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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Thomas W. Dunne entitled "Stressful Relationships in Thomas Mann's Early Short Prose." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in College Teaching, with a major in German.

Ursula Ritzenhoff
Ursula Ritzenhoff, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

John C. Dunne
Henry Katz

Accepted for the Council:

Leuminkel
The Graduate School

STRESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN THOMAS MANN'S
EARLY SHORT PROSE

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Thomas W. Dunne

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ABSTRACT

C.A.M. Noble labels the male protagonists in Thomas Mann's early short works neurotics. He does not mention, however, that all of the men are driven by egocentric needs, and that the compulsion to satisfy those needs is the predominant cause for the problems the men encounter in their attempts to relate to women.

Some of the men suffer from lack of self-regard, while others have inflated egos. All seek satisfaction in involvements with women, but the relationships generally provide more distress than gratification. Not only do the emotionally weak males become enamored of women who cannot offer them any relief, but the men also ignore the feelings and problems of their female counterparts. The self-centered males cannot understand why they are therefore shunned by the disappointed women. Death is the result in several stories, but in only one case does the male protagonist die happily. Others die when recognition of their weaknesses overpowers and destroys them. The remaining men survive, living on in indifference or in various degrees of bitterness or despair.

Mann provides a considerable amount of background material for his male characters. Examination of this information will expose the reasons behind the actions and reactions of the suffering, unhappy men.

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1894 and 1903, the first ten years of his professional writing career, Thomas Mann wrote a number of stories which feature unhappy or strained relationships between men and women. The male characters are egoists, seeking to bolster their self-images by way of their passionate interests in their respective female counterparts. The women are predominantly indifferent in their relationships with the male protagonists and noticeably lack the ardor which the men possess. Because of the largely one-sided nature of the relationships, the men place themselves in situations that promise nothing but pain, yet they cannot desist in their passion until their selfish needs are satisfied or their egos shattered.

Closer scrutiny of the male characters reveals the inadequacies that are the basis for their troubled emotional states. Some are inexperienced in the ways of love, some have physical problems, but more importantly, all have compulsive egocentric needs. The attraction to the women is generally instantaneous and inexplicable; it quickly grows into fascination or obsession, but never into true love.

Mann writes mainly from the standpoint of the men, but his women are also real and diverse characters who have a role to play. The women themselves do not always realize how strongly they affect the men. In those stories in which the male

protagonist dies, the female characters are much more aware of their influence than the women in the stories in which the men survive. Some of the women have problems of their own which are overlooked or ignored by the self-seeking males. The female characters thereby serve to emphasize the egoism and emotional weaknesses of the males.

In the secondary literature on Mann's early short prose there is no study that treats these stories collectively from the aspect of male/female relationships. However, C.A.M. Noble does classify the suffering characters as neurotics:

. . . die entweder hoffnungslos zugrunde gehen
oder in denen eine gewaltige Neigung zur
Selbstzerstörung wirksam ist.¹

Noble also mentions that these same characters are weak, but asserts that the source of the weakness is difficult to identify:

Aber es kommt darauf an zu erkennen, worin die
Schwäche besteht; daß die Gestalten nicht etwa
von der menschlichen Gesellschaft ausgestoßen
worden sind, sondern daß der Grund ihrer
Vereinsamung und ihres Verhaltens in ihnen
selbst und in ihrer außerordentlichen Konstitu-
tion liegt. (74)

He notices that their problems are internal, but does not speak of the ego problems which are the common thread running through the seven stories.

¹C.A.M. Noble, Krankheit, Verbrechen und künstlerisches Schaffen bei Thomas Mann (Verlag Herbert Lang & Cie AG, Bern, 1970), p. 86.

CHAPTER I
THE MALE PROTAGONIST DIES

A. Der Wille zum Glück--Death from Fulfillment

The narrator in this story written in 1896 relates the high and low points in the predominantly unhappy life of his schoolmate and friend, Paolo Hofmann. Paolo is a sickly youth who wages a continual battle with death; his weapon is a compulsion to inflate his ego through love. His goal appears in the person of Ada von Stein, daughter of a baron, who loves him and shares his wish for their eventual marriage. Ada's parents, however, are concerned about Paolo's ill health and deny his request to marry their daughter. Ada's avowed love helps keep Paolo alive until the baron agrees to the marriage five years later. Paolo dies the morning after his wedding; his self-centered quest has ended successfully.

Paolo appears to suffer from more than just a physical malady. His friend notes that Paolo reacts differently than others might in certain situations. The narrator recalls crying and clinging to his father's coat when going to school for the first time, whereas Paolo remained completely impassive:

Er lehnte regungslos an der Wand, kniff die
schmalen Lippen zusammen und blickte aus grogen,

tränenerfüllten Augen auf die übrige hoffnungsvolle Jugend²

Much later, sixteen-year-old Paolo falls in love with a girl in his dance class, yet his friend remarks that his love is strangely unlike that of others so young:

Das kleine Mädchen, das es ihm angetan, ein blondes, fröhliches Geschöpf, verehrte er mit einer schwermütigen Glut, die für sein Alter bemerkenswert war und mir manchmal direkt unheimlich erschien. (33)

The depth of his feelings for this girl is seen on a day when she dances twice with another boy and disregards Paolo. His ego deflated, he falls unconscious and spends eight days at home in bed. His illness is now attributed to an ailing heart.

A connection between his physical and emotional health is again apparent when the friends unexpectedly meet in Munich several years later. Paolo is in noticeably high spirits, although his external appearance is decidedly sickly. He admits that he has been seriously ill and explains his problem: "'Es sitzt hier.' Er deutete mit der linken Hand auf seine Brust." (34) But he mentions that his condition has improved of late when he speaks of the von Stein family, with whom he has recently become acquainted. Paolo invites his friend to accompany him to meet the von Steins and Ada, their nineteen-year-old daughter.

²Thomas Mann, Die Erzählungen, Band 1 (Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1979), p. 32. (Page numbers in parentheses indicate additional references to this work.)

On the way to the baron's home, Paolo is visibly excited, yet his friend notices an odd change in his behavior when they reach the door of the house. Outwardly calm, Paolo is likened to a tense and waiting animal:

Alles an ihm war, während er neben mir stand, bis auf ein nervöses Zucken der Augenlider, vollkommen ruhig, -- von einer gewaltsamen, gespannten Ruhe. Er hatte den Kopf ein wenig vorgestreckt. Seine Stirnhaut war gestrammt. Er machte beinahe den Eindruck eines Tieres, das kramphaft die Ohren spitzt und mit Anspannung aller Muskeln horcht.
(35)

The tension lies beneath the exterior calmness throughout the visit, as Paolo is pictured as ready to pounce on his prey:

"Er machte, ohne das ich genau zu sagen vermöchte, woran es lag, den Eindruck eines sprungbereiten Panthers." (37)

Paolo's tranquility stems from his conviction that happiness through marriage to Ada is a realistic possibility. His friend has noticed Paolo's attraction to Ada, and when he asks him about Ada's feelings, Paolo makes no mention of her interests and speaks only of himself: "Ich glaube, daß ich glücklich sein werde." (37) His friend expresses his happiness for Paolo, while simultaneously concealing a strange reservation he holds. In the following weeks, the friend notes Paolo's continued good spirits and especially his calmness in the company of Ada.

Paolo suddenly disappears, and his friend hears of another emotional setback, when Ada tells of Paolo's marriage

proposal and subsequent refusal by her parents. She expresses her love for him and her vow to marry no one but him. Five years pass before Paolo and his friend meet accidentally in Rome. Paolo's physical condition has deteriorated even more, and he explains that a narcotic has helped delay his death since his abrupt departure from Munich.

Though embittered by his rejected proposal, Paolo's drive for satisfaction of his egoistic need has been as effective as the drug in prolonging his life. His determination and former calm resurface after his friend repeats Ada's words of love, and Paolo responds:

"Ich -- halte diese Worte!"
 Und in diesem Augenblick erkannte ich auf seinem Gesicht und in seiner Haltung den Ausdruck wieder, den ich damals, als ich die Baronesse zum ersten Male sehen sollte, an ihm beobachtete: diese gewaltsame, kramphafte angespannte Ruhe, die das Raubtier vor dem Sprunge zeigt. (41)

In a later conversation Paolo speaks of his many close brushes with death and admits that an emotional need and Ada's words have been instrumental in preventing his death:

"Mich hält etwas. -- Ich fahre auf, ich denke an einen Satz, den ich mir zwanzigmal wiederhole" (43)

A month later Paolo's fortune improves when a letter from the baron arrives explaining his change of heart after Ada had spurned a proposal from a worthy suitor. Paolo recognizes that his wait, and most likely his life, is about to end, as his friend notes:

Auf diesem schmalen, gelblichen Krankengesicht
mit den schwarzen, fiebernden Augen lag ein Ausdruck,
wie ihn sonst nur der Tod hervorzubringen vermag,
ein ungeheurer Ernst (43)

As the friends part, the same realization, together with a sense of victory, is visible: "Tiefer Ernst lag in seinen Augen -- und Triumph." (45) Since Paolo dies so soon after his wedding, his victory seems a Pyrrhic one, yet the narrator explains that Paolo's need has been satisfied; he no longer has a reason to live.

Paolo suffers for many years from a physical problem, and he also has an emotional void to fill. His longing for a woman's love is expressed in his artistic talent. The narrator mentions having kept a drawing by Paolo of the girl in the dance class, and on one occasion, a teacher finds a drawing of a woman under Paolo's copy of the Old Testament. During the narrator's first visit with the von Stein family, the conversation turns to an exhibition where a female nude painted by Paolo is displayed.

The title of the story applies equally as well to Ada; she too has a goal which she is determined to achieve. Hoping that her vow helps Paolo survive, Ada is so strong that she is willing to reject another suitor and wait five years for her father to capitulate. Like Paolo, she is calm and resolute, and she is often described in such terms. After Paolo disappears, the narrator notes: "Sie hatte ihre Ruhe vollständig

bewahrt" (38) She suddenly begins to talk about him
 ". . . in einem sehr ruhigen und sehr sicheren Ton." (38) Her
 words and motions are punctuated with decisiveness. For example,
 she lifts her head ". . . mit einer entschlossenen Bewegung . . ."
 (39) and later: "Sie verwirrte sich einen Augenblick und fuhr
 dann mit derselben Entschlossenheit fort" (39) Finally,
 the friend's fear that Ada may have unnecessarily suffered is
 dispelled when he sees the same expression in her face that he
 had seen in Paolo's face when he left Rome:

Ich habe auch in ihrem Antlitz den Ausdruck erkannt,
 den ich auf seinem gefunden: den feierlichen und
 starken Ernst des Triumphes. (45)

Determination results in success for Paolo and Ada, as
 they reach their goals in their short-lived marriage. His
 longing and unfulfilled ego stave off death until his wedding
 night. Yet even in death he is egocentric, for he surrenders
 with no concern for the happiness of his new bride. Ada's love
 and superior strength enable her not only to overcome the
 obstructive solicitousness of her parents, but also to live
 on after Paolo's death.

B. Luischen--Death from Humiliation

An unlikely marriage is the basis for this story of
 deceit and death written in 1900. Christian Jacoby is a
 grossly overweight forty-year-old lawyer whose poor self-image
 is apparent in his fawning submissiveness. His wife Amra is

thirty, attractive, and somewhat stupid, yet she is clever enough to manipulate others. Obsessively devoted to Amra, Jacoby dotes on her, asking only for her faithfulness and gratitude in return. Yet he is virtually the only one in town unaware of the affair Amra has been having with Alfred Lutner, a young musician. Spring arrives, and with it Amra's idea for a large party, complete with a variety of entertainment. It is she who suggests the final act, in which Jacoby is to sing and dance while wearing baby clothes. Her plans are carried out, and Jacoby, while performing his ridiculous and humiliating routine, suddenly realizes what everyone else knows about Amra and Lutner. When he also recognizes that his inadequacy as a husband is evident to all, his already weakened ego is destroyed and he collapses and dies.

Suffering from extremely low self-esteem, Jacoby is a desperately lonely man who went too far ". . . in seiner fast kriechenden Selbstverkleinerung (127) He attempts to build up his ego by endearing himself to his wife and others, but achieves the opposite effect and becomes even more repugnant. His humble politeness and willingness to oblige lead to deference and self-deprecation, making him a prime target for mistreatment, especially at the hands of his wife. He is not a particularly successful man, and his limited law practice reflects his lack of conviction and assertiveness. He and Amra can live comfortably only because she brings money into their marriage.

Anna's personality mirrors her intellectual shortcomings and character flaws. Aware of her lack of intelligence, she conceals it by seldom speaking in the company of others. In describing her, however, Mann cautions that behind her blank expression lies a lustful and dangerous cunning:

Ihr Blick war nicht nur t6rlicht, sondern auch von einer gewissen l6sternen Verschlagenheit, und man sah wohl, da6 diese Frau nicht zu beschr6nkt war, um geneigt zu sein, Unheil zu stiften. . . . (126)

Her failure to consider the feelings of others, especially those of her husband, stems from ignorance of such emotions. Mann suggests that she has little concern for matters of the heart:

. . . h6chstwahrscheinlich (war) ihr Verstand von Herzen untergeordnet. . . . (126)

With no apparent conscience, Amra enjoys her relationship with L6utner while disregarding Jacoby's feelings.

The negative traits of Amra and Jacoby are particularly obvious in their marital relationship. That they lead an active social life is strictly her doing, since Jacoby is uncomfortable among other people. Final decisions rest with Amra. Jacoby readily agrees to host the spring party, but when he asks about a possible postponement, she ignores his question and continues her planning. Although Jacoby adores Amra, he knows she does not love him. He often tiptoes to her bed at night, but not in search of sexual favors; rather, he kneels beside her and expresses his unrequited love and egocentric need to be appreciated:

" . . . und daß du mich niemals verraten und hintergehen wirst, auch wenn du mich wohl nicht lieben kannst, aber aus Dankbarkeit, allein aus Dankbarkeit" (129)

She responds to his customary tears by stroking him as she would a pet, saying: "Ja! -- Ja! -- Du gutes Tier --!" (129)

As preparations for the party begin, Amra's craftiness becomes more and more evident. She forms a committee consisting entirely of men, with the exception of one female singer. The meeting runs smoothly until the matter of the last act is to be decided. All silently search for an idea, and then a strange and ominous smile on the face of the scheming Amra indicates that she has been inspired:

Ein Lächeln lag um ihren Mund, ein abwesendes und beinahe irres Lächeln, das von einer schmerzlichen und zugleich grausamen Lüsternheit redete
(133)

Pale, but ever aware of her power over her husband, she stares into his face and reveals her plan.

Everyone is stunned by the absurd and disquieting suggestion. Even Amra's lover reddens, finding her idea discomfiting and incomprehensible:

. . . mit vorgestrecktem Kopf blickte er in Amras Augen, verstört, verständnislos, forschend. . . .
(133)

Jacoby is adamant in his refusal to participate in such a farce, at least until he makes another nocturnal visit to his wife's bedside. He pleads his case weakly, and Amra feeds on his poor self-regard by claiming that the festival will be ruined

by his obstinacy over a matter that could only be flattering for him. Ever seeking to be appreciated, Jacoby submits in characteristic fashion:

"Ich will niemand beleidigen und niemandem mißfallen, und wenn ich mich häßlich benommen habe, so bin ich bereit, es wieder gutzumachen." (135)

A foreboding air surrounds the party; the troubled lawyer cannot enjoy the banquet, sensing ". . . in dieser geräuschvollen Heiterkeit etwas unsäglich Trauriges und Unverständliches. . . ." (136) Lätner, who at Amra's command has written a two-part piano number so that she can accompany him during Jacoby's act, is nervous and flushed, and Amra pales in anticipation. When Jacoby appears onstage, the spectators' horror at the scandalous scene and their knowledge of the love triangle is reflected in their eyes. Jacoby's sudden recognition of Amra's infidelity is but the first blow to his ego. Dressed in baby clothes and singing a song in which he calls himself a little girl, he becomes painfully aware that the crowd knows that Amra has gone to Lätner for what she could not get from her obese and impotent husband.

The reason for Jacoby and Amra's marriage is unexplained and inexplicable, since neither partner derives any pleasure from it. For Jacoby, the beautiful Amra is his sole source of egoistic pride, his only visible sign of success. To lose her is to lose everything. Because of her unfeeling nature, Amra

is only minimally affected by Jacoby's sufferings; even his death brings little reaction from her:

. . . sie, unfähig, mit ihrem Spatzenhirn so rasch zu begreifen, was vor sich ging, blickte mit vollkommen leerem Gesichte um sich her. . . . (140)

Cognizant of her ability to control men, particularly her husband, Amra knows what she wants and uses her cunning to get it.

C. Der kleine Herr Friedemann -- Death from Despair

In this story written in 1897, the title figure is depicted as a small, deformed man, crippled as an infant, who vows to avoid romantic involvement with women after an early disappointment in love bruises his ego. Thereafter he is satisfied with a life devoted to educational and cultural pursuits. A single glimpse of Gerda von Rinnlingen, wife of the new district commander, leads to his undoing, however, for he instantly finds her attractive and challenging. Herr Friedemann's plan for a peaceful life is destroyed when further interaction with Gerda causes him extreme emotional distress. He is torn between her magnetism and her infuriating ability to alternately charm and demean him. When he finally surrenders verbally to her power, she unexpectedly scorns him and the psychologically annihilated little man commits suicide.

Herr Friedemann's problems begin early in his life. While only a baby, he falls from a table while in the care of

an inattentive nurse. After two days of observation, the doctor concludes that any concussion that may have occurred has now disappeared, yet he also ominously alludes to the future:

Freilich müsse man abwarten, wie im übrigen sich
die Sache entwickeln werde -- und das Beste hoffen,
wie gesagt, das Beste hoffen. . . . (57)

Physically, Friedemann is crippled for life.

A life of solitude develops as Friedemann has little to do with his schoolmates, although he does listen attentively when discussions turn to the opposite sex. He concludes with some sadness that his disability precludes any future relationships with women. When he is sixteen, however, he becomes enamored of a rather exuberant blond girl, even though she shows no particular inclination toward him and he himself feels uncomfortable around her:

Er empfand eine seltsame Beklommenheit in ihrer
Nähe, und die befangene und künstlich freundliche
Art, mit der auch sie ihn behandelte, erfüllte
ihn mit tiefer Traurigkeit. (59)

When he later finds her kissing another boy, Friedemann decides to avoid further affairs with women, since they will only be belittling and painful:

Ich will mich niemals wieder um dies alles bekümmern.
Den anderen gewährt es Glück und Freude, mir aber
vermag es immer nur Gram und Leid zu bringen.
Ich bin fertig damit. Es ist für mich abgetan.
Nie wieder. -- (59)

Friedemann sets out to rebuild his ego in other ways, as he tries to develop an inner strength. When his mother

dies, he takes pleasure in the pain he feels, finding it a powerful and important experience. Both good and bad occurrences are rewarding, and unfulfilled longing holds a special enjoyment for him:

Ist das süße, schmerzliche, vage Sehnen und Hoffen
stiller Frühlingsabende nicht genußreicher als
alle Erfüllungen, die der Sommer zu bringen
vermöchte? (60)

He is satisfied with the artificial happiness he creates, and on his thirtieth birthday he sees many years of quiet joy ahead.

The effect is immediate when Herr Friedemann meets Gerda von Rinnlingen for the first time. After she passes by, he is seen looking at the ground and must ask his companion to repeat what he has said. Three days later he comes home to find Gerda and her husband visiting his sisters. About to enter the room where the guests are seated, Herr Friedemann decides against meeting them. When his sisters later mention a return visit, he again is lost in thought and does not hear a question asked by one of the sisters.

Fostering the memory of his single brief encounter with Gerda, Herr Friedemann seems reluctant to meet her again. At the theater, he hesitates before entering his box, which is adjacent to that of Gerda and her husband. During the intermission everyone gets up to leave, but he changes his mind and does not leave his box. When Gerda returns, Herr Friedemann

cannot resist looking at her, and he again yields when they look at each other ". . . bis er selbst, bezwungen und gedemütigt, die Augen niederschlug." (66) When she drops her fan next to him and then mockingly smiles while retrieving it herself, he is forced to leave the theater, overcome by her perfume, her presence and his own jumbled emotions. His turmoil is obvious when he whispers her name while in a state of ". . . Schwindel, Trunkenheit, Sehnsucht und Qual" (67) He recovers his senses, however, and feels some sensual pleasure in hating her for the way she has ridiculed him.

Hereafter, Herr Friedemann is bent on testing his carefully developed fortitude, as he pits it against the strangely powerful influence Gerda exerts over him. On the morning after the theater experience, he smugly decides that avoiding Gerda is the best way to maintain his untroubled world. But then his self-confidence begins to dominate: "Eine Art von Übermut begann ihn zu erfüllen." (69) As he toys with the idea of visiting Gerda, his odd notion of finding pleasure in any experience reappears:

Und da, plötzlich, ohne einen Nebengedanken, stieg mit einem süßen Schrecken der Gedanke in ihm auf:
Wenn ich zu ihr ginge? (69)

Although aware of the risk involved, he cannot resist the challenge.

During the visit, Herr Friedemann experiences major changes in emotion. Pale and nervous, he hears his own words

trailing off, and in the ensuing silence he attributes his ineptitude and increasing discomfort to Gerda, who is merely looking at him. He feels she is trying to intimidate him: "Sie will mich quälen und verhöhnen! dachte er, und sie durchschaut mich!" (70) Yet when she speaks so cordially and calmly about their respective musical talents and the theater, Herr Friedemann feels as if he were dreaming. Then he detects a barely noticeable expression of scorn on Gerda's face, and his dream world is shattered. He lowers his head again, and his fury returns, but once more the pain is mixed with pleasure:

Wie ein kurzer Schauer aber durchrieselte ihn
wieder jene ohnmächtige, süßlich peinigende
Wut. . . . (71)

The arrival of Gerda's husband brings the visit to a close, and Herr Friedemann, leaving with an invitation to the von Rinnlingen's upcoming party, stops by the river to organize his thoughts. Unable to understand Gerda's treatment of him, he concludes that it is peace that he is seeking. He realizes that drowning himself in the river would bring him that peace, but his love of life will not permit such an action. He is also aware that he has not yet found the true happiness he desires:

Seine ganze zärtliche Liebe zum Leben durchzitterte ihn in diesem Augenblick und die tiefe Sehnsucht nach seinem verlorenen Glück. (73)

Recalling the calm life he had arranged for himself, he determines that Gerda disturbs it because fate has decreed it to be so:

Da war diese Frau gekommen, sie mußte kommen, es war sein Schicksal, sie selbst war sein Schicksal, sie allein! (73)

Gerda embodies all the opportunities which Herr Friedemann had denied himself many years ago:

. . . für sie mußte sich alles in ihm empören, was er von Jugend auf in sich unterdrückt hatte, weil er fühlte, daß es für ihn Qual und Untergang bedeutete (73)

He submits to the pleasurable pain destined to appear, and on the day of the party his physical appearance reflects his decision to accept his fate:

. . . seine Wangen waren eingefallen, seine geröteten und dunkel umschatteten Augen zeigten einen unsäglich traurigen Schimmer, und es sah aus, als sei seine Gestalt verkrüppelter als je. (74)

He has yielded to his destiny as he sees it, and the result leaves him listless and submissive:

Es war nichts Leidenschaftliches in seinem Blick und kaum ein Schmerz; etwas Stumpfes und Totes lag darin, eine dumpfe, kraft- und willenslose Hingabe. (76)

The end comes when Herr Friedemann and Gerda walk to the river together. She asks about his deformity and his happiness, which he admits has been artificial up to this point. When he suddenly throws himself babbling at her feet, she laughs contemptuously and flings him aside. After she walks away, Herr Friedemann, angry with her and disgusted with himself, lets himself fall into the river and perishes.

Herr Friedemann leads a planned, peaceful life, yet he realizes that happiness is still missing. The appearance of another fiery blond in the person of Gerda von Rinnlingen forces him to forsake his uncomplicated lifestyle for the opportunity to reassert his carefully reconstructed, but still vulnerable ego. Gerda is the goal of the unfulfilled longing that Herr Friedemann finds so gratifying, yet he takes almost masochistic pleasure in the distress caused by her attractiveness and cruel treatment of him, cruel in his mind, at any rate. The little man is crippled physically and emotionally, as he is incapable of controlling his own feelings.

Gerda, too, is an unhappy and unhealthy person. A local woman criticizes her free spirit, and especially the cool way in which she relates to her husband. The same critic characterizes the husband as being a proper and gallant officer. From these descriptions alone it can be seen that the two are hardly a perfect match.

Gerda is portrayed as having a pallid countenance and bluish shadows constantly around her eyes, and she is, by her own admission, ailing:

"Auch ich bin viel krank," fuhr sie fort, ohne die Augen von ihm abzuwenden, "aber niemand merkt es. Ich bin nervös, und kenne die merkwürdigsten Zustände." (71)

The subsequent unspoken appeal for Herr Friedemann's empathy is unanswered, as he shows no interest in her condition:

Sie schwieg, legte das Kinn auf die Brust und sah ihn von unten herauf wartend an. Aber er antwortete nicht. (71)

Gerda drops other hints about her lonely and unfulfilled life, but Herr Friedemann repeatedly fails to acknowledge them. When he mentions that he plays the violin, she seems momentarily glad to have found a companion, or at least a musical partner: "Ich kann etwas begleiten. Es würde mich freuen, hier jemanden gefunden zu haben. . . ." (71) His failure to recognize her loneliness and his stilted response to her invitation to play duets cause the mocking look that so pains and angers him. When asked if she is happy in her new surroundings, Gerda automatically responds affirmatively, yet also refers to the constriction she feels:

"Warum sollte ich nicht zufrieden sein? Freilich ein wenig beengt und beobachtet komme ich mir vor, aber. . . ." (72)

Again, Herr Friedemann has no comment. Just prior to his collapse, Gerda mentions another common bond they share: "Ich verstehe mich ein wenig auf das Unglück. . . ." (77) He remains disinterested: "Hierauf antwortete er nicht" (77)

Herr Friedemann and Gerda von Rinnlingen are two despairing souls whose paths cross. They could have a warm personal relationship, but his self-centeredness makes him blind to her overtures for friendship. His collapse at her feet is the

summation of his emotional weaknesses; his death brings the peace, but not the happiness, he has been seeking. Gerda's rejection of him represents her discouragement and her disgust with him, but she at least is strong enough to survive and face her problems anew.

CHAPTER II

THE MALE PROTAGONIST SURVIVES

A. Gefallen--The Functional Cynic

In a discussion among four friends about the contemporary view of women, two participants are of different minds in this story, which Mann wrote in 1894. Laube, the idealist, feels women are seen purely as sexual beings who are alienated from society when a relationship with a man ends. Dr. Selten, the older, more experienced and more cynical member of the group, presents his standpoint in the form of a story. He tells of a young medical student who becomes infatuated with an actress named Irma Weltner. Their relationship is abruptly terminated when the student, later identified as Selten himself, discovers that Irma is also a prostitute. His manly pride severely injured, the youth never sees Irma again, and Selten has since harbored bitter feelings toward women.

The facts of the story combined with Selten's choice of words in his narration indicate an affair that is doomed from the start. The youthful and inexperienced Selten has left his small town in northern Germany to study medicine at a university in a considerably larger southern city. He describes himself as cheerful, likable and innocent: "Dabei war er unschuldig, -- rein am Leibe wie an der Seele." (9)

Shortly after arriving in the university city, Selten falls in love with a woman who from the outset is depicted as an unlikely conquest:

Kaum war er vierzehn Tage in P., als er sich natürlich verliebte. Nicht in eine Kellnerin, wie es das gewöhnliche ist, sondern in eine junge Schauspielerin, ein Fräulein Weltner, naive Liebhaberin am Goethe-Theater. (9)

Immediately attracted to Irma, the impressionable Selten portrays his love as developing in stages:

Er verliebte sich zuerst in ihr Gesicht, dann in ihre Hände, dann in ihre Arme, welche er gelegentlich einer antiken Rolle entblößt sah, -- und eines Tages liebte er sie ganz und gar. Auch ihre Seele, die er noch gar nicht kannte. (10)

Selten's obsession is reflected in repeated trips to the theater and woeful attempts at poetry. Although he still has had no personal contact with Irma, his deepening involvement affects his health and his interaction with the world around him:

Er war nun so weit, daß er keine Gedichte mehr machen und nicht mehr essen konnte. Er mied seine Bekannten, ging kaum noch aus und hatte tiefe, dunkle Ränder unter den Augen. (10)

At the advice of a friend named Rölling, Selten sends the actress flowers and a note. When over a week passes without a reply, the naive, self-pitying youth reaches the depths of despair:

Die Ränder unter seinen Augen waren noch tiefer geworden; er sah wirklich recht elend aus. Wenn er sich im Spiegel sah, erschrak er ordentlich; und dann weinte er vor Selbstmitleid. (12)

Rölling's goading and the arrival of a beautiful spring day give Selten the courage to visit Irma for the first time. The meeting goes well in Selten's mind, but already differences can be noted in the way each thinks. Irma is surprised that he has devotedly seen her performances for over six weeks, yet has just now come to visit. She also alludes to his gullibility or naiveté: "Sie müssen nicht so schwer von Begriffen sein. . . ." (14)

Selten himself is not always able to distinguish between Irma the actress and Irma the woman, nor will his blooming self-esteem allow such a distinction:

Es klang in ihrem lustigen Lachen immer eine kleine Theater-Note mit, . . . aber es entzückte ihn, wenn er dazu mit ganz naiv unverhüllter Innigkeit ihr Gesicht betrachtete (15)

The difference is difficult to recognize not only in her laughter, but in her voice as well:

"Warum wollen Sie denn schon gehen?" fragte sie mit einer betrübten Verwunderung, welche, wenn sie gespielt war, jedenfalls realistischer und überzeugender wirkte als jemals auf der Bühne. (15)

As the visit comes to an end, Selten does notice a certain hesitancy on the part of Irma, but he is quick to rationalize and overlook her conduct. The first incident occurs after he has kissed her hand at some length:

Sie zog ihre Hand etwas hastig zurück, und als er sie wieder anblickte, glaubte er auf ihrem Gesicht einen gewissen Ausdruck der Verwirrung zu bemerken . . . den er aber als Ärger über sein unschickliches Betragen deutete (16)

The result is similar when he asks permission to visit her again:

"Natürlich! . . . das heißt . . . gewiß, -- warum nicht!" Sie ward ein wenig verlegen. Seine Bitte schien nach dem seltsamen Handkusse etwas unzeitgemäß.
(16)

Selten is not at all disillusioned by Irma's behavior, but rather is so enraptured that he kisses the railing on the stairs that lead from her apartment, knowing that her hand has touched that same railing.

The visits become a habit, but Selten continues to protect his vested interest by refusing to comprehend what he actually sees:

An einem dieser Abende war es, als er sich nach dem Abschiede, schon einige Schritte von ihr entfernt, noch einmal umwandte. Da sah er, daß sie noch in der Tür stand und scheinbar am Boden etwas suchte. -- Doch wollte es ihm dünken, als habe sie erst bei seiner schnellen Wendung plötzlich die Haltung des Suchens angenommen. -- (17)

After several weeks the relationship reaches a high point. Overcome by a particular undefined longing, Selten visits Irma unexpectedly, and finds her distraught and tearful. She does not explain her condition, but her emotional state is so well-matched to that of Selten that they fall into each other's arms, and the relationship attains a physical level.

Selten's delirium is now complete; he totally withdraws from everyday life. Letters to his family are incomprehensible and filled with exclamation points; his only thoughts are of the happiness that his association with Irma brings him.

His own description of their relationship reveals its imbalance, however. He recalls his usual position at the feet of the socially more sophisticated Irma, and pictures himself as a child who must be reprimanded from time to time:

Er ließ sich, teils gewiß auch aus hingebender Liebe, mehr noch aber wohl, weil er der gesellschaftlich Kleinere, Schwächere war, wie ein Kind von ihr ausschelten, um dann de- und wehmütig um Verzeihung zu bitten, bis er wieder den Kopf in ihren Schoß schmiegen durfte und sie ihm liebevoll das Haar streichelte, -- mit einer mütterlichen, fast mitleidigen Zärtlichkeit. (23)

Furthermore, Selten does not object to his subservient role and fails to see that he is being manipulated:

Ja er blickte, zu ihren Füßen liegend, zu ihr empor, er kam und ging, wann sie es wünschte, er gehorchte jeder ihrer Launen, und sie hatte Launen. (23)

Selten is moved to write another poem, in which one of the verses refers to the possibility of the termination of the relationship. He again dismisses his own words, however:

Aber dies Gedicht rührte ihn nicht etwa, weil er sich wirklich und ernsthaft die Eventualität eines Endes vor Augen gestellt hatte. Das wäre ja ein ganz wahnsinniger Gedanke gewesen. (24)

Another unexpected visit by Selten brings the affair to an abrupt close. He finds an older man having breakfast with Irma, and when he subsequently sees the unmade bed and the money on the nightstand, realization strikes. He feels deceived, but he covers Irma with kisses, hoping his love can overcome this catastrophe. She remains stubbornly impassive, however, and with dashed ego he leaves her, permanently scarred:

Vielleicht, daß er es schon aus diesen Küssen lernte,
 daß für ihn fortan die Liebe im Haß sei und die
 Wollust in wilder Rache; vielleicht, daß da später
 noch eins zum anderen kam. Er weiß es selber nicht.
 (29)

The relationship could not succeed. Though the same age, Irma and Selten live in different worlds with different perspectives. Irma is a mediocre actress, a worldly woman whose sense of survival rules her actions. Although she may indeed love the naive, enraptured student in her own way, the arrangement is satisfying only one of her needs. It is probably only by chance that they become lovers; he happens to appear on a night when she needs someone. Thereafter, he comes and goes as she pleases. Meanwhile, Selten is unable to see through his obsession. Selfish and indifferent to Irma's wants and needs, he preens himself on the success of his first affair. The failure of the inexperienced student leads to self-deception, until the encounter with the stranger in Irma's apartment jars him into reality.

Selten is able to survive this personal tragedy, for he goes on to become a doctor and can even tell his friends his bitter story. Laube, while touched by the sad tale, still questions the prevailing negative view of women. Selten is forced to spell out his assertion:

"Wenn eine Frau heute aus Liebe fällt, so fällt
 sie morgen um Geld. Das hab' ich dir erzählen
 wollen." (31)

Yet in identifying himself as the unfortunate medical student, Selten admits that the long-past blow to his pride is the sole basis for his viewpoint:

"Na Gott," sagte er, "weil ich das selber war, der 'gute Kerl', -- sonst wär' mir's doch ganz egal --!" (31)

B. Gerächt--The Indifferent Youth

Describing himself as a passionate twenty-year-old who is eagerly, yet unsuccessfully, trying to satisfy his many desires, the narrator of this story, written in 1899, meets Dunja Stegmann, an extremely unattractive and amazingly liberated woman ten years his senior. A platonic relationship develops as the two engage in a number of intellectual and intimate conversations. Although he enjoys the nature of their arrangement, the narrator nonetheless cannot ignore his seething libido. At what he considers an opportune moment, he suggests to Dunja that physical interaction would also have its place in their relationship. She immediately rebuffs him, whereupon they calmly agree to continue their friendship as before.

That the narrator is so affected by this woman is not surprising. He admits his impressionableness, portraying himself as being ". . . von extremer Gimpelhaftigkeit." (121) He is initially disconcerted by Dunja's independence ["Die Freiheit ihres Geistes verblüffte mich" (121)], but he soon

discovers that the level of their conversations fulfills his need for an exchange of deep and personal thoughts and ideas:

. . . ihre Vorurteilslosigkeit (ermöglichte) jenen intimen Radikalismus im Austausch von Erlebnissen, Stimmungen und Sensationen . . ., der damals meine Leidenschaft war. (122)

While the situation is satisfying for the narrator, he finds it somehow incomplete. After he and Dunja bare their souls, he feels something more needs to be said or done. For her part, Dunja apparently senses no such void. Signs of potential physical involvement are noticeably absent; indeed, the narrator's description of a scene indicative of their relationship emphasizes the physical distance between them:

Dunja Stegmann saß aufrecht am Tische, während ich, das Gesicht derselben Richtung zugewandt, halb liegend auf der Chaiselongue ruhte. (122)

On a night when the narrator has drunk a lot and feels especially excitable, the need to define the missing element becomes more pressing:

. . . jener üble Reiz lag in der Luft und verunreinigte sie in einer Weise, die mir immer unerträglich wurde. (123)

As he and Dunja speak of love between men and women, he bluntly and inconsiderately contrasts the beauty of their intellectual intimacy with Dunja's physical unattractiveness:

"Es ist die intime Vertrautheit unserer Geister, die mir unentbehrlich geworden ist, im Gegensatze zu der prononcierten Abneigung, die ich körperlich dir gegenüber empfinde." (123)

After a moment of silence, Dunja says she finds his assessment amusing, and the narrator feels relieved that he has broached the subject of their asexual arrangement properly and harmlessly.

Shortly thereafter, however, Dunja responds to his crudely stated opinion by suddenly mentioning an affair she had a year ago with a banker. Nonplussed by this revelation, the narrator finds his newfound knowledge strangely arousing:

. . . (ich) ließ meine Phantasie diesen Körper
entkleiden und fand einen abstoßenden Reiz an ihm.
(124)

When Dunja states how glad she is that he now knows of her past involvement, the brash youth is certain that she is inviting him to assume the role of the banker. His lusty nature re-surfaces: "Meine lasterhaften Instinkte waren in Aufruhr."
(124)

His anticipation is unfounded, since the astonished Dunja rejects his sexual proposition three times. As they part for the evening as platonic friends, the narrator's indiscretion is more or less forgotten, although Dunja does not completely conceal the scorn she feels:

. . . (sie) schüttelte kameradschaftlich meine
Hand, wobei ein ziemlich spöttisches Lächeln um
ihren unschönen Mund lag. (125)

Although the narrator can hold intelligent conversations with Dunja, he cannot match her maturity, experience and judgment. His reference to Dunja's physical appearance is not candid, but coarse and insensitive. He misinterprets her story of the

affair as a means of seduction, while she is actually rebuking him for his unkind appraisal by telling him that someone has indeed found her attractive. Her surprise at his clumsy approaches is genuine, since she assumes their relationship to be strictly intellectual. He merits her disdain through his lack of sensitivity and insight, and because he risked the purity and beauty of their friendship.

Neither embarrassed by his actions nor shamed by Dunja's rebuke, the selfish narrator does not even consider severing all ties with her. Dwelling only on his own needs, he asks only if their friendship will continue, thus insuring his future intellectual gratification at least. Confused by Dunja's behavior, he makes no attempt to understand her motives or her wants, but simply slaps his head in consternation and goes to bed.

C. Der Bajazzo--The Miserable Wastrel

In this first-person account written in 1897, the narrator, henceforth referred to as the Bajazzo, records the events that have most influenced his wasted life. Now thirty years old, he finds himself isolated, lonely, and disgusted with himself. Having always led a carefree existence, he recognizes that without a profession or role in society he has no self-esteem. The full effect of the realization strikes when he botches his attempt to meet Anna Rainer, a lawyer's daughter with whom he

is smitten. The Bajazzo's carefully developed dilettantism has served for nought, as he is incapable of earning the respect of others or of himself.

Remembrances of the Bajazzo's youth reveal the pattern of experiences which are to shape his adult life. His favorite toy as a child is a puppet theater, an outlet for his rich imagination and an ideal means for self-gratification. He stages elaborate performances, playing all roles himself and providing a vocal form of the musical accompaniment. He is his own audience and the game remains his favorite pastime until he is fourteen; even as an adult he recalls it with great pleasure.

The Bajazzo cannot take life seriously. His mimicry and theatrics endear him to his schoolmates, but also limit his scholastic development:

Beim Unterricht aber erging es mir übel, denn ich war zu tief beschäftigt damit, die Komik aus den Bewegungen der Lehrer herauszufinden . . . und zu Hause war mir der Kopf zu voll von Opernstoffen, Versen und buntem Unsinn, als daß ich ernstlich imstande gewesen wäre, zu arbeiten. (82)

When his mother notices his knack for piano improvisations, she arranges for the Bajazzo to take music lessons, but he admits he is not the type to learn to play in a disciplined fashion. Annoyed with his son's frivolous nature and lack of direction, the father suggests the eighteen-year-old Bajazzo enter the business world. Eager for a change, the son agrees

and takes a position with a lumber firm. He has no interest in the business, however, preferring to daydream about plays he has seen or books he has read.

At one stage, the Bajazzo refers to one of his main interests and to his affectability:

Ich las viel, las alles, was mir erreichbar
war, und meine Eindrucksfähigkeit war groß. (85)

He also suggests that the feelings which the books evoke are virtually useless:

. . . ein unfruchtbares Chaos von halben Gedanken
und Phantasiebildern (erfüllte) mich. . . . (85)

An indication that he is beginning to question his own values is seen when his mother asks if he is happy. After he considers his position and lifestyle, he asks himself: "Wie sollte ich nicht glücklich sein?" (86)

From this point on, the thoughts of the Bajazzo are pendular, that is, they swing back and forth from self-satisfaction to self-doubt. After his parents die and he receives a sizable inheritance, the Bajazzo prepares to leave his home and the townspeople he finds mundane. He himself is held in no great esteem, and he is blunt in his self-assessment:

Zugegeben, daß sie mich richtig kannten, und zwar
als ausgemacht unnützlichen Menschen, so kannte
auch ich mich. (87)

Nevertheless, he completes a three-year journey filled with experiences and impressions. Now twenty-five, he rents

a room in the city of his choice and prepares for a leisurely life without obligations. Almost immediately, a feeling of uneasiness surfaces:

. . . dennoch regte sich neben Zufriedenheit und Vertrauen sacht etwas anderes in mir, irgendein kleines Gefühl von Ängstlichkeit und Unruhe, das leise Bewusstsein irgendeiner Art von Empörung und Auflehnung meinerseits gegen eine drohende Macht (90)

The Bajazzo tries to fill his days with economical activities, yet confesses that boredom is occasionally a problem.

Idleness leads to disquieting thoughts:

. . . unwiderstehlich beschleicht dich ein Gefühl der Abneigung von aller Welt und dir selbst, die Ängstlichkeit befällt dich wieder, die Übelbekannte Ängstlichkeit (91)

When such thoughts occur, the Bajazzo finds comfort in watching the working people pass by, since he considers these people not intelligent enough to enjoy leisure.

Feelings of loneliness appear, and the Bajazzo realizes he has few social contacts. With no job and nothing in common with other people, he notices his acquaintanceships are minimal and superficial. On one evening, only the recollection that he has recently bought a novel into which he can escape keeps him from becoming even more despairing.

As the years pass and the Bajazzo continues to lose his sense of self-worth, he feels a pressing need to be acknowledged. He recalls an incident from his earlier journey, when he performed a piano improvisation and earned considerable applause

from his fellow travelers. He wishes he could now play his piano and receive a similar uplifting and ego-building reaction:

. . . ein ähnlicher Vorfall in diesem Augenblick (würde) für mich eine unvergleichlich wohltuende Ermunterung bedeuten. . . . (93)

An internal battle ensues as he again attempts to convince himself that he has chosen the correct path to happiness:

An meiner Zufriedenheit aber damit ist, wie selbstverständlich, in keinem Augenblick zu zweifeln, kann nicht gezweifelt werden, darf nicht gezweifelt werden; -- denn, um es zu wiederholen, und zwar mit einem verzweiferten Nachdruck zu wiederholen: Ich will und muß glücklich sein! (94)

On the day the Bajazzo sees Anna Rainer with her father in their carriage, his frame of mind makes him particularly susceptible to a new experience. He describes himself as:

. . . ganz erfüllt von einer leichten und freudigen Stimmung, von einer unbestimmten Hoffnung auf Veränderungen, Überraschungen und Glück (95)

Unaware that she is being observed, Anna exudes a charm and refined elegance which have a powerful impact on the Bajazzo.

He has difficulty putting his emotions in the proper perspective:

Was ich empfand, war Freude und Bewunderung; aber irgendein seltsamer und stechender Schmerz meldete sich zur gleichen Zeit, ein herbes und drängendes Gefühl von -- Neid? von Liebe? -- ich wagte es nicht auszudenken--, von Selbstverachtung? (97)

He also hints at the futility of any future dealings with the pretty young woman when he compares himself to a beggar looking at a gem in a jeweler's window. The beggar would never wish

to possess such an object; the very thought of such an unlikelihood is ridiculous.

Still, when the Bajazzo sees Anna eight days later at the opera, he cannot resist looking at her, despite the discomfort it causes him. He sees a formidable adversary in a suitor who approaches Anna, a cultured man who is repeatedly described in terms of his obvious self-confidence. After the opera, the Bajazzo follows Anna and the stranger, although he feels uncomfortable, intimidated, and depressed.

Three months later at a local bazaar, the Bajazzo has his first opportunity to address Anna, and he is confident that his background is suitable and will allow him to converse with her. Unexplainable misgivings arise, however, when he draws nearer to Anna:

Woher angesichts dieses Mädchens dies peinigende
und elende Mischgefühl aus Neid, Liebe, Scham und
gereizter Bitterkeit, das mir auch nun wieder,
ich bekenne es, das Gesicht erhitzte? (101)

When he reaches Anna's table, his self-assuredness crumbles. Painfully aware of his disheveled appearance and his sudden lack of control of the situation, he becomes confused and uncertain, and is able only to ask for a glass of wine. He can also understand the look exchanged between Anna and the gentleman from the theater. The glance only heightens his discomfort, and he leaves the bazaar ". . . rot und verstört vor Wut und Schmerz, eine unglückliche und lächerliche Figur (102)

Thoughts of suicide are quickly dismissed as the Bajazzo considers it an inappropriately heroic act for a person of his character.

Anna Rainer plays a passive role, yet for the Bajazzo she represents an opportunity to reassert himself, to convince himself that he still has an identity and a role of importance. His total failure with Anna proves his inability to relate to the people outside his world of books and music. All too aware of his lonely, purposeless life and negligible ego, he is too weak to try to change his lot, and simply continues to pursue his aimless existence.

D. Tristan--The Ultimate Egomaniac

In this work, written in 1903, Gabriele Klöterjahn, demure wife of a successful businessman, is sent to a sanitarium in the mountains to recover from a windpipe injury suffered during the difficult birth of her son. There she strikes up an acquaintanceship with an odd patient named Detlev Spinell, a writer who previously has avoided contact with other patients and who is interested only in the pleasure which beauty brings him. In trying to enhance Gabriele's beauty to satisfy his need, Spinell also influences her to the extent that she begins to question the value of her marriage and lifestyle. Her physical condition deteriorates, and she coughs up blood after Spinell tempts her to play the piano for his benefit. After her husband grudgingly arrives at the request of the doctor, Gabriele is heard humming

in bed, whereupon she produces a considerable amount of blood from her lungs and dies.

For all of the secrecy and eccentricity that surround Detlev Spinell, he is a straightforward character. His main interest, his passion for beauty, is seen in his single completed work, a forgettable novel filled with descriptions of richly-furnished rooms, and in his repeated utterance: "Wie schön! Gott, sehen Sie, wie schön!" (169) To suit his whim, he can use his ample imagination to create beauty where it may not necessarily exist. He once tells Gabriele of a lovely woman he has noticed on his morning walk, yet he cannot describe her because her face was in shadow and he did not actually see her features.

When he expounds on his philosophy, Spinell gives the reasons behind his growing hatred of Gabriele's husband. Addressing Gabriele, he describes himself as useless: "Wir sind unnütze Geschöpfe, ich und meinesgleichen . . ." (172), yet he prefers his status to that of useful people. Thus he finds nothing worthwhile in the mundane lives of Gabriele's husband and robust son, since their ordered and purposeful existence precludes the beauty Spinell constantly seeks.

The fragile beauty and gentleness of Gabriele touch everyone upon her arrival, but especially Spinell. His first look at her leaves him pale and transfixed. As he becomes more acquainted with her, he searches for ways to heighten her beauty.

Loathing the commonness of her name, he finds her rather ordinary maiden name acceptable because it is also the name of a famous actor. His disappointment in learning that Gabriele's father is a merchant disappears when she mentions that he is also a musician. Her recollection of days spent talking and crocheting with friends in the garden is totally indigestible for Spinell. He prefers to envision the women singing, with Gabriele wearing a golden crown in her hair.

Gabriele's impressionableness and the nature of her marital relationship make her suitable prey for Spinell's whimsy. Initially interested in him as an author, she finds his ideas curious, yet also stimulating:

. . . auf irgendeine Weise rief er in ihr eine seltsame Neugier, ein nie gekanntes Interesse für ihr eigenes Sein hervor. (175)

Further discussions with Spinell lead to additional introspection, as well as to setbacks in her recovery. She recalls her husband's departure from the sanitarium, whereby he addressed her more as a comrade than as his wife. When later asked about her son, she responds indifferently: "Danke; wie soll es dem wohl gehen? -- Ihm und meinem Mann geht es gut." (179)

Gabriele's husband, meanwhile, is garrulous and loud. He enjoys being the center of attention and telling of his wife's illness or talking about good food and wine. He tends to downplay the seriousness of Gabriele's problem, believing that no cause for alarm exists as long as her lungs remain

unaffected. He therefore sees no wrong in flirting with a chamber-maid or in hurriedly leaving Gabriele to return to his flourishing business. He considers the summons of the doctor an unnecessary disturbance of his stay at the beach:

"Ich sehe auf mein Geld, mein Herr, die Zeiten
sind schlecht und die Eisenbahnen sind teuer.
War diese Tagereise nicht zu umgehen?" (188)

The climax comes on a day when most of the patients are to go on a sleigh ride. Despite the urgings of the doctor to take part in the trip, Gabriele remains behind, as does Spinell. They meet in the hospital dayroom, where Spinell urges her to play the piano, knowing that she has been forbidden to do so. The concern he has always shown for her health is superseded by his self-seeking quest for beauty, as he lures Gabriele with the vision of the golden crown:

". . . dann kann es geschehen, daß man sie wieder
heimlich in Ihrem Haare blinken sieht, die kleine,
goldene Krone. . . ." (183)

Gabriele cannot resist, and plays several nocturnes by Chopin. Spinell is ecstatic when he finds music for the haunting and powerful "Liebestod" movement from Richard Wagner's opera Tristan und Isolde, and both he and Gabriele immerse themselves in the magnetism of the notes Gabriele produces. The vein in her forehead that pulsates whenever she is distressed or excited becomes more and more prominent. Within two days she is spitting up blood and her death soon follows.

Gabriele meets Spinell at a critical point in her life. At a time when she is to avoid all stress, her involvement with Spinell aggravates her physical problem and makes her doubt the genuineness of the happiness she has wanted and thought she had found in her two years of marriage. Unaware of the powerful impact she has on Spinell and of the motive behind his interest in her, she searches for her true self and pays with her life.

Detlev Spinell is neither surprised nor particularly disturbed by Gabriele's death since he had earlier hinted with some indifference at his role in her demise. In a letter he writes to her husband, he claims she is already dying, that it is only a question of who will be more influential in causing her death:

"Und wenn sie nicht in Gemeinheit dahinfährt,
wenn sie dennoch zuletzt sich aus den Tiefen ihrer
Erniedrigung erhob und stolz und selig unter dem
tödlichen Kusse der Schönheit vergeht, so ist das
meine Sorge gewesen." (192)

He need not mourn her death, because he did not love her; he loved the beauty that surrounded her and which reached its culmination in her playing of the Wagnerian music. His selfish need was temporarily satiated.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Where stressful relationships are found in Thomas Mann's early works, there too are found egocentric men looking to attractive women for fulfillment of their particular needs. The emotionally weak males, however, tend to involve themselves with women unwilling to meet their needs or unaware of the men's problems. In most instances, therefore, the men lose much more than they gain.

The outcomes of the stories correspond to the extent to which the needs of the selfish male characters are satisfied. Paolo Hoffman passes away contentedly, whereas the less fortunate Christian Jacoby dies from shame, and the shattered Herr Friedemann commits suicide to end his frustration. Among the survivors, Dr. Selten leads a successful life, albeit with a biased view of women; the unfeeling narrator in Gerächt simply dismisses his argument with Dunja as incomprehensible and unimportant, and he is only too glad to continue their platonic relationship; the Bajazzo resigns himself to an unhappy life, too weak to change it or end it; and Detlev Spinell, the only male who causes the demise of a female character, continues his self-seeking quest for beauty, totally unaffected by the death of Gabriele Klöterjahn.

Even Mann's titles reflect the weaknesses of the male characters. Der Wille zum Glück is the self-centered driving

force behind Paolo Hoffman's long struggle to marry Ada. Luischen is the name of the song which epitomizes the decidedly unmanly behavior of the obsequious Christian Jacoby. The protagonist in Der kleine Herr Friedemann is little in several ways; in terms of his stature, his emotional stability and his sensitivity to Gerda von Rinnlingen's problems. Gefallen represents the dim view of the wounded, embittered Dr. Selten, who believes that women who fall out of love turn their attention to money. Dunja Stegmann is truly avenged in Gerächt, as she scolds the youth for his insensitive statement and selfish request for sexual gratification. In Der Bajazzo, the protagonist discovers too late that the label his father had placed on him is appropriate; his early years of clowning for his own pleasure or for the approval of his friends laid the groundwork for a life devoid of meaning and interpersonal relationships. The incredibly self-seeking Detlev Spinell makes a mockery of the Tristan story, as he holds beauty in higher regard than life and love.

Mann's women are neither perfect goddesses nor cold-hearted temptresses who live to spurn men. They have their own crises and feelings, yet these are of secondary importance to those of their emotionally unstable male counterparts. Mann places the brunt of the blame for the interpersonal difficulties on the self-centered men. He says that a true relationship

between a man and a woman cannot exist if the male partner suffers from a weak self-image or an insatiable ego, regardless of whether his female partner is strong or weak, domineering or submissive, indifferent or concerned.

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VITA

Thomas W. Dunne was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 18, 1951. He attended schools in the suburbs of Chicago and graduated from St. Laurence High School in May 1969. He then entered Quincy College, Quincy, Illinois and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Management in December 1972.

Between 1973 and 1975 he was first employed by Continental Illinois National Bank and later by Convenient Food Mart, Inc. in Chicago. In April 1976 he began a four-year tour of duty in the United States Army. In August 1980 he entered Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and graduated in August 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in German. The following September he accepted a teaching assistantship at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and began study toward a Master's degree in German.

The author is a member of the National Honor Societies for Liberal Arts and for German.