms to the Nazis' appreciation of music. As is mentioned in the introduction, one of the commandments Goebbels issued is "music of the past must be respected." Politically far right, the Nazis' conservative ideology also applies to their taste of music. Although the party rose to power in 1933, the music they like is mostly composed before the 20th century.

The Nazis resemble the conservative masters in *Die Meistersinger*, who consider the "new" as a danger when they say "Der Fall ist neu: Ein Ritter gar? soll man sich freu'n? Wäre Gefahr?"⁶⁰ The Nazis were even reluctant to use the term "modern" which "smacked of the ideologically saturated modernism that the hated Weimar Republic had spawned and become associated with."⁶¹

Instead, they used the word "contemporary" and declared at the "Degenerate Music" exhibition in Düsseldorf that "contemporary music was not permitted to be atonal, especially of the twelve-tone variety personified by Schoenberg" and "both modern, abstract (as in much Expressionist) art, and modern, atonal music were ultimately considered as Jewish."⁶² Ziegler also wrote in his brochure for the degenerate art exhibition that modernity equals atonality and atonality destroys tonality: "dass die Atonalität als Ergebnis der Zerstörung der Tonalität Entartung und Kunstbolschewismus bedeutet."⁶³ While atonality was linked with modernity, they both represent Jewish and cultural Bolshevism, and were directly labeled as "Entartung." When Ziegler said that atonality destroys the tonality, it means that modernity destroys the tradition, which the Nazis valued the most.

⁶⁰ "Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

⁶¹ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 178.

⁶² Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 178.

⁶³ Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik - Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S.Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Völkischer Verlag, 1938), 24.

Moreover, the Nazi composer Werner Egk suggested that “since ‘contemporary’ did not necessarily connote ‘modern’ or ‘revolutionary’, older living composers whose music, in the traditional style, had been around for years and was well known, could try to answer the call and pass themselves off as champion of the new era.”⁶⁴ The notion of older composers as champions of the new era perfectly echoes *Die Meistersinger*, in which Sachs as the old becomes the true champion at the end. It was even admitted on 14 February 1943 in the *Völkischer Beobachter* that a future Nazi music culture was at present based on traditional “folk-classical” forms.⁶⁵

The new was either banned or ignored. As a result, there are only a few contemporary composers who were backed by the Nazis and are still remembered today. However, it does not mean that there were no great composers in 20th century Germany. The composers we remember from the 20th century in Germany and Austria are Schönberg, Strauss, Berg, Hindemith, Krenek and so on. They represent the trend of contemporary music and they were looking for innovation to break out of the Romantic tradition; to do so many of them moved away from tonality.

On the other hand, Hitler had a Romantic view of music. “According to Hitler’s understanding, the composer should produce his creations spontaneously.”⁶⁶ The Führer believed that music should be composed by instinct which expresses emotion, and his taste of music would represent the music policy of the Third Reich. Richard Etlin says that “Hitler grounded Nazi policy on music according to his own predilection. Whatever impressed him...should also impress the entire German population. On the other hand, whatever made him unsure or repelled him...should also be withheld from the entire population.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Kater, *The Twisted*, 183.

⁶⁵ Meyer, Michael. "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich." *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 4 (1975): 652. Accessed November 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260106>.

⁶⁶ Richard A. Etlin, *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 54.

⁶⁷ Etlin, *Art, Culture*, 54.

Hitler's belief in spontaneously composing music can be seen in the character Walther, who is also an outsider who "conquers" the masses just as Hitler was. Walther improvises a lot during the opera. For example, the very first song he sings in the trial is an improvisation. After the marker Beckmesser gives the order "fanget an!", Walther misunderstands the rule and he starts his song with "fanget an" and continues singing. Therefore, his improvisation is derived from this random "fanget an."

Furthermore, in the final Preislied Walther improvises again. He sings a modulation from C major to B major, which is not in the original melody he sings to Sachs in the previous act.

Zurückhaltend.

V V/V V/iii

BM: I

Even in the competition, Walther is not satisfied just to play it safe by singing the original version. The Preislied is originally in C major. Walther first uses the secondary chord—the dominant of the dominant chord of C major (V/V), and then uses the third of the dominant (iii/V), which also functions as the tonic of B major. His instinct takes over as he spontaneously produces a complicated modulation. Those improvisations show Walther’s ability as a Meistersinger and it is also the ability that Hitler believed the composer should possess.

In contrast, modern music in the 20th century represented by Schönberg’s atonal and twelve-tone techniques have nothing to do with improvisation. They cannot be composed spontaneously, especially twelve-tone music is purely intellectual and it is believed by many people that atonal and 12-tone music is not related to the expression of emotion at all. These terms “spontaneity, instinct, improvisation” are quite vague, but they are the opposite of cerebral, which the Nazis identified as Jewish.

Back in the 19th century, Wagner had attacked the Jews in his essay *Judaism in Music* that the Jews lack human expression and feelings. He says: “When we listen to a Jew talking we are unconsciously upset by the complete lack of purely human expression in his speech...he is incapable of really deep feeling.”⁶⁸ He further compared the Jews with parrots that mimic human speech as mentioned before. Because Schoenberg was born in a Jewish family, it’s easy to connect his atonal and 12-tone techniques with what Wagner attacks in his essay.

While Wagner’s political ideology and understanding of music strongly influenced Hitler, his belief became the belief of the Third Reich. Reich speaker Hans Severus Ziegler said, “Atonality in music signifies degeneracy and artistic bolshevism,” while Alfred Rosenberg said, “The whole atonal movement in music is contradictory to the rhythm of blood and soul of the German nation.”⁶⁹



⁶⁸ Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 28.

⁶⁹ Erik Levi, "Atonality, 12-Tone Music and the Third Reich," *Tempo*, n.s., September 1991, 17, JSTOR.

The term “blood and soil” was being used again and again by the Nazis and it became a slogan for Nazi propaganda. It was related to the vision of “Lebensraum;” Richard Walther Darré wrote a book called *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* (A New Nobility Based On Blood And Soil) in 1930, which proposed a systematic eugenics program and emphasized on selective breeding.⁷⁰ Anti-Semitic writer Max Wundt defined “das Volkstum” as “das lebendige Ganze eines Volkes” in his 1924 book *Was heißt völkisch?*⁷¹ He said that “An seinen natürlichen Grundlagen von Boden und Blut besitzt es seinen Körper” and “Treue zum Blut und zum Boden vereinen sich zur Vaterlandsliebe, in der Familiensinn und Heimatsgefühl verschmolzen sind.”⁷²

Blood and soil are identical to the German Volk. Atonality is against the blood and soul of Germany, while folk songs are products of blood and soil. A similar statement was also made by Wagner when he talked about German art: “our luxury arts...retain a certain connection with their natural soil, the real spirit of the people.”⁷³ In contrast, Wagner emphasized that the Jews bring something unpleasantly foreign to the German blood and soil, and “we instinctively feel we have nothing in common with a man who looks like that.”⁷⁴ While Wagner thought that Germans instinctively disliked Jews, Ziegler defined Jews as “Fremdvolk,” who “allezeit einen infernalischen Hass gegen alles Germanische gehegt hat.”⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Leila J. Rupp and Barbara Miller Lane, *Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 110.

⁷¹ Max Wundt, *Was heißt völkisch?* (Langensalza: Hermann Beyer & Söhne, 1924), 30, digital file.

⁷² Max Wundt, *Was heißt völkisch?* (Langensalza: Hermann Beyer & Söhne, 1924), 31, digital file.

⁷³ Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 31.

⁷⁴ Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 26.

⁷⁵ Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik - Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S.Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Völkischer Verlag, 1938), 12

3.1.1: *Carmina Burana* vs. *Wozzeck*

It would seem that both Wagner and Hitler value instinct a lot, especially in music composition. Elaborating on Hitler's idea about creating spontaneously, it does not only mean that music should have the characteristics of improvisation. The word improvisation implies that music should not be intellectual as 12-tone music, and music should not be complicated or ambivalent because improvisation and instinct do not allow it to be so. The Nazis liked music to be simple and straightforward because it is easy for the audience to follow and does not require them to think a lot.

It is useful to compare the "entartet" *Wozzeck* and the "artet" *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff, which belongs to the few pieces still remembered today, and which was composed during the Nazi era and also accepted by the Nazis. Both of these works have a scene in a tavern but the scenes are very different. The second section of *Carmina Burana* is called "In Taberna" and it describes different kinds of people who indulge in drinking in the tavern. In No.14 "In taberna quando sumus," a male chorus sings a recitative:

When we are in the tavern
we spare no thought for the grave
but rush to the gaming tables
where we always sweat and strain.
What goes on in the tavern
where a coin gets you a drink,
if this is what you would know
then listen to what I have to say.

Some men gamble, some men drink,
some indulge in indiscretions,
but of those who stay to gamble
some lose their clothes,
some win new clothes,
while others put on sack clothes.
There is no one afraid of death,
throwing dice for Bacchus.

First, the dice are thrown for wine:
this the libertines drink.
Once they drink to prisoners,
then three times to the living,
four times to all Christians,
five to the faithful departed,

six times to the dissolute sisters,
seven to the bush-rangers.

Eight times to delinquent brothers,
nine to the dispersed monks,
ten times to the navigators,
eleven to those who are fighting,
twelve to the penitent,
thirteen to the travelers.
They drink to the Pope and King alike,
all drink without restraint.

The mistress drinks, the master drinks,
the soldier drinks, the clergyman drinks,
this man drinks, this woman drinks,
the manservant drinks with the serving maid,
the quick man drinks, the sluggard drinks,
the white man drinks, the black man drinks,
the steady man drinks, the wanderer drinks,
the simpleton drinks, the wise man drinks.

The poor man drinks, the sick man drinks,
the exile drinks and the unknown man drinks,
the boy drinks, the old man drinks,
the Bishop drinks, the Deacon drinks,
Sister drinks and brother drinks,
the old crone drinks, the mother drinks,
this one drinks, that one drinks,
a hundred drink, a thousand drink.

Six hundred coins are not enough
for this aimless
and immoderate drinking,
although they drink cheerfully.
Many people censure us
and we shall always be short of money.
My our critics be confounded
and never be numbered among the just.⁷⁶

Everything is as superficial as stated in the text. All kinds of people are having fun drinking and gambling with no constraint; they think about nothing but enjoying the alcohol aimlessly. They are not afraid of death and everyone is equal in the tavern no matter if he is poor or rich, healthy or sick, black or white, male or female. It is very possible that the Nazis imagined this scene as a huge revelry after they won the war, although it didn't happen in the end.

The tavern scene in *Wozzeck* also talks about people having fun dancing and drinking. A Handwerksbursche sings again and again that “meine unsterbliche Seele,

⁷⁶ *Carmina Burana* (2013), 60, <https://issuu.com/lpcpub/docs/tco-1213-week18-april11/67>.

stinkt nach Branntewein.”⁷⁷ The stinky soul shows the devastating effects of alcohol, the opposite of the happy drinking song in *Carmina Burana*. However, while *Carmina Burana* is so happy and straightforward that there is no deep meaning behind it, the tavern scene in *Wozzeck* is very complicated and it can provoke thinking. In the fourth scene the Handwerksbursche gives a long speech about “Warum ist der Mensch:”

Jedoch, wenn ein Wanderer, der gelehnt steht an dem Strom der Zeit, oder aber sich die göttliche Weisheit vergegenwärtigt und fraget: Warum ist der Mensch?

(mit Pathos)

Aber wahrlich, geliebte Zuhörer, ich sage Euch:

(verzückt)

Es ist gut so! Denn von was hätten der Landmann, der Fassbinder, der Schneider, der Arzt leben sollen, wenn Gott den Menschen nicht geschaffen hätte? Von was hätte der Schneider leben sollen, wenn Er nicht dem Menschen die Empfindung der Schamhaftigkeit eingepflanzt hätte? Von was der Soldat und der Wirt, wenn Er ihn nicht mit dem Bedürfnis des Totschiessens und der Feuchtigkeit ausgerüstet hätte? Darum, Geliebteste, zweifelt nicht; denn es ist Alles lieblich und fein ... Aber alles Irdische ist eitel; selbst das Geld geht in Verwesung über ... Und meine Seele stinkt nach Branntewein.⁷⁸

The whole speech seems really philosophical. The Handwerksbursche is thinking about the meaning of life and the question of “warum ist der Mensch” is such an existential question. He pretends to be Christ when he says “aber wahrlich” and “ich sage Euch,” and one expects a spiritual answer. However, his logic does not make a lot of sense. He asks a series of questions with no answers, but comes to the conclusion that everything is “lieblich und fein” but also “eitel.” “Aber alles Irdische ist eitel” is another quote from the Bible (Ecclesiastes 1:1). However, the use of this biblical reference here shows that religion is not able to offer the answers it used to give. This passage seems absurd, even nihilist. When he says: “alles Irdische ist eitel,” the implication is that everything is in vain; everything is transitory and worthless. On

⁷⁷ Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, n.d.), 92.

⁷⁸ Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, n.d.), 92.

the other hand, the Nazis had answers for everything and they were against such negativity.

Despite the absurdity and maybe also because of the absurdity, the Handwerksbursche's speech provokes thinking, especially when he says that the soldiers are born "mit dem Bedürfnis des Totschiessens." God creates humans to fulfill the mechanized and inhuman purpose of killing people. The audience is called upon thinking about the meaning and purpose of life but such a thinking process is not needed when listening to *Carmina Burana*.

It is not only the audience who needs to think; the main character Wozzeck is also thinking for most of this opera. He is thinking and talking to himself about nature and the darkness around him. The doctor criticizes him that he "philosophiert wieder" and Marie even comments: "Der Mann! So vergeistert! Er hat sein Kind nicht angesehen! Er schnappt noch über mit den Gedanken!"⁷⁹ Wozzeck is constantly ruminating and brooding, and he cannot stop doing so.

As he reflects, he sees through society. As the victim of society, Wozzeck comments: "Der Mensch ist ein Abgrund, es schwindelt Einem, wenn man hinunterschaut (im Abgehen) mich schwindelt [...]"⁸⁰ He sees through the dark world and the dreadful humanity. People as abysses can not only make others dizzy, they can also destroy others. Furthermore, he also says that: "die Erd' ist manchem höllenheiss."⁸¹ He senses the hellish quality of the world with his hypersensitive mind.

Although Wozzeck and the audience of *Wozzeck* need to think a lot during the opera, the tone and the overall atmosphere is very clear. It reveals a dark society with no hope; even the next generation is corrupted. In contrast, everything in *Die Meistersinger* is positive and happy. It is the only opera of Wagner in which no one

⁷⁹ Berg, *Wozzeck*, 69.

⁸⁰ Berg, *Wozzeck*, 90.

⁸¹ Berg, *Wozzeck*, 87.

dies and Larry Arnhart comments that this is one opera of Wagner's that is free from nihilism: "there is no ecstatic self-annihilation in *Die Meistersinger* like that in *Tristan und Isolde*. In *Die Meistersinger*, there is no fleeing from the world, but rather a healing reaffirmation of the world of ordinary experience."⁸²

3.1.2: "Neue Sachlichkeit:"The Folk Song and Its "Verfremdung"

Compared to these two operas, *Jonny spielt auf* is very different. This opera sounds light, but it is actually problematic and ambivalent. Krenek presents the main character Jonny as a criminal, who is deceitful, unloyal, and immoral. Nonetheless, he not only escapes from being punished by law, but also becomes a leader who leads the people to the new land with Daniello's violin.

The plot makes the audience wonder whether they should be happy about the ending. Moreover, after watching the whole opera, it is hard for the audience to feel aligned with any of the characters--the sensitive Max, deceitful Jonny, or the modern "Don Juan" Daniello; one can barely feel empathy for any of those characters. Unlike *Die Meistersinger* and *Wozzeck* which are purely positive and purely negative, *Jonny spielt auf* is quite ambivalent and it is hard to guess the intention of the composer. And the character Max, who, as discussed before, represents both a Romantic and Expressionist artist, adds more complexity to this ambivalence.

In fact, this is a characteristic of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement in the Weimar Republic. After Germany lost the war in 1919, people are rethinking art and its purpose, and they abandon the sentimentality of late Romanticism and the emotional agitation of Expressionism. In accordance with the ideals of *Neue*

⁸² Larry Arnhart, "Lyric Opera's 'Die Meistersinger' (2): Is Hans Sachs a Nihilist?," *Blogger*, entry posted February 27, 2013, <http://darwinianconservatism.blogspot.com/2013/02/lyric-operas-die-meistersinger-2-is.html>.

Sachlichkeit and Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik*, Krenek believed that composers must compose for practicality and functionality.⁸³

On the other hand, composing for practicality and functionality is exactly the opposite of Wagner and the Nazis' music aesthetics. In *Judaism in Music*, Wagner also writes that: "their (the Jews') eyes have always busied themselves far more with practical affairs than with beauty or the spiritual substance of the material world."⁸⁴ For the Nazis, music is spiritual and should not be connected to functionality and practicality.

Krenek applies this "Jewish" aesthetics to the plot of *Jonny spielt auf*. He puts the reality of two clashing worlds in front of the audience and lets them decide what they want. The opera reflects the post-war situation in the Weimar Republic and the rising "Amerikanismus." Krenek does not choose to stand with any side—neither the old Romantic world nor the modern society; in the opera, the old world is being abandoned and the modern society is problematic. Yet even in its very ambivalence, *Jonny spielt auf* goes beyond practicality and functionality. The opera does have a message, and while it is ambivalent, it is also quite worrisome. The world is changing and Jonny is taking over the new order, abandoning the old world of Max. The question is only, should we be happy about this? Raising this question in itself is an important artistic effect, and there are no easy answers. He leaves the thinking to the audience and allows different kinds of interpretations.

Such techniques were described by German playwright Bertolt Brecht as "Verfremdungseffekt," which is the distancing effect. It is used in theater to prevent the audience from losing itself completely in the illusion and create distance between

⁸³ Jenny L. Jackson, "Musical Style as a Representation of Social Milieu : the 1927 premieres of Ernst Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* and Erich Wolfgang Korngold's *Das Wunder der Heliane*." (master's thesis, University of Iowa, 2001), 48.

⁸⁴ Richard Wagner and Charles Osborne, "Judaism in Music," in *Richard Wagner--Stories and Essays* (London: Owen, 1973), 29

the audience and the characters and the plot on stage. By making things strange, the audience is less prone to identify with the characters; instead, they begin to think about why things happen.

Another example of the distancing effect can be found in *Wozzeck*. Berg uses a large number of “folk” songs in the opera but he makes them sound strange by adding a lot of dissonances. Examples of “folk” songs are the hunting song by Andres in the second scene, “Das ist die schöne Jägerei”, the song Marie sings to praise the soldiers in the third scene, “Soldaten, Soldaten sind schöne Burschen!”, the song Marie sings to put their boy to sleep in the third scene, “Mädel, was fangst Du jetzt an?”, and the children song at the end, “Ringel, Ringel, Rosenkranz, Ringelreih'n!” Berg also borrows the famous German folk song “Ein Jäger aus Kurpfalz” and uses it in the chorus in the tavern scene in scene 4. For all the songs, Berg retains some folk song elements, for example the meter, some of the melody, and the lyrics, but he changes the interval and harmony to make it sound strange and disturbing. The strange and disturbing sound would make the audiences realize that something is amiss prompting them to think.

This is unacceptable for the Nazis. First of all, despite the fact that it is really hard to define Germanness, National Socialist cultural official and musicologist Müller-Blattau claimed that “the only features of Germanness mentioned are a greater attention to folk elements in German art music.”⁸⁵ Furthermore, it was believed by many scholars that “folk music, unlike art music, was pure and sheltered from foreign influences...could represent the closest approximation to some sort of “original”

⁸⁵ Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 1998), 211.

German music.”⁸⁶ Therefore, folk music is considered to be the purest manifestation of Germanness.

Nonetheless, in the word “Verfremdung” there is the word “fremd” in it. “Fremd” is equal to “wälsch” in Sachs’s final speech and the word itself would be banned by the Nazis because it is foreign. And Berg’s intentionally “verfremdete” folk songs would for sure irritate the Nazis because the only pure manifestation of Germanness is polluted by foreign influences.

The proper use of folk songs could be found in *Carmina Burana*. The idea of *Carmina Burana* came from the “life reform movement” in Germany, also known as “Wandervögel.”⁸⁷ The movement claims that their music is derived from long-forgotten folk songs from the countryside and small villages and the music of *Carmina Burana* “draws on outdated and predictable harmonic language of nineteenth-century popular song, and popular versions of Volkslied, often set off with yodels and hunting calls befitting the landscape.”⁸⁸ Orff even wrote in the letter to his friend that “Were diu werlt alle min” is “in the style of a folk song” and the statement “I would give up all my lands to lie with the Queen of England” was musically set with the pomp of a fanfare.⁸⁹

Schmidt also comments in his book *German Youth Movement* that “the banality and superficiality of the age, as seen by the Wandervögel, was dramatically illustrated in what they called the noisy, shallow, sentimental concert of the popular patriotic music of the day.”⁹⁰ Such patriotic music is exactly the political music that the Nazis were looking for.

⁸⁶ Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 1998), 214-215.

⁸⁷ Yri, Kirsten. "Lebensreform and Wandervögel Ideals in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*." *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 100, Issue 3-4, Fall-Winter 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy007>

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

The most characteristic element of this music is the use of “trumpet and horn calls, fanfare motives, the strong presence of percussion and brass, and a clear tonal harmony directed to the strong beats of the form.” An example of this can be found in “O Fortuna”, which appears twice both in the beginning and at the end. It could be interpreted as the will to triumph because of the military fanfare at the end and the passionate and powerful voice. It is perfect to be played on the frontline to motivate the soldiers and enhance the cohesion in the Third Reich.

In fact, the Nazis largely advocated music’s ceremonial functions and encouraged the use of brass because it is very effective in mass gatherings such as party rallies. The Hitler Youth paid a lot of attention to brass bands and its leaders even declared that ceremony is “the first function of music.”⁹¹ In addition to instrumental music, the Hitler Youth also promoted the singing of folk songs as its central musical activity because it helps “promote feelings of camaraderie and national identity.”⁹² It is quite ironic that on the one hand, the Nazis believed that music should not be composed for practicality and functionality, like the way the Jews do. On the other hand they promoted the very practical and functional use of music—ceremony.

Therefore, the Nazis highlighted the use of brass bands and folk songs to serve their political goal and both of them can be found in *Carmina Burana*. Michael Meyer comments that “music was to be integrated with National Socialism to the degree that the two realms would appear inseparable.”⁹³ Music for the Nazis is a tool of propaganda and it should propagate National Socialism. German composer Werner Egk who worked for the Nazis wrote an essay “Weltanschauliche Grundlagen einer

⁹¹ Potter, *Most German*, 15.

⁹² Potter, *Most German*, 15.

⁹³ Meyer, Michael. "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich." *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 4 (1975): 652. Accessed November 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260106>.

neuen Musik” for the journal *Die Musik*. In the essay, he claimed that “the ideological foundation will give direction and purpose to artistic creativity, guiding it into healthy and practical paths.”⁹⁴ It’s no longer the composers who decide how to compose; rather, it is the political party who guides the composers. The Nazis emphasized their ideology at the expense of creativity. Although Ziegler claimed that Nazis’ culture politics were “Betreuung der Seele des Volkes, Pflege seiner schöpferischen Kräfte und aller völkischen Charakter—und Gesinnungswerte, die wir in dem Generalbegriff “Volkstum” zusammenfassen,”⁹⁵ creativity is largely suppressed because of ideology and there is little room for the composers.

Moreover, the music of *Carmina Burana* is very straightforward and arousing and Joseph Goebbels had said that they want to “work on people until they are addicted to us, until they realize, in the ideological sense as well, that what is happening now in Germany not only must be allowed, but can be allowed.”⁹⁶ The Nazis wanted to use music to brainwash people and make them believe in their ideology, and therefore, music cannot be complicated, ambivalent, and intellectual as it is in *Wozzeck* and *Jonny spielt auf*. Lucy Burns writes in her article *Degenerate Art: Why Hitler Hated Modernism* that “works of art which cannot be understood in themselves but need some pretentious instruction book to justify their existence will never again find their way to the German people”⁹⁷ The Nazis wanted to direct the thinking of the people because different interpretations are dangerous to them. For example, *Wozzeck*’s thinking unmask the dark society around him, and the Nazis apparently do not want people to think too much. Music that is ambivalent or

⁹⁴ Ibid, 652

⁹⁵ Hans Severus Ziegler, *Entartete Musik - Eine Abrechnung von Staatsrat Dr. H.S.Ziegler* (Düsseldorf: Völkischer Verlag, 1938), 5.

⁹⁶ Robert G. Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010), 58.

⁹⁷ Burns, Lucy, ed. "Degenerate art: Why Hitler hated modernism." BBC News. Last modified November 6, 2013. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24819441>.

intellectual would be considered degenerate because it would provoke and require rational thinking. Therefore, most of the great composers in the 20th century were banned. The Nazis had little tolerance for modernity and they preferred the safe, traditional music and required the contemporary composers to compose in the “folk-classical” form. As a result, creativity and artistic freedom are limited.

3.2: Ambivalent Models: *Carmina Burana* and *Die Meistersinger*

As we learned in the previous section, the Nazis despised modernity and allowed only limited freedom for music composition. However, they were also aware that it would be dangerous for the regime to keep suppressing creativity, and therefore, they tried to balance censorship and creativity in music to please the German people and calling it the “regeneration of the German people and German culture.”⁹⁸ The Nazis needed contemporary music to solidify the Third Reich and their pride as Germans.

Therefore, the “folk-classical” form needs to somehow involve modern music, under the guidance of Nazi ideology. As Meyer concludes, “The Third Reich music culture reflected, therefore, a synthesis of native popular values with the great tradition of classical music, and of the past with the present,” and at the same time “negative values associated with the ‘disintegrating’ and ‘modernistic’ aspects of Weimar culture had to be defined and detected, in order to be purged in justification of the higher mission of National Socialism.”⁹⁹ Different from *Die Meistersinger*, where the synthesis of the past and the present is seen as necessary to create good music, the synthesis for the Nazis was to create politically exemplary music. And

⁹⁸ Meyer, Michael. "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich." *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 4 (1975): 649. Accessed November 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260106>.

⁹⁹ Meyer, Michael. "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich." *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 4 (1975): 653. Accessed November 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260106>.

Carmina Burana meets precisely this tricky requirement of combining past and present.

Carmina Burana can be described using a quote from *Die Meistersinger* when Sachs comments on Walther's piece: "Es klang so alt und war doch so neu." In addition to the use of folk songs as mentioned in the previous chapter, there are a lot of medieval elements in *Carmina Burana*. For example, the text comes from the 11th to the 13th centuries and was composed by some medieval students. Furthermore, the music also sounds old because there are a lot of allusions to medieval music.

Kirsten Yri suggests that "Orff sets the poems' descriptions of love to music that conjures up Gregorian chant, among other medieval sacred traditions suggesting the parallel with chaste or Christian love."¹⁰⁰ For example, in "Ego sum Abbas," the baritone sings recitative church music, and "Ecce Gratum" is composed in the manner of a motet. A parody of a phrase from the Requiem Mass can be found at the end of the piece: "Let those who slander us be confounded and let their names not be recorded in the Book of the Righteous."¹⁰¹ There are a lot of recurring rhythms, perfect 5th and unisons, and monophony which makes the music sound medieval.

The medieval time is exactly what the Nazis yearned for. The Holy Roman Empire is the First Reich when Germany was at the height of its power and was the leading power in Europe. It was also the time when Walther von der Vogelweide lived. The Holy Roman Empire lasted for a thousand years from 806 to 1806 and collapsed because of the invasion of Napoleon. H. –J. Hahn writes that: "the naming of a second and third Reich clearly harks back to medieval traditions, alien to an enlightened modern understanding of the idea of the state, as does a yearning for a

¹⁰⁰ Yri, Kirsten. "Lebensreform and Wandervögel Ideals in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*." *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 100, Issue 3-4, Fall-Winter 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy007>

¹⁰¹

hidden savior.”¹⁰² Hitler considered the First Reich as his model and wished that his Third Reich could also last for 1000 years. He even named the campaign against the Soviet Union “Operation Barbarossa,” after Emperor Frederick I whose nickname was Barbarossa¹⁰³.

In addition to the medieval references, there are also some modern elements in *Carmina Burana*. Orff was initially influenced by Stravinsky and was looking for modern but still tonal forms of music expression while distancing himself from the experimental Weimar and Vienna Schools.¹⁰⁴ For example, the very dramatic chord at the beginning has a Stravinsky sound, and the bassoon solo in “Olim lacus choleram” also sounds like the beginning bassoon solo in *The Rite of Spring* (1913). The harmony is overall very simple, but there are also some dissonances like 2nd and 7th which add more modernity to this piece.

Nonetheless, the seemingly “artefact” piece of music which manages to combine present and past is also problematic. First of all, despite the fact that the music is in the “folk-classical” form and the text is ancient and traditional, it is in fact quite erotic. For example, in *Circa mea pectora* the baritone sings: “May God grant, may the Gods permit /the plan I have in mind /to undo the bonds of her virginity,” and in the next song *Si puer cum puellula* the chorus sings: “If a boy and a girl /are together in a little room, /happy is their union; /increasing love /leaves tedious good sense /far behind, /and inexpressible pleasure fills /their limbs, their arms, their lips.”¹⁰⁵ While the music sounds so sacred and ancient, the text is in fact so secular and erotic.

In addition to the erotic elements in *Carmina Burana*, this piece is also quite

¹⁰² Hans J. Hahn, *German Thought and Culture: From the Holy Roman Empire to the Present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 17.

¹⁰³ Hans J. Hahn, *German Thought and Culture: From the Holy Roman Empire to the Present Day* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 13.

¹⁰⁴ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 190.

¹⁰⁵ *Carmina Burana*, 65.

ambiguous. The Wandervögel movement emphasized on the one hand German nationalism by reviving German folk songs; on the other hand, its nostalgic return to singing folk songs was alluding to the liberal and democratic attitudes manifest in the 1848 revolution.¹⁰⁶ The group of young people emphasized freedom, equality, and the spirit of adventure. Therefore, *Carmina Burana* was often seen as a work of art propagating democracy.

Having the characteristics of democracy and nationalism, *Carmina Burana* can be viewed both as arousing music which could increase nationalism through patriotic folk song, and as dangerous, democratic music that could be used to attack the dictatorial Nazis. Accordingly, Yri writes,

It would be easy to interpret the “In Taberna” section as an indictment of Weimar culture, a critique of its decadence and debased state that justified the new reign of the National Socialists. With its zweifacher, militaristic fanfares, and folk-like character, “Uf dem Anger” could be heard as rallying cries for the German volk instead of as mocking the sentimental and old-fashioned attitudes towards love and women...¹⁰⁷

As we have already seen in the last chapter in the comparison of the tavern scenes in *Carmina Burana* and *Wozzeck*, Orff paints an image of thousands of people drinking alcohol and gambling. No matter whether one is poor or rich, black or white, libertine or prisoner, they are all equal in the tavern. It could reflect the cabaret culture in the Weimar Republic which is famous for its color and decadence. The Baritone also sings: “I am caught up in vice/ and forgetful of virtue. /caring more for voluptuous pleasure /than for my health, /dead in spirit, /I think only of my skin.”¹⁰⁸ In such an environment people forget their virtue and become soulless. It could be interpreted as Orff criticizing the cabaret culture which the Nazis were opposed to, and the Weimar Republic as a whole, which the Nazis hated like poison.

¹⁰⁶ Yri, Kirsten. "Lebensreform and Wandervögel Ideals in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*." *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 100, Issue 3-4, Fall-Winter 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy007>

¹⁰⁷ Yri, Kirsten. "Lebensreform and Wandervögel Ideals in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*." *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 100, Issue 3-4, Fall-Winter 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy007>

¹⁰⁸ *Carmina Burana*, 59.

Yri further adds that,

It would, of course, also have been easy to read *Carmina Burana* as an indictment of Nazi era politics: “In *Taberna*” considers authority figures with great scorn, and the harsh blow that fate delivers after “*Ave Formosissima*” seems to smack of authoritarianism...*Carmina Burana* alluded to the “wine, women and song” topics of the national Festivals, oratorios, and *Liedertafel* of the nineteenth century...The “noble deeds” that “German woman, German loyalty, German wine, and German song” were intended to inspire--to quote from the *Deutschlandlied* could here be humorously caricatured in the sexual consummation in “*Cour d’amours*.”¹⁰⁹

After “*Ave Formosissima*,” in “*Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi*,” the chorus sings:

O Fortune! Like the moon
 ever-changing
 rising first then declining;
 hateful life
 treats us badly then with kindness
 making sport with our desires,
 causing power and poverty alike
 to melt like ice.
 ...¹¹⁰

The lyrics “causing power and poverty alike” shows that fate and fortune treat power and poverty the same. Therefore, authority and the poor are equal to each other. Just like the tavern scene where everyone drinks together, this passage has a democratic tone which could also be used to indict the totalitarian state of the Nazis.

In addition to the ambiguous text, the Stravinsky influence in music is also problematic. Stravinsky had a complicated relationship with the Third Reich. He was one of the few foreign composers who profited from Nazi Germany. He enjoyed the financial income that Germany brought him and thus he tried hard to integrate himself into German society and claimed that “I am in no sense a revolutionary, either in my general views or in my art, and I was never a Communist, materialist, atheist, or Bolshevik, as is frequently said of me.”¹¹¹

It was even reported by Nürnberg’s *Fränkischer Kurier* that the president of

¹⁰⁹ Yri, Kirsten. “*Lebensreform* and *Wandervögel* Ideals in Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*.” *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 100, Issue 3-4, Fall-Winter 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy007>

¹¹⁰ *Carmina Burana*, 67.

¹¹¹ Vera Stravinsky, Rita McCaffrey, and Robert Craft, *Igor and Vera Stravinsky: A Photograph Album, 1921 to 1971* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 22.

the Reichsmusikkammer, Richard Strauss, affirmed Stravinsky's "pure Aryan background" and declared "the 'cultural bolshevist Igor Stravinsky' " to be nothing more than a fiction. The report concludes, "Richard Strauss emphatically and definitively declared that the Russian Igor Stravinsky is known to be enthusiastic about the ideas of Adolf Hitler."¹¹²

Nonetheless, because of his foreign status, there was an unofficial boycott of Stravinsky in the first three years of the regime. Still, the boycott was lifted in 1936 and Stravinsky's music gained more and more acceptance in Germany and his music was played very frequently before the outbreak of World War II, when he was officially banned on 24 May 1938 in the degenerate music exhibition. On 1 February 1940 the president of the Reichsmusikkammer Peter Raabe issued a communique clarifying that, "the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky, who is living in France, is a French citizen." Thus his music was not to be performed in Germany for the duration of the war.¹¹³

The strange Stravinsky sound plus the sexually explicit and ambiguous text would for sure irritate the Nazis. In fact, after its premiere in 1937 in Frankfurt, *Carmina Burana* received a harsh review by Herbert Gerigk in both *Die Musik* and the Nazi mouthpiece *Völkischer Beobachter*. However, from the 1940s onwards, the work was celebrated under National Socialism as a staple of musical theatre. The reason for their change of attitude was because the Nazis were desperately in need of promising artists.¹¹⁴ Since they had banned most of the talented composers in Germany, there were not many promising talents left who were willing to work with the Third Reich. Although Orff was never their first choice, the Nazis needed him for

¹¹² Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Themes and Episodes* (n.p.: New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 35-36.

¹¹³ Evans, Joan. "Stravinsky's Music in Hitler's Germany." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 3 (2003): 583. Accessed November 9, 2020. doi:10.1525/jams.2003.56.3.525.

¹¹⁴ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 192.

their “regeneration of the German people and German culture.”

The Nazis’ attitude towards *Carmina Burana* and Stravinsky shows how inconsistent and contradictory they were. They let Stravinsky develop his music career in Germany, and then boycotted him unofficially, and then lifted the boycott, and finally banned him again officially. As concerns *Carmina Burana*, they never liked the piece but had to accept it for political reasons. They intentionally overlooked the ambiguities of the text which pointed to a possible democratic interpretation indicting Nazi-era politics; instead, they chose to believe that the piece is an indictment of Weimar culture and justifies the new reign of the National Socialists.

Further ambiguities that they chose to ignore could be found in *Die Meistersinger* and *Wozzeck*. The “Nürnbergers teurem Sachs” also has some dangerous speeches that would irk the Nazis. First of all, Sachs raises the concept of “Wahn” which is an indispensable element of Holy German Art and the “Wahn” would not be liked by the Nazis. The “Wahn” first appears in Walther’s song in the trial. Sachs comments on his song in the second Act in his monologue, saying that the song is carried away by “Wahn:”

Ich fühl's und kann's nicht versteh'n:
kann's nicht behalten, - doch auch nicht vergessen:
und fass' ich es ganz, kann ich's nicht messen!
Doch wie wollt' ich auch fassen,
was unermesslich mir schien?
Kein' Regel wollte da passen,
und war doch kein Fehler drin.
Es klang so alt und war doch so neu,
wie Vogelsang im süßen Mai!
Wer ihn hört,
und wahnbetört
sänge dem Vogel nach,
dem brächt' es Spott und Schmach¹¹⁵

Walther’s song which is composed “spontaneously” can only be felt but not understood or measured. “Kein’ Regel, kein Fehler” could be the modern

¹¹⁵ "Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

manifestation that the Nazis hate. What is more uncontrollable is the “Wahn,” which

Sachs discusses in his next monologue:

Wahn! Wahn!
 Überall Wahn!
 Wohin ich forschend blick',
 in Stadt- und Weltchronik,
 den Grund mir aufzufinden,
 warum gar bis aufs Blut
 die Leut' sich quälen und schinden
 in unnütz toller Wut!
 ...
 Steht's wo im Lauf,
 er schläft nur neue Kraft sich an:
 gleich wacht er auf,
 dann schaut, wer ihn bemeistern kann!
 ...
 wie bald auf Gassen und Strassen
 fängt der da an zu rasen!
 Mann, Weib, Gesell und Kind
 fällt sich da an wie toll und blind;
 und will's der Wahn gesegnen,
 nun muss es Prügel regnen,
 mit Hieben, Stoss' und Dreschen
 den Wutesbrand zu löschen.
 ...
 Jetzt schau wir, wie Hans Sachs es macht,
 dass er den Wahn fein lenken mag,
 ein edler Werk zu tun:
 denn lässt er uns nicht ruh'n,
 selbst hier in Nürnberg,
 so sei's um solche Werk',
 die selten vor gemeinen Dingen
 und nie ohn' ein'gen Wahn gelingen.¹¹⁶

Without the “Wahn” nothing will happen and Holy German Art needs the “Wahn.” The “Wahn” leads to chaos and it is the opposite of rules. The “alte Wahn” is now awakened by the arrival of the “neue Kraft”—Walther. Although the Nazis liked music to be composed spontaneously, they expected rules to be learned and memorized by heart before composing. It is just like Walther, who knows the bar form by heart and improvises his song in the trial. The Nazis relied on rules to regulate society and maintain their dictatorship. And the “Wahn” would only bring chaos and revolt; it leads to “Prügel, Wut, Blut,” and makes people “blind, toll” and they begin to “rasen,” “quälen und schinden.” It has to be neutralized with rules—to

¹¹⁶ "Die Meistersinger," DM's opera site.

“bemeistern” and “fein lenken.”

Sachs, on the other hand believes that rules are not everything. In the opera, Sachs actually takes the role as an anti-authoritarian revolutionary. He proposes to test the Table of Rules by someone who does not know it: “Doch einmal im Jahre fänd' ich's weise, /dass man die Regeln selbst probier', /ob in der Gewohnheit trägem Gleise ihr' Kraft und Leben nicht sich verlier'! /Und ob ihr der Natur noch seid auf rechter Spur, /das sagt euch nur, /wer nichts weiss von der Tabulatur.”¹¹⁷ Sachs supports the outsider Walther and challenges and questions the status of the masters and the rules they create. Such a revolutionary would be dangerous in the Third Reich.

Sachs also talked about the chaos and violence caused by the “Wahn”. He says that wähnt er zu jagen; /hört nicht sein eigen Schmerzgekreisch, /wenn er sich wühlt ins eig'ne Fleisch, /wähnt Lust sich zu erzeugen.”¹¹⁸ Sachs actually talked about a humanistic and pacific point of view: hurting others equals hurting oneself. This would be the opposite of the Nazis who championed war.

Therefore, if we closely analyze the most “artet” opera *Die Meistersinger*, we can still find things that would irk the Nazis. The Nazis were just obsessed with the final speech of Sachs and ignored (or intentionally ignored) the ambiguities. On the other hand, there are also some elements that the Nazis would love in the degenerate operas.

3.3: Ambivalent Degeneracy: *Wozzeck* and *Jonny spielt auf*

Büchner provides a kind of utopia for the Nazis in his play. The Tambourmajor says to Marie in the fifth scene that “Und Du bist auch ein Weibsbild! Sapperment! Wir wollen eine Zucht von Tambourmajors anlegen. Was?!”¹¹⁹ He wants

¹¹⁷ “Die Meistersinger,” DM's opera site.

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, n.d.), 77.

to breed a bunch of little Tambourmajors with Marie. And in the Third Reich, the duty of women was also to produce soldiers for the Vaterland. This wishful thinking in *Wozzeck* would be a paradise for the Nazis.

Furthermore, there is the Jewish stereotype in the opera. In the third scene when Margret satirizes Marie's shining eyes as she sees the soldiers, Marie answers: "Und wenn! Was geht Sie's an? Trag' Sie ihre Augen zum Juden und lass Sie sie putzen: vielleicht glänzen sie auch noch, dass man sie für zwei Knöpf' verkaufen."¹²⁰ Marie uses here the stereotype of the Jewish businessman to attack Margret. The Jews can sell and trade anything including the eyes; they are doing dubious transactions.

In fact, there are more Jew-related passages in the original play by Büchner which are omitted by Berg. One crucial action that is deleted by Berg is the scene when Wozzeck buys the knife that he uses to kill Marie from a Jew in the market:

WOYZECK:

Das Pistolchen ist zu teuer.

JUDE:

Nu, kauft's oder kauft's nit, was is?

WOYZECK:

Was kost' das Messer?

JUDE:

's ist ganz grad. Wollt Ihr Euch den Hals mit abschneiden? Nu, was is es? Ich geb's Euch so wohlfeil wie ein andrer. Ihr sollt Euern Tod wohlfeil haben, aber doch nit umsonst. Was is es? Er soll ein ökonomischer Tod haben.

WOYZECK:

Das kann mehr als Brot schneiden -

JUDE:

Zwee Grosche.

WOYZECK:

Da! - Geht ab.

JUDE:

Da! Als ob's nichts wär! Und es is doch Geld. - Du Hund!¹²¹

The passage contains strong prejudices against the Jews, who value money over anything and despise the poor. Wozzeck can't afford to buy a pistol and the Jew sneers at him. He even puts a price on death by saying "ein ökonomischer Tod" and

¹²⁰ Alban Berg, *Wozzeck*, ed. Nicholas John (New York: Riverrun Press, n.d.), 67.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 102

“euern Tod wohlfeil haben.” Berg could have retained the scene in the opera which would add an anti-Semitic jab to the opera. However, he dares not to create any misunderstanding and provide excuses for the Nazi to ban his opera, because there is also another interpretation of this passage which would provoke the Nazis’ wrath.

The key point is that it is the Jew who sells the knife to Wozzeck and it could be interpreted as Jewish manipulation. In the opera, the Jew has money and possesses weapons—pistols and knives. He is also smart enough to see through Wozzeck’s intention to kill people and he provides him with the weapon. It is also interesting that the Jew uses the pronoun “ihr” and “euch” when he says: “Wollt Ihr Euch den Hals mit abschneiden? Nu, was is es? Ich geb's Euch so wohlfeil wie ein anderer. Ihr sollt Euern Tod wohlfeil haben”. “Ihr” and “Euch” can have the meaning of “you” in the form of respect. Although the Jew despises the poor Wozzeck, he flatters him in order to sell his goods to him. It shows the sly, savvy, and insidious characteristic of the Jew as a manipulator.

On the other hand, “Ihr” and “Euch” can also be the plural form and it means that the Jew addresses not only Wozzeck but also other people, or other groups of people. It is interesting what group of people he is addressing. One possible interpretation is that the Jew means all the poor people like Wozzeck who can’t afford to buy a pistol. Another interpretation could be that he means all the people who are not Jewish. The Jew plans to lend the German weapons and let them kill each other. This interpretation plus the characteristics of the Jew that are mentioned above—rich, smart, manipulating, and possessing weapons, would fit in with the prejudices that the Nazis had against the Jews, insinuating that they would eventually rule Germany and the whole world if the Nazis didn’t kill them all. The scene could fuel fear of the Nazis and Berg didn’t want to take the risk.

Neither the utopia of breeding soldiers for the Vaterland nor Berg's intentional omission of the Jewish passage was appreciated by the Nazis. They ignore the ambiguity in the "artet" opera, and the "positive" passages in the "entartet" opera. In other words, they choose what they like to see.

A major ambiguity and controversy is however the Nazis' attitude toward jazz. Jazz is in fact music that involves improvisation; it is, presumably composed spontaneously and full of emotion instead of reason. Nonetheless, as we have seen at the beginning of this essay, the Nazis were hostile to the jazz opera *Jonny spielt auf*. Shortly before the first performance of the opera, Hans Pfitzner declared in 1927 that "the soulless American 'jazz-foxtrot-culture' had triumphed over European civilization."¹²² While jazz is often related to Judaism, Wagner also used the word soulless to describe Jewish music, saying that Jewish music has a "soulless, unfeeling inertia." Soulless music is the opposite of the ideal German music, namely the music produced by the "deutsche Volksseele," which in turn is inspired by the "deutsche Blut und Boden." Moreover, Pfitzner not only related jazz to Judaism and America, but also to democracy, bolshevism, internationalism, pacifism.¹²³ Therefore, jazz was labeled as an all-encompassing enemy of the Third Reich.

By the end of the Weimar era, jazz had become a key target in the ideological power struggle. As shown in this Nazi propaganda poster of the 1930s, jazz was opposed to folk song ("Volkslied oder Jazz!")¹²⁴, which is the purest form of German art. And on October 12th, 1935, jazz was officially banned. The head of the "Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft" Eugen Hadamovsky declared that: "Mit dem

¹²² Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (London [England]: Routledge, 2017), 104

¹²³ Claire Taylor-Jay, *The Artist-operas of Pfitzner, Krenek, and Hindemith: Politics and the Ideology of the Artist* (London [England]: Routledge, 2017), 104.

¹²⁴ Kaldewey, Helma. "Jazz in Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–1945." Chapter. In *A People's Music: Jazz in East Germany, 1945–1990*, New Studies in European History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. doi:10.1017/9781108645638.003.

heutigen Tage spreche ich ein endgültiges Verbot des Nigger-Jazz für den gesamten deutschen Rundfunk aus.“¹²⁵



However, the popularity of and enthusiasm for jazz in Germany could not be stopped by the ban. Many SS and SA officials were jazz enthusiasts, and they frequently visited the night clubs, which were hard to control, and therefore, prohibited music managed to thrive.¹²⁶ Furthermore, although Goebbels banned all non-Aryan recordings, many German soldiers still purchased illegal recordings in the occupied territories and brought them home.¹²⁷

Facing the large popularity of jazz and also in order to present an open and tolerant attitude to the international visitors during the Olympics, the Nazis made compromises and loosened the restrictions on jazz.¹²⁸ They started to allow works by

¹²⁵ Florian Steinbiß and David Eisermann, "„Wir haben damals die beste Musik gemacht,“" *Der Spiegel*, last modified April 18, 1988, <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13528677.html>.

¹²⁶ Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 1998), 24.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 24

¹²⁸ Kaldewey, Helma. "Jazz in Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–1945." Chapter. In *A People's Music: Jazz in East Germany, 1945–1990*, *New Studies in European History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

jazz artists to be played in radio programs such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Benny Goodman but concealed their names, insisting that this was not “Negro and Jewish jazz” but rather the “relaxed, strongly rhythmic music” that soldiers desired.¹²⁹

Furthermore, Hitler even owned his own jazz band called Charlie and His Orchestra. The target audience was however the Allies, represented by Britain and America. The Nazis wanted to convey a defeatist message and spread their ideology through jazz. In order to make the jazz “artel,” the band used the harpsichord to play jazz in order to “verfremden” the “foreign” music and make it “German.”¹³⁰ It is exactly the opposite of how Berg “verfremdet” the folk song.

The band also changed the title and lyrics of the original songs to make them “artel” and fit the Nazi ideology. For example, they changed the title “Tiger Rag” into “Schwarzer Panther,” and “Saint Louis Blues” into “Lied vom Blauen Ludwig.”¹³¹ The band also changed the lyrics such as in the very first song “you’re driving me crazy.”

Here are the original lyrics:

How true were the friends who were near me,
To cheer me, believe me, they knew.
But you, you were the kind who would hurt me,
Desert me when I needed you.

And Charlie changed it into:

The Jews are the friends who are near me,
To cheer me, believe me they do.
But Jews are the kind who will hurt me,
Desert me, and laugh at me too.¹³²

The song becomes suddenly anti-Semitic by simply equating “friends” with

doi:10.1017/9781108645638.003.

¹²⁹ Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 1998), 24.

¹³⁰ Florian Steinbiß and David Eisermann, “„Wir haben damals die beste Musik gemacht,“” *Der Spiegel*, last modified April 18, 1988, <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13528677.html>.

¹³¹ Florian Steinbiß and David Eisermann, “„Wir haben damals die beste Musik gemacht,“” *Der Spiegel*, last modified April 18, 1988, <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13528677.html>.

¹³² Will Friedwald, “Exit, Stage Reich: The Nazi orchestra that turned jazz standards into anti-Western propaganda,” *The Wall Street Journal*, last modified October 1, 2014, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/charlie-his-orchestra-1412202368>.

the Jews. In addition to this anti-Semitic message, many other songs are related to battles. There is a song about bombing England: “Let's Go To It, Let's Do It, Let's Go Bombing, It's Becoming Quite The Thing To Do,” and a song about the U-boat and Blitzkrieg “You're The Tops, You're A German Flyer/ You're The Tops, You're Machine Gun Fire/ You're A U-boat Chap With a Lot Of Pep/ You're Grand, You're A German Blitz, The Paris Ritz.” Charlie even made fun of Churchill when he asked for protection from Roosevelt by singing: “Frankie, Frankie, The Germans Are Driving Me Nuts/ From Narvik Down To Egypt/ They Took All My Landing Spots”. The Nazis were now using the degenerate “Wahn” to intimidate their enemies. The degenerate Jazz became their propaganda tool.

Just like the folk songs, jazz functions as a tool to brainwash. Although jazz and folk songs stand in opposite positions as the poster shows, they are actually very alike: they are simple, straightforward, and arousing. The Nazis use the “artet” folk song to brainwash the Germans and use the “entartet” jazz to let the foreigners believe that they were invincible. The jazz music that they were so hostile to becomes now their own weapon.

Conclusion

Due to Nazis censorship, many composers and their works disappeared from the repertoire for decades. By arguing that “all music is not suited to everyone” in the Ten Commandments, Goebbels meant that not all music is “ideologically” good and people should be carefully selecting the music they hear. For the Nazis, “good” music meant German music, and one perfect example is *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* by Wagner. In contrast, “bad” meant “foreign,” and they derided such music as “un-German” and labeled it “degenerate,” for example *Jonny spielt auf* and *Wozzeck*. However, there never existed a clear boundary between “German” and “un-German,” or between ideologically good and bad music. In fact, the Nazis kept moving the boundary in order to propagate music that they considered useful for their agenda.

In contrast to *Die Meistersinger*, where we find specific rules about how to compose a work of Holy German Art, the Nazis failed to come up with consistent rules and they often contradicted themselves. Wagner sought to create a balance between freedom and rules, new and old in his *Meistersinger*, and while the Nazis tried to imitate him, they hated the new, modern music because it represented intellectualism and ambiguity, leading the audience to think. They wanted blind followers and liked music to be as simple and positive as possible, a means to brainwash their followers and make them believe in their ideology. They loved traditional music and even hoped that old music would answer the call so that they could pass themselves off as champions of the new era.

Nonetheless, the Nazis were aware that they needed contemporary music to represent their ideology and they understood that they could not ban everything and suppress creativity. Therefore, they were desperately in need of promising composers, and they found Orff and his *Carmina Burana*, whose ambiguities were intentionally

neglected by the Nazis. The dual function of Jazz reflects even more ironically the conundrum of the Nazis. The genre was constantly under attack as it was perceived as “foreign,” “black,” and “Jewish.” Yet, it was also used by the Nazis as their own propaganda tool to attack their enemies, and Jazz had a similar function as folk music.

In terms of the Nazis and degenerate music, there are many important figures that are not discussed in this essay leaving room for future research, for example, Richard Strauss, Paul Hindemith, and Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Hindemith and Korngold wrote influential music but were banned by the Nazis, and the relationship between Strauss and the Nazis was fraught with tension. Strauss’s musical style was considered extremely modern in the 1890s and 1900s, yet he kept embracing aspects of the tradition after *Rosenkavalier* (1911). He was appointed president of the Reichsmusikkammer in 1933 and was dismissed in 1935 due to his friendship with the Jewish writer Stephan Zweig. Although he refused to blacklist Jewish composers, he was still denounced as a “Hitlerian” composer by many people including Thomas Mann.

Another topic in the three operas of this project deserving further investigation is the role of women in society from different time periods, and the role of women in the Nazi era. *Die Meistersinger* was set in the 16th century, the original play *Woyzeck* was set in 1821 and *Jonny spielt auf* was set in the early 1920s. There are some similarities between these female figures. Eva in *Die Meistersinger* and Anita in *Jonny spielt auf* can both be considered as sources of inspiration for the male characters, Walther and Max, to compose. Furthermore, women in these two operas are related to nature and religion. Both Eva and Anita are quite independent; Eva is brave enough to pursue love and Anita takes the dominant role in her relationship with Max and she has her own career. In contrast, Marie’s role in society is more

traditional. It seems that her value in the society is to bear children. It would be intriguing to compare these female figures to the Nazi ideal of womanhood.

After the Nazi regime fell, these pieces of degenerate music came gradually back into the public eye. However, in comparison with *Wozzeck*, *Jonny spielt auf* is much less performed and much less known. They used to be as popular after their premiere in the Weimar Republic, but according to the statistics from “Operabase,” the total number of performances of *Jonny spielt auf* in the world from 2004-2019 was 48, while *Wozzeck* was performed 681 times.¹³³ None of the 48 performances of *Jonny spielt auf* were staged outside Europe and although Krenek immigrated to America, *Jonny spielt auf* was never performed from 2004 to 2019 in the United States. One reason might be the problem of racism. The opera was banned because of race back in Nazi Germany and it is also “neglected” today because of race. The question of how audiences view and appreciate an opera with racial stereotypes, as well as how they view and appreciate the music from a “racist” composer, such as Wagner, is worth researching.

¹³³ Operabase, <https://www.operabase.com/statistics/en>.

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