



Nietzsche, Mann and Gide: On the Transition from a Socratic Realm of Reason to a Harmful Dionysian Whirl

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Abstract. Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophies can surely be related to the lives of ordinary people, and we may all fall into a harmful Dionysian whirl where the instincts prevail. In this article, I argue that the protagonists of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* and André Gide's *The Immoralist* both undergo a transition from a Socratic realm of reason to a Dionysian whirl. A connection to the moderating Apollonian realm could have been to their benefit and saved them from their failures.

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I. Introduction

Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice* and André Gide's novel *The Immoralist* are both stories from the early twentieth century that portray protagonists who undergo great internal changes that they are unable to handle in a positive way. Michel goes from being a bookish young scholar who at the age of twenty-five had "thought of little else but ruins and books" into becoming deeply involved in following his sensuous urges, which lay the foundation for a new way of thinking about life and culture (Gide 2000, p. 16). Towards the end of *The Immoralist*, the narrator and protagonist Michel thus states the following: "I began to appreciate other people only when they displayed their wild side; I hated it when they suppressed this out of some sense of restraint" (ibid., p. 110). This transformation turns out to have profound consequences for both Michel and his surroundings; in particular his wife Marceline comes to pay the highest possible price by dying in Tunisia at the end of the novel, having followed her husband back to North Africa despite her sick condition. Whilst honeymooning in Tunisia, Michael encountered local, beautiful Arabian boys for the first time in his adult life, and they caused a tremendous arousal of his inner, instinctual desires.

One can draw some clear similarities between Michel's association with the 'wild side' of life and the way in which Aschenbach succumbs to his instinctual desires in *Death in Venice*. At the onset of the story, the middle-aged writer Gustave von Aschenbach is focussed on the necessity to cultivate a culture of dignity, and he renounces "every kind of sympathy with the abyss" (Mann 1998, p. 207). The abyss here stands for a transgression into the realm of the indecent and ethically uncertain, something which Aschenbach had written about in his famous short-story *A Study in Abjection*. Since his youth, Aschenbach had been under the strong influence of common sense, and he had practised a moderating form of self-discipline (ibid., p. 200). But when he goes to Venice for a vacation and meets the handsome young boy Tadzio, he falls into a state of "emotional intoxication" which is impossible for him to escape (ibid., p. 237). Despite the fact that he finds out a dangerous outbreak of cholera has turned Venice into an unsafe hotbed of anti-moral behaviour, he stays in the area because it proves difficult for him to leave the place where he is near to Tadzio. He ultimately dies as a result of his desire to stay in Venice.

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The Immoralist was originally published during a time in which Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophies were becoming quite prevalent in France's intellectual circles, and Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* served as a philosophical influence to *Death in Venice* (Sheridan 2000, p. vi; Kontje 2011, p. 47). In *The Birth of Tragedy* from 1872, Nietzsche's first published book, Nietzsche is especially critical of the Socratic pursuit and exaltation of pure reason which according to him is a view that has shaped and dominated Western philosophy ever since Antiquity (Nietzsche 1999). Nietzsche's critique is made apparent through his unification of the two contrasting aesthetic and metaphysical categories, the Dionysian and the Apollonian. The Dionysian is connected to the Greek god of wine and intoxication, Dionysus, and is associated with the senses, the unconscious, the feelings and the instincts (Nietzsche 1999; Golden 1988). Apollo, the Greek god of light and the sun, truth and prophecy, is related to the Apollonian, which stands for order, structure, clarity and the conscious aspects of the self. The two categories thus reflect Nietzsche's aspiration to establish an equal standing between man's corporeal nature and the rationality of man's mind, thereby rejecting the one-sidedness of reason-based philosophy initiated by Socrates.

This article will suggest that neither Michel nor Aschenbach manage to establish a balance between the Dionysian and Apollonian aspects of existence. They both go from one extreme to the other: both protagonists start from a position that very much resembles the Socratic reason-based realm, and then get caught up in a harmful Dionysian whirl. Firstly, I shall give an exposition of what Nietzsche is saying in regard to the Dionysian, Apollonian and Socratic in *The Birth of Tragedy*. I shall subsequently set out to offer an analysis of different secondary material that has been written about the connections between Nietzsche, Mann and Gide in order to compare the views stated therein with my own views.

II. *The Birth of Tragedy*

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche points to a place in time during Antiquity when the Attic tragedy existed and the two forces, the Dionysian and Apollonian, combined through tragedy to a higher state:

Thereby Apolline deception is revealed for what it is: a persistent veiling, for the duration of the tragedy, of the true Dionysiac effect, an effect so powerful, however, that it finally drives the Apolline drama itself into a sphere where it begins to speak with Dionysiac wisdom and where it

negates itself and its Apolline visibility. Thus the difficult relationship of the Apolline and the Dionysiac in tragedy truly could be symbolized by a bond of brotherhood between the two deities: Dionysos speaks the language of Apollo, but finally it is Apollo who speaks that of Dionysos (Nietzsche 1999, pp. 103-104).

The Apollonian 'deception' is related to the ways in which we need Apollo to show us appearances. When we enter the realm of the Dionysian, and are confronted with the absurd and terrible aspects of existence, the Apollonian, which governs the inner world of fantasy, deceives man about the awful generality of what he has seen, and induces in him the delusion that he has just seen a single image of the world (ibid., pp. 16, 40, 102).

Moreover, one may see the Apollonian-Dionysian as a surface and depth model: the Apollonian is on the surface, and cautions us not to go too deep into the Dionysian. In other words, we need the Apollonian to temper the instinctual mood of the Dionysian. Because of the reconciliation of these two apparent opponents, the Greeks' Dionysian orgies were festivals of "universal release and redemption" while the Babylonian orgies, which did not have any Apollonian element, were festivals in which human beings "regressed to the condition of tigers and monkeys" (ibid., p. 20). We can thus clearly understand that Nietzsche did not advocate for a total yielding to the passions, nor an uninhibited titillation of the senses.

According to Nietzsche's interpretation of Antiquity, the Attic tragedy vanished when Euripides developed a new kind of drama. The deity whom Euripides was inspired by was neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but a newborn "daemon" called Socrates (ibid., pp. 60-62). The Euripidean drama had lost both the Apollonian and Dionysian elements of the Attic tragedy:

Thus Euripidean drama is simultaneously fiery and cool, equally capable of freezing and burning; it is impossible for it to achieve the Apolline effect of epic poetry, but on the other hand it has liberated itself as far as possible from the Dionysian elements, and it now needs new means of stimulation to have any effect at all, means which are no longer part of the two artistic drives, the Apolline and the Dionysiac. These stimulants are cool, paradoxical *thoughts* – in place of Apolline visions – and fiery *affects* – in place of Dionysiac ecstasies – and, what is more, thoughts and affects most realistically imitated, not ones which have been dipped in the ether of art (ibid., pp. 61-62).

While the Apollonian was able to create a truce between itself and the Dionysian, the strong Socratic emphasis on reason pushed away both the Dionysian sense of ecstasy and the Apollonian means of letting (Dionysian) art appear in a way that was

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manageable for humans. Nietzsche condemns aesthetic Socratism, which had as a supreme law that everything must be reasonable in order to be beautiful. Was Nietzsche nostalgic in his retrospective analysis of Ancient Greece? He did point to some elements in parts of the Greek culture that he regarded as positive. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche expressed his hopes and belief in a future German rebirth of the Dionysian-Apollonian tragic culture however, so it would be wrong to classify him as solely nostalgic. As Tracy Strong notes in *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, Nietzsche's concern with Ancient Greece is filtered through his concern with the present (Strong 2000, pp. 136-137).

III. Aschenbach's Venice as an "Apollonian cultural zone"?

Jerry S. Clegg states that *Death in Venice* is easily read as a thought experiment designed to test the viability of a dramatic tenet in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The tenet is that the 'Socratic' cultural order of German society has come to an exhausted end and will soon be replaced by an older, more vital 'Apollonian' order. Clegg (2004) believes that many commentators have made a mistake by seeing the character Aschenbach as an arena wherein Apollo and Dionysus battle each other. Clegg rightly points to the way in which Nietzsche insisted that the antagonism between the Dionysian and Apollonian was overcome by tragic theatre which produced a truce. Clegg expresses the effects of this cooperation in the following manner: "Only so much of the Dionysian essence of the universe may enter an individual consciousness as can be coped with by the powers of Apollo" (Clegg 2004, p. 158). This relates to the way in which the Apollonian should be able to temper the Dionysian, as mentioned earlier. Clegg also correctly states that the real battle in *The Birth of Tragedy* is between Socrates and the Apollonian-Dionysian pact.

Clegg writes that Aschenbach early in the story can be characterized as a "Socratic novelist": "he [Aschenbach] explicitly renounced all sympathy with the abyss, condemned all moral shilly-shallying, and lived as if a clenched fist might have been his emblem. He is Nietzsche's Socratic novelist whose stock in trade is talk of destiny and the triumph of the moral order. He has had, throughout his life, nothing to do with either Apollo or Dionysus up to the point Mann's story begins" (ibid., p. 161). As noted earlier, at the beginning of the novella Aschenbach is indeed focused on the necessity of strong moral standards, dignity, and the use of reason. The Aschenbach we meet early in *Death in Venice* has denounced knowledge and psychology because an understanding of these subjects, in his view, leads to a lack of

dignity (Mann 1998, pp. 206-7). So while Nietzsche was critical of knowledge that one-sidedly was associated with reason, Aschenbach was critical of knowledge because he tied it to psychology and improper moral behaviour. Because of his critical stance to knowledge, I believe it is simplified to associate the Aschenbach at the beginning of the novella solely with the Socratic world-view. Nevertheless, there are some similarities between the Socratic world-view and the Aschenbach we meet early in the novella, since they both raise a critique of moral scepticism from an intellect-based ground, and because they are both critical of the wild disturbances that can be caused by the passions.

A difference, on the contrary, is that Aschenbach is not altogether rejecting the emotions and passions; he merely wants to ascent these human drives to a state of dignity. This may seem somewhat different from the Socratic view which would go against any kind of influence from the passions that was not associated with reason: "The optimistic dialectic [the Socratic way of thinking] drives *music* out of tragedy under the lash of its syllogisms; i.e. it destroys the essence of tragedy which can only be interpreted as a manifestation and transformation into images of Dionysiac states, as the visual symbolization of music, as the dream-world of Dionysiac intoxication" (Nietzsche 1999, p. 70). In Nietzsche's rendering of the Socratic world-view, it is thus clear that Socrates wanted to make a total end to the influence of the passions in so far as these were related to the Dionysian state of intoxication. However, it does seem apparent that the Aschenbach we meet early in the novella would also be critical to the ways in which passions and the instincts could disrupt a vigorous way of living when he believed that "nearly all the great things that exist owe their existence to a defiant despite: it is despite grief and anguish, despite poverty, loneliness, bodily weakness, vice and passion and a thousand inhibitions, that they come into being at all" (Mann 1998, 204-5). For this reason, it does not seem to be a mistake to characterize the Aschenbach in the beginning of *Death in Venice* as closely aligned to the Socratic world-view.

According to Clegg, Aschenbach's travel to Venice is a travel to an "ancient, obsolescent, Apollonian cultural zone". Clegg describes how Aschenbach begins to enjoy himself in a Venice where the people's vital instincts had turned against ethics. Moreover, Clegg believes that the anti-moral climate of Venice, as well as the anti-moral developments in the character Aschenbach himself, points to a reinstatement of the influence of Apollo: "He [Aschenbach] feels, too, a curious elation in sensing the weakening of the social fabric of Venice, as intemperance, professional vice, crime and murder increase. This spontaneous, effortless shedding of his Socratic identity is complete when he begins to frequent a barber's shop, where his hair is

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dyed, his eyebrows made even, his cheeks rouged, and from where he emerges as the 'artist in cosmetic'. ... Nietzsche's predicted advent of Apollo has now occurred in Mann's thought experiment. German culture has reverted to that of ancient Greece" (Clegg 2004, pp. 161-62). Should we accept Clegg's claim that the weakening of moral standards in Venice is tied to a re-emergence of Apollo?

As noted earlier, the Apollonian is associated with clarity, order, structure and the conscious aspects of the self. If the Apollonian is able to exercise an influence, it is exactly the kind of force that moderates the wild Dionysian instincts. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche makes it clear that the Apollonian stands for a certain sense of restraint in regard to the moral realm: "As an ethical divinity Apollo demands measure from all who belong to him and, so that they may respect that measure, knowledge of themselves. Thus the aesthetic necessity of beauty is accompanied by the demands: 'Know thyself' and 'Not too much!', whereas getting above oneself and excess were regarded as the true hostile demons of the non-Apolline sphere, and thus as qualities of the pre-Apolline period, the age of the Titans, and of the extra-Apolline world, that of the barbarians" (Nietzsche 1999, p. 27). When Nietzsche states that Apollo, as a deity, stands for self-knowledge and moderation used against any bad kind of excess, I believe that Clegg commits a grave error when he labels the Venice that Aschenbach comes to as an "Apollonian cultural zone". Apollo – as we know him from *The Birth of Tragedy* – would never endorse and support the vice and disregard of morals which Aschenbach met in Venice. Nietzsche does write that the "ethical foundation" of the pessimistic tragedy, as exemplified by Aeschylus' Prometheus, is a "justification" of the evil in human life; but he underlines how it is the will of Apollo to draw boundaries between individuals in order to bring "rest and calm" to them (ibid., p. 50).

The tragedy of Prometheus was represented by a double essence of Dionysian and Apollonian nature, and since the latter stood for the boundaries of justice and the Dionysian had an acceptance of evil, the essence of the Promethean tragedy could be described as this: "All that exists is just and unjust and is equally justified in both respects" (ibid., p. 51). This may seem to leave us in a state that resembles some kind of nihilism, but I would caution against adopting such an approach. Nietzsche's viewpoints do not resemble a pessimistic nihilism, but there is an affirmative acceptance of the pessimistic nature of existence which should not paralyse us, but instead give us a will to go on living with resolution, as has also been argued by Raymond Geuss (1999, p. xxv). Moreover, Nietzsche offers us something of value, namely an understanding of the Dionysian-Apollonian pact which is inspiring in the

ways it can show us that we can potentially become able to balance contrasting impulses in our lives. In the Dionysian-Apollonian pact considered on the whole, the Apollonian is not there to extinguish the Dionysian, but it still plays a role which makes it able to influence the (Dionysian) ferocity.

In regard to the developments of Aschenbach's own character, it is also quite clear that during his stay in Venice, the Apollonian forces are not able to establish a presence in the psychological realm of Aschenbach's mind as well as in his behaviour. Aschenbach does not want to be "disenchanted" from his intoxication and he is no longer disposed to "self-criticism" (Mann 1998, p. 240). When he desperately follows Tadzio's family through the streets of Venice, he is unable to moderate his instincts, as is expressed in the following excerpt from the novella: "His head and his heart were drunk, and his steps followed the dictates of that dark god whose pleasure it is to trample man's reason and dignity underfoot" (ibid. 247). Aschenbach dreams about Dionysus towards the end of the novella and wakes up unnerved. At that moment, he feels enslaved towards this "daemon-god" and no longer fears the exposure of his love for Tadzio to other people (ibid., 261). The narrator describes how, during his "undignified" pursuit of Tadzio, Aschenbach felt that the "moral law" was no longer "valid" (ibid.). The Apollonian does not seem to play any role at all here.

However, towards the end of *Death in Venice*, Aschenbach has not completely let go of thinking about dignity. He tries to justify his feelings for Tadzio by relating his own actions and way of thinking to that of his ancestors: "Numerous warrior-heroes of olden times had willingly borne its yoke, for there was no kind of abasement that could be reckoned as such if the god had imposed it; and actions that would have been castigated as signs of cowardice had their motives been different, such as falling to the ground in supplication, desperate pleas and slavish demeanour – these were accounted no disgrace to a lover, but rather won him still greater praise. Such were the thoughts with which love beguiled him, and thus he sought to sustain himself, to preserve his dignity" (ibid., pp. 249-50). Throughout the novella, Aschenbach puts an effort in legitimizing his actions through an inner thought-process that is full of references to Antiquity and myth. He turns his love of Tadzio into a love of beauty. This kind of intellectualization may seem to show that his Socratic nature never left him completely because he tries to use his reason and his knowledge of Antiquity to make his actions appear reasonable. But, as noted by Todd Kontje (2011, pp. 50-51), this use of classical myth merely functions as a form of (personal) deception in the course of *Death in Venice*. Aschenbach tries to disarm the true significance of his visceral desire with irony and mythical allusions, but

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Kontje points to the actual negative development which occurs for the character in this process of self-deception: "The ironic masks that were a sign of intellectual distance and emotional discipline now become a sign of his degradation, his loss of control" (Kontje 2011, p. 51). In the Dionysian whirl that engulfs Aschenbach, one may see his continued intellectualizing as merely a fragile and failed attempt to contain some kind of control over his situation.

The extensive use of myth in *Death in Venice* can also, somewhat paradoxically, enable us to view the novella as a work which in itself has incorporated a balance between the Dionysian and the Apollonian. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche laments the lack of myth in the Euripidean tragedy (Nietzsche 1999, pp. 83-84). While the Euripidean tragedy focuses solely on individual characteristics, the Attic tragedy was able to portray whole characters of an "eternal" type through its use of myth. As a result of this (negative) development in the tragedy, there has been a victory of the phenomenal over the universal. This can clearly be compared to *Death in Venice*: its use of myth is able to elevate the issues that Aschenbach faces into universal issues, as we are all capable of being possessed in a negative way by the alluring powers of beauty and passion. *Death in Venice* can thus be seen as a story that carries some similarities with the Attic tragedy. André Cadieux (1979) claims that while Mann denied reconciliation between the Dionysian and Apollonian to Aschenbach, he adopted it himself in the novella through stylistic means. According to Cadieux, in the novella Mann imposes the serenity of a plastic form to the demonic, the passionate, and the morbid. Cadieux mentions different examples of this, including the inexorable gondolier who may be seen as the mythical Charon, as well as the disturbing old man on the ferry who is prophesying the form of Aschenbach's own degeneration.

Furthermore, Cadieux believes that through the use of such techniques, Mann is able to temper the Dionysian tendencies which are implicit in the work: "...Mann imposes sculptural form, the plastic quality of the Apollinian, on his own work, and in that way counters the Dionysian tendencies implicit in its subject (Aschenbach's love for Tadzio), and implicit also in the temporal flow and surge natural to the verbal as well as to the musical art" (Cadieux 1979, p. 60). In general, myth becomes a way of shaping order to the story that is being told, a story that in many ways resembles a Greek tragedy itself.

IV. Can Mann and Gide be characterized as anti-Nietzschean?

Alan Sheridan (2000, p. viii) claims that an inattentive reader might see *The Immoralist* as an apologia for Nietzschean 'immoralism'. Sheridan believes that one may well share Michel's delight in his discovery of the beauties of the natural world, and even his sexuality, but "*L'Immoraliste* is not so much an apologia for Nietzschean ideas as an exploration of what can happen if such ideas fall into the hands of someone too weak to sustain them." In *Evil – A History in Modern French Literature and Thought*, Damian Catani (2013) goes further than Sheridan by claiming that Gide even had a certain "anti-Nietzscheanism" in his works.

Catani offers an analysis of Nietzsche's 'genealogy of morals' which is compared to Gide's novel *The Vatican Cellars*. According to Catani, Nietzsche pointed out that no moral rule is ever universal and intrinsic, but that it on the other hand is always context-related, making it prone to human error (Catani 2013, p. 88). It is commonly assumed that notions such as 'good' and 'evil' have a fixed meaning, but Nietzsche wants us to re-evaluate our moral system, so that we may come to give greater weight to individual understandings of such notions, as well as a greater weight to individuality in general. An anti-individualist, egalitarian kind of conformism will stifle untapped human potential and render society timid, unadventurous and morally anaemic. However, as Catani points out, these elements may actually represent the 'darker side' of Nietzsche's thought, since the anti-egalitarian focus on individuality is seen as an end itself, in a way which verges towards "outright egotism" and an "exploitative elitism" (ibid., p. 91). Catani then shows how Gide did incorporate some of Nietzsche's critique of scientific objectivity and Catholicism (Christianity) in *The Vatican Cellars*, but Gide is also quite critical of Nietzsche's pro-individualistic positions:

However, if the Lafcadio presented by the Gidean narrator both before and during his infamous 'acte gratuit' incarnates a seemingly uninhibited Nietzschean master morality, the narrator subsequently casts considerable doubt on the legitimacy of this carefree, self-possessed mode of being by insinuating, contrary to the German philosopher, that self-determined, transgressive actions have serious moral repercussions, for which the individual must accept full responsibility. An 'anti-Nietzschean' side to Gide thus emerges, one that is given explicit formulation in his famous Letters to Angel and which some critics have attributed to the Dostoevksyeian strand of his thinking. This strand is resolutely opposed to Nietzsche in valuing a notion of selfhood based on humility, confession, psychological complexity and self-abnegation (ibid., p. 98).

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One may thus see *The Vatican Cellars* as a novel that goes against some of Nietzsche's pro-individualistic positions, since it shows that the individual must take responsibility for its transgressive actions and the moral damage that is caused by these actions. And in Catani's view moreover, Gide goes against a morally irresponsible (Nietzschean) "egotism" that "ignores empathy and consideration for others" (ibid., p. 99). Can these insights be related to *The Immoralist*?

When Michel and Marceline are about to travel to St. Moritz in Switzerland towards the end of *The Immoralist*, Michel thinks about Marceline's "awful cough" (Gide 2000, p. 108). He does not feel any sense of sympathy with her because he thinks that one "should only sympathize with the strong" (ibid.). This may be seen as an example of how he viewed the role of sympathy and respect as something that was only a privilege to be enjoyed by the strong. Marceline had even become aware of these thoughts of her husband, as it can be sensed from this excerpt: "'I understand your doctrine', she said to me one day, 'for that is what it has become – a doctrine. And no doubt it is a very fine one'. Then she added slowly, lowering her voice, 'But it leaves out the week'" (ibid., p. 112). Nietzsche seemed to have an understanding of the human need for a feeling of oneness and for a community when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1872. This can be seen by the way in which he stressed the need for a common Dionysian rebirth of the German culture. This rebirth would give all people access to a sense of Dionysian ecstasy in which "despite fear and pity, we are happily alive, not as individuals, but as the *one* living being, with whose procreative lust we have become one" (Nietzsche 1999, p. 81). Michel does not represent this sense of Dionysian oneness since he acts out of a need to please his own desires without showing any true kind of consideration for Marceline, whom he does not really seem to love.

On the other hand, one can draw some clear similarities between Michel and Nietzsche's view on the weak in *Twilight of the Idols* from 1889. In *Twilight of the Idols*, one can sense how Nietzsche had developed an individualism that had a support for strong people as its main emphasis:

Every individual may be regarded as representing the ascending or descending line of life. When one has decided which, one has thereby established a canon for the value of his egoism. If he represents the ascending line his value is in fact extraordinary. ... If he represents the descending development, decay, chronic degeneration, sickening (-sickness is, broadly speaking, already a phenomenon consequent upon decay, *not* the cause of it), then he can be accorded little value, and

elementary fairness demands that he *takes away* as little as possible from the well-constituted. He is not better than a parasite on them... (Nietzsche 1990, p. 97).

One can here perceive the elitism of Nietzsche that Catani is so critical of. It seems possible to draw a comparison between the above quote by Nietzsche and Michel's desire only to sympathise with the healthy and vigorous. However, Michel did in fact take care of Marceline and even "watched over her day and night" when she was very ill (Gide 2000, p. 112). But one may of course ask if one should not rather speak of Michel's 'neglect' instead of 'care', since he takes her back to North Africa where she dies in the warmth, and since he has focussed on his own development and own needs throughout the novel.

As noted earlier, Michel's pursuit of instinctual gratification proves to have serious consequences. In the end of this process, Michel comes to realize that it is a difficult task to live a life that is based on freedom: "Knowing how to free oneself is nothing; the difficult task is knowing how to live with that freedom" (ibid., p. 15). To some extent, Michel seems to have learned that if we as individuals are to free ourselves from what he called the "suffocating layers of culture, decency and morality," this freedom comes with a need to live with freedom under responsibility, so that we may be able to take responsibility for our actions. At least he should have learned that absolute freedom comes at a price, and that not much may be left if all culture, decency and morality are shunned. In *The Immoralist*, does Gide portray an anti-Nietzschean philosophy because he shows us the failure of Michel? Yes, to some extent the failure of Michel may be seen as a warning of what can go wrong if one unleashes one's (Dionysian) instincts too powerfully.

Nevertheless, the problem with Michel is also that he never actually incorporates a balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian aspects of existence. The conscious, Apollonian side to life does not get any space in him when he feels that he is 'born' again. There is even a passage where he acknowledges the neglect of the mind that took place in him, and admits that he did not "have the strength to lead a dual life" which would incorporate both the needs of the body and the mind (ibid., p. 30). Because of this lack of balance between the Apollonian and Dionysian, he is not even in control of his own desires, as is clear from the following passage: "Why did I hark back to the convalescence in Biskra? ... The weather was already a bit warmer; the climate of Palermo is very clement and Marceline liked it there. If she had stayed there, she might have ... But could I determine my own will, could I decide my own desires?" (ibid., p. 115). His lack of (Apollonian) moral restraint ends up being the cause for Marceline's death. Of course one could also claim that it is Michel's lack of

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a Socratic morality (in the Nietzschean sense) which ends up killing Marceline. However, I would still like to maintain that Michel's main problem is a lack of the Apollonian. So much havoc is caused by his lack of a rational, moral side that could *balance* his corporeal nature. Accordingly, since we are never able to see a portrayal of a balanced state between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in Michel's character, Nietzsche's philosophy is not able to show us its strengths in full: the same applies to the story about Aschenbach.

One may see Mann's *Death in Venice* as an apologia for the "Socratic artist", as claimed by Clegg. Clegg believes that Mann was against a reinstatement of the Apollonian-Dionysian composition and against the philosophies of Nietzsche because Apollo proves to be unable to save Aschenbach from his Dionysian intoxication. I agree with Clegg that there might be a certain anti-Nietzscheanism in Mann's novella. But it is, however, important to emphasize that Aschenbach never really gets in touch with the Apollonian side. And that he failed to temper his desires should not so much be seen as sign of a weakness of the Apollonian, but more as a sign of Aschenbach's own weakness. According to Nietzsche, Goethe aspired to a state of totality and "strove against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling, will" (Nietzsche 1990, p. 114). Aschenbach was never able to establish a similar state of totality for himself.

There is, nevertheless, one character in *The Immoralist* who seems to have grasped some elements of the Nietzschean Dionysian-Apollonian connection: Ménélaque is not afraid to stand out from the crowd. His only "claim" is to be "natural"; if something gives him pleasure, he takes it as a sign that he should do it (Gide 2000, p. 80). These Dionysian insights of Ménélaque are combined with a certain Apollonian sense of knowing oneself as he seems very much aware of the necessity to find one's own sense of self, and to find out what it is that gives each person his or her specific value. Ménélaque also advocates for a unifying of beauty, action, and wisdom, which is a way of thinking that both Michel and Aschenbach could have benefitted from. However, *The Immoralist* and *Death in Venice* do not, in general, portray a state for the protagonists where the instinctual Dionysian forces and the moderating Apollonian forces are both present and in balance. Michel and Aschenbach lack a connection to the Apollonian realm, which could have saved them from their failures. That they fail does not prove that the Dionysian-Apollonian balance is of no relevance or is impossible to achieve, but it does show that Nietzsche's project is difficult to put into practice; notably, both authors have incorporated a degree of anti-Nietzscheanism in their works.

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