

# 1911: MODERNISM, HUSSERL, AND MANN<sup>1</sup>

## I

Both Thomas Mann and Edmund Husserl, in central writings of the early years of their mature voice, addressed the crisis of culture exhibited in Modernism and both saw the crucial issue as no less than the future of European humanity. Both thought that an increasingly prevalent norm-less, ideal-free radical subjectivism was the source of the crisis. This essay will discuss this common ground and show how the Nietzschean dynamic of Apollinian/Dionysian is exhibited in each and how the two authors variously interpreted the solution to the crisis.

## II

What happens when a culture changes its metaphors for meaning, justification and truth? Such a change occurred in Western Culture in the period from approximately 1890 to 1930. Cultural Historians and Literary Critics, but, typically, not Philosophers, refer to that period as the Modernist period. Its status as revolutionary is beyond quarrel. Virtually every form of high culture underwent fundamental and radical transformation in those four decades. From painting to theoretical physics, from poetry to logic, music to mathematics, the "normal science" of the disciplines went thru foundational transformation. Nearly every form of inquiry and expression in art, in science, in the humanities and the newborn social sciences, in the theoretical and the practical disciplines emerged from the 40 years dramatically different from how they entered.

The changes of culture in Modernism were different from those of many other periods of radical transformation in our history. In Modernism we not only find *new forms of inquiry* [nearly all of the social sciences appeared], not only do we find *older disciplines transformed*, (the Einsteinian [relativity] model supplants the Newtonian model [absolute space/time] in theoretical physics), but we find a transformation more radical than these familiar forms of "revolution". What we find is a *new paradigm or model for meaning, justification and truth* entering the historical scene. The picture of the human's relationship to the cosmos as one of representation, as one of 'mirroring' the hidden truths of nature is displaced.<sup>2</sup> The metaphors of copying and correspondence, the assumption that meaning and truth resided in a correspondence between the human product, such as thought or language, and a separate, free-standing and integral reality was analyzed, criticized, challenged and in significant cases, rejected. The new paradigm was and still is unclear and is far from consensual or universal. But increasingly the language of "construction" begins to replace the language of "representation", the language of "perspective" replaces "the view from nowhere," the metaphors of "interpretation" replace those of "vision", citing context and the context dependent nature of observation replaces the assumptions of Archimedean points and value free observation, and the language of relational and contextual truths begins to replace that of absolutes.

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<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this essay appeared in *Analecta Husserliana*, XLIX, 251-263

<sup>2</sup>R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979)

Rather exactly in the middle of this 40-year period, in 1911, two of the central intellectual figures of 20th century culture, Thomas Mann and Edmund Husserl coincidentally wrote two classics of 20th century intellectual culture. *Death in Venice* and *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* have crucial significance quite beyond their enormous importance to their authors and to their respective fields. Although far removed from each other in most obvious ways, and beyond the coincidence of dates, the two pieces are both centrally concerned with the same problem: the crisis of culture produced by the Modernist revolution and its bearing on the future of European humanity.

Both writings are, in odd ways, historical artifacts---period statements about the reception of and reaction to the Modernist crisis of culture transforming the very culture these two self appointed conservative guardians of culture saw themselves as struggling to preserve.

### III

The standard way to interpret *Death in Venice* is to set it in the context of Nietzsche and Freud, occasionally with a nod to Schopenhauer and Marx.<sup>3</sup> The novella clearly exhibits Nietzschean themes, particularly the early version of the Apollonian/Dionysian theme as expressed in *Birth of Tragedy* where only the artist [Aeschylus/Wagner] can find a livable synthesis of the two forces and alone can find a way with integrity to affirm life in the face of its chaos.<sup>4</sup> As von Aschenbach illustrates, Nietzsche asserts living by either "god" alone will only lead to tragedy.

The notion of sublimation from Freud allows a reasonably straight forward mapping of his early egology unto the case of v. Aschenbach. The long repressed Id, releasing its libido first hesitantly, and then ever more directly and blindly, seals Gustav's fate and his doom in Venice. The ego is unable to perform successfully its task of adjudicating between the demands of irrational nature and social injunctions, between Id and Superego.

Both of these standard interpretations of v. Aschenbach treat the novella as the tragedy of a single man. To be sure, one can generalize the case of Gustav and claim that he represents a warning and, thus, the potential fate of Everyman. But aside from the fact that few exhibit either the status, fame, talent, endurance, perseverance, self-discipline, single-mindedness or drive of v. Aschenbach, he's an unlikely Everyman for another quite different reason. Von Aschenbach can very easily be seen not as any person in

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<sup>3</sup>For Nietzsche, see, for example, Erich Heller in various writings including his essay accompanying the Kenneth Burke translation for Modern Library of *Death in Venice*, 1970. R.J. Hollingdale's classic study, *Thomas Mann*, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971) equally endorses that reading, as do virtually all other commentaries including Mann's own remarks on his story. Mann also suggests the Freudian interpretation though that's more contentious since a number of critics have thought Freud only enters with *The Magic Mountain*. A good discussion of the controversy can be found in Frederick J. Beharriell's article "'Never Without Freud': Freud's Influence on Mann" in, *Thomas Mann In Context*, edited by Kenneth Hughes, (Worcester, Mass: Clark University Press, 1978.)

<sup>4</sup> In Nietzsche's later writing, e.g., *Twilight of the Idols*, the character of Dionysius becomes a synthesis of the two 'gods' of the earlier work. W. Kaufman noted this in his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1950.)

particular or in general, but as the fate of Europe. The tragedy of v. Aschenbach is the prophetic tragedy of the West.

Husserl prepared the first comprehensive statement of his philosophical objectives in the article *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*. The article is both proposal and corrective, both diagnosis and directive; it critically condemns [then] contemporary developments in philosophy which betray philosophy's heritage and its claim "...to be rigorous science" as well as its claim "...to be the science that satisfies the loftiest theoretical needs and renders possible from an ethico-religious point of view a life regulated by pure rational norms."<sup>5</sup> The villains of the piece are three: Naturalism in the guise of empirical psychology is the first misguided endeavor. But the more intense targets of Husserl's critique are the other two forms of philosophy singled out for criticism: Historicism, with its self-refuting relativism, and Weltanschauung philosophy with its psychologizing of ideas and its misguided humanism. The widespread influence of this trio gives testimony to the magnitude of the disarray in philosophy, in the arts and sciences, and, generally, in the intellectual life of European humanity.

Though Husserl focuses on three different developments in philosophy, and their more general cultural backdrop, the one he is most critical of Weltanschauung Philosophy.<sup>6</sup> [His copy of Rudolf Eucken's *Grundlinien einer Neuen Lebensanschauung* (Leipzig, 1907) was heavily marked. Eucken was the most famous of the Weltanschauung philosophers] As he notes, this development most significantly threatens the ancient vision of philosophy as a rigorous science because *it can appear to satisfy* need human's have for wisdom and it does that while presenting itself as a scientifically based way of doing philosophy. In other words, it is doubly deceptive and thus especially dangerous.

Though the criticism in all three cases is directed toward them as types of philosophy, the energy behind the criticism comes from outside philosophy. Here in 1911, even as some 25 years later in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, the real threat is the fate of Europe.<sup>7</sup> The threatened tragedy of philosophy is the prophetic tragedy of the West.

Both Mann and Husserl share the perception of the disarray of their times. Both see culture at a turning point; both see their contemporary world as in crisis and, strikingly, both believe the shape of the crisis to be manifestly similar. The conflict and "battle for the soul" of Western humanity lies in the struggle between the ideals

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<sup>5</sup> E. Husserl, "Philosophy As Rigorous Science," in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, ed. P. McCormick and F. Elliston (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup>"But how is it now, when any and every norm is controverted or empirically falsified and robbed or its ideal validity? Naturalists and historicists fight about Weltanschauung, and yet both are at work on different sides to misinterpret ideas as facts and to transform all reality, all life, into an incomprehensible, idealess confusion of "facts". The superstition of the fact is common to them all." Husserl, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>7</sup> E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970.) See also the text of the Prague and Vienna lecture, "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man" which served as the basis of the book. If anything, the message is clearer in the lecture. It's in, E. Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, ed. by Q. Lauer. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965.)

Nietzsche named the Apollinian and the Dionysian. This is transparent in the case of Mann, easily interpretable in the case of Husserl.

The richness and complexity of both writings makes it impossible to do justice to them in the time available for this presentation. The same observation holds for the more circumscribed task of interpreting comprehensively the two pieces in terms of how they express a response to the Modernist assault on the received culture. What I shall do instead is focus on one topic, a topic that is asserted to be central by each author in his respective text. For Mann it is the confusion and degradation caused by passion, or, in his words, "...the destructiveness of the Dionysiac spirit of individualistic lyrical effusion."<sup>8</sup> For Husserl, the enemy is skeptical subjectivism, which results from destroying ideals, naturalizing reason and collapsing the difference between ideality and empirical fact. What I will do is show how closely related the two themes are and how both evidence the critical response to Modernism I've mentioned earlier.

#### IV

*Philosophy as Rigorous Science* presents an ultramontane version of the Apollinian ideal. Husserl's reaction to the cultural disarray he perceives around him is to see digressions/wanderings from this ideal as degenerative--at best confused, at worst diseased and nihilistically destructive. The problems with Historicism and Weltanschauung philosophy parallel the temptation of Dionysus because each is nihilistic and free from any notion of an absolute standard. Furthermore, each is focused on a varying and ultimately individual preference and not on a rational, objective and timeless standard of measure. Weltanschauung philosophy is perhaps the more perverse for it looks to individual inspiration and individual self-fulfillment, [one must find his OWN meaning] as its satisfaction and completion. One of the main reasons Husserl is so focused and dramatic in his vision is because he sees in the background the gathering threat of a kind of cultural Dionysian apocalypse. The end of reason, the death of standards, the removal of restraints to behavior, etc.--in a phrase, *the end of culture*, which he would forestall is, in fact, the dismal prospect of a Dionysian future. His way to save us, and to address the problem, is to renew with ever-greater fervor our commitment to an Apollinian vision and, in addition, this time to get it right. No more of the half-hearted commitments that have characterized our history; we must now REALLY make good on the commitments made at the Greek beginnings of our culture. We must get philosophy right and when we do that, we'll have rectified hu-manity and realized reason itself.

Before examining and expanding these themes, let me briefly give the background information and context for Husserl's essay.

Husserl was asked by the editors of the new journal *Logos* to write an essay for its inaugural publication. Husserl's reputation in the world of German philosophy was already fairly high, a product largely of the influence of *Logische Untersuchungen* from 1900. Although by 1911 he had already made the "transcendental turn" in his phenomenology, there's evidence of that in *Idea of Phenomenology* in 1907, [the English

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<sup>8</sup> This is the phrase Mann uses in an interpretive letter written to Carl Maria Weber, discussed later in this essay.

title of his *Five Lectures on Phenomenology* given at Göttingen]<sup>9</sup> his significant and controversial publications in phenomenology lay ahead of him. Thus the programmatic claims of *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* are all the more remarkable, in that they had no real antecedent. The article is further remarkable because its programmatic statements for phenomenology also cite what problems and difficulties in both philosophy and in culture this new science was designed to correct. In other words, this extraordinary new exercise in radical thinking and the science such stringency was to produce were given a rationale and justification. In the context of Husserl's own work we need to wait until the end of his career, in *The Crisis of European Science...* to find another statement of such scope concerning the purpose and function of this phenomenology.

The seriousness and substance of Husserl's concern are stated bluntly:

The spiritual need of our time has, in fact, become unbearable. Would that it were only theoretical lack of clarity regarding the sense of the "reality" investigated in the natural and humanistic sciences that disturbed our peace...Far more than this, it is the most radical vital need that afflicts us, a need that leaves no point of our lives untouched.... So long as..norms [of absolute validity] were not attacked, were not threatened and ridiculed by skepticism, there was only one vital question: how best to satisfy these norms in practice. But how is it now, when any and every norm is controverted or empirically falsified and robbed of its ideal validity? *Naturalists and historicists fight about Weltanschauung, and yet both are at work on different sides to misinterpret ideas as facts and to transform all reality, all life, into an incomprehensible, idealess confusion of "facts." The superstition of the fact is common to them all.*<sup>10</sup> [Italics, mine]

It is very difficult to reconstruct, outside of the article itself, what cultural concerns were on Husserl's mind at the time. If we study what else he worked on during and immediately before and after writing the *Logos* piece, we find nothing to clue us to any ongoing concerns. Around the time of the composition of the piece he had offered an "Introduction to Philosophy" course and a History of Philosophy seminar, which might have put the grand sweep of the history of Philosophy before him. But his research and the rest of his seminars concerned work on the structure of logic of the sort that showed up in *Erfahrung und Urteil* and in *Formal und Transcendental Logik*. Furthermore, Husserl destroyed the manuscript, the page proofs, as well as any notes he had for the article, so there is no help to be had from those sources. Thus, when Husserl begins by citing the sweep of all of Western thought, and continues by diagnosing the danger of the collapse of Western culture and concludes with dire prophesies of what happens if this culture does not reground itself in the truths of reason----when Husserl sounds like a combination of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel we have to puzzle at the piece. To repeat, this is a global, even cosmic statement by someone who had avoided any statement addressing the justificatory question of "why concern oneself with

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<sup>9</sup> There is even earlier evidence of the transcendental turn in the *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, published in 1928 but drawing from lectures of 1905. But these lectures do not make it as apparent as do the Göttingen lectures, the completely comprehensive need for the transcendental perspective.

<sup>10</sup> Husserl, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

phenomenology; what broader value or significance was had by these arcane studies of the activities of consciousness". Let us now answer those questions: what is the justification for this new science, and how can we meet the "spiritual needs of the time"?

At the outset we should note that Husserl is not unqualifiedly pessimistic. He, for example, disagrees with those who would call "our age the age of decadence". In fact, "you will scarcely find in history an age in which such a sum of working forces was set in motion and worked with such success."<sup>11</sup> "Our age is according to its vocation a great age--only it suffers from the skepticism that has disintegrated the *old, unclarified ideals*"<sup>12</sup> The greatness of the age then is in its potential; its reality, quite to the contrary, is where its great peril lies.

The problem is diagnosed; the solution, the "cure" lies in adequately grounding those ideals; in the configuration that Husserl saw as the only one possible for adequacy, we need a "science" which presents with apodictic evidence the clarified notions of essence, of ideality, of norms.

...there is only one remedy for these and all similar evils: a scientific critique and in addition a radical science, rising from below, based on sure foundations, and progressing according to the most rigorous methods--the philosophical science for which we speak here.<sup>13</sup>

Weltanschauung philosophy stands in thorough opposition to this project since it is a product of INDIVIDUAL inspiration, it is a vehicle for INDIVIDUAL fulfillment and meaning, it is a congealing of subjective, individualistic needs. By particularizing and individualizing the philosophical project, Weltanschauung philosophy serves the destructive skepticism of the times. For in measuring the validity of a philosophy by the help it offers to an individual in finding meaning in his [subjective] life, it turns away from the timeless, and hence, external goal of realizing the absolute norms of reason. Weltanschauung philosophy, by subjectivising philosophy, endorses and promotes the logically absurd confusion that ideas and ideals can be disproved by facts.<sup>14</sup> By supporting the historicist's vision that all truth is particular to an era, Weltanschauung philosophy destroys the idea of universal validity. It, even as its ally Historicism, promotes an extreme skeptical subjectivism that denies the validity of all norms, ideals, and standards.<sup>15</sup>

The way to overcome this crisis of culture, this nihilism of subjectivism, is to return to the ancient ideal of an all-encompassing science of reason, which will be

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<sup>11</sup> Husserl, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Husserl, *op. cit.* p. 194

<sup>14</sup> Husserl, *op. cit.*, p.187.

<sup>15</sup> Husserl, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

philosophy itself. Only by reinvigorating the ancient dream will we be able to found and ground the ideals and norms we need to overcome the spiritual destructiveness and nihilism of the times. The Dionysian absorption in the subjective, the individual, the moment, must be set aside for the Apollinian order and clarity of reason itself.

## V

Mann's resolution of the Apollinian/Dionysian dynamic is less one sided and more complex. Von Aschenbach gradually takes leave of his Apollinian commitments as he first journeys to, and then remains in Venice. The failings of that ideal, particularly its repressive denial of the passionate side of the self, insure that it's only a matter of time [and temptation] before the 'return of the repressed.' But v. Aschenbach's "journey" to his ultimate end is no endorsement by Mann of the competing ideal. Von Aschenbach dies, though perhaps with some happiness, because he exceeds 'proper measure.' He passes beyond balance and reason, substituting Beauty for Morality. The cost of such aspiration to godliness is death.

I will expand this summary in some detail but before doing that I need to address some accompanying issues which could confuse understanding the topic of this paper.

Anyone who studies *Death in Venice* quickly learns that it is to a great extent autobiographical.<sup>16</sup> Mann did go to Venice, in fact he began writing the story there, there was an old roué on the boat, there even was a Polish boy named Tadzio and, to judge by his own words in a famous interpretive letter he wrote to Carl Maria Weber concerning the story, Mann was homosexually attracted to the boy<sup>17</sup>. The question is not whether the story is about the struggle of an artist to find a justification for his art; it clearly is that. The question is what greater theme is also addressed. Mann's struggle and doubt, his trouble in defining and justifying his craft certainly drove the story; after the difficulties he had in the immediately prior years in completing his projects, he certainly was in the midst of a personal crisis. But the struggle between competing ideals for art was a struggle delivered to Mann by his times. The choices he saw were ones that were "live options" in his culture; the doubts and the implied criticisms were ones insinuated by the trends of his time. He struggled against what was prevalent and what was expected of an artist in his era. Thus, though the inspiration for *Death in Venice* is personal and autobiographical, the choices and options, the dilemmas and temptations, the problematic and its resolve are of the time, not just of the person. In Mann's own phrase for the story, *Death in Venice* is a "complex crystal" of its time.<sup>18</sup> It shows its era in fractured light.

The particular failing of von Aschenbach is his rejection of "critical analysis". In the words of his telling phrase, he will go "beyond knowledge," he will leave behind self-

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<sup>16</sup>See R. Winston, *Thomas Mann: The Making of an Artist, 1875-1911*. (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1981.) Also, the comprehensive study of T.J. Reed. *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.)

<sup>17</sup>Reed discusses the letter on pp, 151-155 of his book. Mann wrote the letter July 4, 1920. Winston shows in great and convincing detail how virtually every item in the novella reports an actual experience of Mann's. In other words, except for the obvious changes, e.g., Mann didn't die in Venice, the story almost entirely autobiographical.

<sup>18</sup>Mann's own image for the work; see Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

criticism and a commitment to external, objective standards. What he claims to find is a "moral resoluteness beyond knowledge," in other words, a kind of willful commitment which is not guided by rational criticism, by communal consensus, by objective measures but only by the subjective passion of the agent. In the case of von Aschenbach [but the temptation need not necessarily take the same form for everyone], the "resoluteness" is guided by a fatal infatuation with a new type of aesthetic taste. What's crucial here is the idea of non-critical resoluteness, of unanalyzed willful commitment. In terms of the story, the author who earlier rejected the sympathy and fascination with the abyss and similarly rejected the flabby humanism of 'to understand all is to forgive all' [*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*] now finds himself a perfect illustration of both. He now finds a beauty in form itself [a kind of art for arts' sake] and the humanity and the concomitant moral dimension of his new obsession, Tadzio, is irrelevant. We are warned in Chap 2 of *Death in Venice* of how Form can be treacherous, how it can be a fatal attraction to immorality since it substitutes Beauty for Morality. That is exactly the temptation Aschenbach gives in to: Tadzio is not a person; he's a "work of art" [of course, we need to be aware of the self deception accompanying this vision--but the ambiguity of his motivation remains a constant to the end--at least HE thought it was the Grecian Beauty of the living statue that held his fascination]. We can well be reminded here of the cult surrounding Stephan George and its celebration of 'art for arts' sake'.<sup>19</sup> [As Reed points out, the ambivalence of the hero<sup>20</sup> is reflected in the disharmony of the story itself; its style is hymnic and celebratory, its substance is moralistic and judgmental.]

The story itself suggests in a nearly didactic way how it is to be understood. Chap 2 tells the story of Aschenbach's life and is prophetic about his fated destruction. The elaborate incorporation of references to Plato's *Phaedrus*, to Socrates' disquisitions there and in the *Symposium*, on how Eros leads on to art and beauty, rather directly instruct the reader to see the fable as illustrating that Greek wisdom. But for the purposes of this paper, the reference to Plato is of only marginal value. It becomes merely a set of cautionary observations since von Aschenbach is incapable of remaining within the limits of proper measure; he succumbs to the danger Socrates' warns of, where Eros leads to beauty and then on to destruction. What we learn from Plato here concerns the warning of the predictable catastrophe.

The line of interpretation just sketched, then, suggests that we can generalize from the case of von Aschenbach to his era and we can treat him as a kind of template of European humanity of the time. Thus the ideals he struggles with define the shape of his era and the pitfalls he encounters and the resolutions he fails to choose constitute a commentary on his historical community. And given the conclusion of the story, we can also see a kind of prophetic warning concerning the disastrous consequences of the "Dionysiac spirit of irresponsible individualistic lyrical effusion"<sup>21</sup> Let us now turn to an analysis of the Dionysiac and subjectivist themes of *Death in Venice*.

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<sup>19</sup>Reed, *op cit.*, p.175 & elsewhere.

<sup>20</sup> Reed, *op cit.*

<sup>21</sup>Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 151, quoting Mann's letter to Weber, July 4, 1920.

In 1918 Mann referred to himself as "a European writer who grew up in the age of decadence but who is now experimenting with ways to overcome the decadence and nihilism of his time." He specifically cites *Death in Venice* as exhibiting that point.<sup>22</sup> The danger, the energy for and the source of Aschenbach's downfall come from Nietzsche's Dionysus.

'The central theme of the story is about psychological decay and how it finds in the outside world the pretext and the occasion for its fulfillment.'<sup>23</sup> Mann tells us that the real subject of his fable was the confusion and degradation caused by passion. [He had earlier thought to tell the tale of the aged Goethe's love for the 17-year-old Ulrike von Levetzow.] The shape of his decay, of his passion, to repeat my earlier citation from the Weber letter, is the "Dionysiac spirit of irresponsible, individualistic lyrical effusion". We can understand how Mann thought of that decay and passion if we see what he uses as the contrast case: again from the Weber letter, Mann asserts its antipode as the "Apolline spirit of epic, with its moral and social responsibilities and objective limitations" "In other words, the battle of the artist in his early twentieth century setting is between the urge to express private and personal feeling, with the attendant loss of morality, objectivity, and social responsibility, and the requirements of the more public genre of prose narrative which can preserve and advance all three."<sup>24</sup> In terms of Mann's 1918 observations, the decay, the degradation, the disaster to be avoided is the Dionysiac 'decadence and nihilism' of the time.

If we return to the interpretation I suggested at the beginning of this section, that we understand the choices von Aschenbach faces and the resolution of them in the story as a comment on the cultural forces of the time, we can determine Mann's response in summary. The forces that destroyed Aschenbach were ones that threaten any artist and, perhaps, any thinking person; the forces, thus, are a threat to the art of any era, and, by parallel reasoning, to human life of any era. The current era, the time of Modernism, is rampant with the kind of Dionysiac individualism that denies the social and moral role of art and instead substitutes irresponsible, subjectivistic "effusions". The danger of this approach to art is manifest in the tragic fate of von Aschenbach.

The conclusion of *Death in Venice* is not just the end of v. Aschenbach but also a prophetic, and, as it turned out, tragic prophesy of the near term fate of the West. The outbreak of the First World War, the onslaught of the 'so-called' "second 30 year's war" began only 3 years later and the hideous forces of Dionysius unleashed as social, political and state policy began their bloodletting and destruction.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 176; the reference is to his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen [Observations of an Unpolitical Man]* not his earlier *Gedanken im Kriege*, 1914 which also advocated the justice of the German cause.

<sup>23</sup> Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>24</sup> Reed, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2.

<sup>25</sup> Contrary to the claims and insinuations of these two authors, one might well argue that the Apollinian emphasis on "moral and social responsibilities" was the real source of the war. We need only remember, for example, how often was German or Russian or Austrian or French, etc. honor enlisted to justify the need for the war. The country's and the citizen's 'moral and social responsibility' was to defend that honor.

The two authors' shared perception of a culture in disarray and exhaustion does not lead to a shared conception of restitution and renewal. In the context of subsequent developments, both authors seem less than prescient. Husserl's resolve vigorously and rigorously to revive the Apollinian, certainly seems, in retrospect, rather to be the 'death throes' of the ancient interpretation of reason. Mann's cautious endorsement of 'proper measure' seems, in retrospect, to be at best a temporary respite, even in terms of his own later work, e.g., *Dr. Faustus*, and in terms of his impending critical commitment to the ironic stance. And there certainly is a significant irony in the fact that Husserl's soon to be announced commitment to the idea of transcendental constitution and the agency of the Transcendental Ego was taken by his critics to reintroduce what he had rejected--namely, subjectivism. It is equally a matter of irony that Mann's professed and studied irony was seen by his readers as promoting a skepticism toward and lack of commitment to the very ideals he was concerned to advocate in *Death in Venice*. Both are seen to reintroduce what they reject; both are conservatives and radicals at the same time. Both see the trouble of a world without absolute standards but in different ways both undercut such a view--Mann with his irony, Husserl with his notion of constitution.

But however we estimate the merit of their prescriptions, both give vivid testimony to a cultural crisis that to this day remains only incompletely comprehended and only very partially overcome.

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