Abstract

This article offers a new interpretation of Aharon Appelfeld's novel Badenheim, 1939 by examining the novel through Friedrich Nietzsche's dichotomy of the Apollonian and Dionysian. The central argument is that Appelfeld portrays the approach of the Holocaust in the novel as a Dionysian takeover of the previously dominant Apollonian sense of order and meaning. This Nietzschean interpretation provides fresh insights into obscure passages and characters in the novel and offers a new understanding of the story and characters.

Moreover, the article explores Appelfeld's perspective on art as a response to the trauma of the Holocaust, arguing that art and music serve a similar function to that attributed by Nietzsche to Greek tragedy. Survivors use artistic expression to engage with the chaotic and horrific experience of the Holocaust while avoiding being consumed by it. Narrative art allows them to confront the unspeakable realm of terror without surrendering to it.

Dionysus and Apollo in Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939*: A Nietzschean Interpretation

Badenheim 1939 and the Dionysian and Apollonian dichotomy

This article proposes a new interpretation of Aharon Appelfeld's representation of the Holocaust experience in his novel *Badenheim, 1939*. Utilizing Friedrich Nietzsche's dichotomic framework of Apollonian and Dionysian,[1] I argue that Appelfeld portrays the Holocaust as a takeover of the Dionysian, characterized by disruption, chaos, and horror, over the previously dominant Apollonian sense of order and meaning. This interpretive lens sheds light on certain obscure passages and characters in the fictional world of the novel.

Scholar Chaya Shacham has previously noted similarities between *Badenheim, 1939* and Thomas Mann's novel *Death in Venice*, both of which associate the eruption of the Dionysian with the onset of catastrophe. While Mann only had an intuition of the impending disaster, Appelfeld retrospectively adopted Mann's model, moving the Dionysian eruption from the psychological and sociological planes to a symbolic plane.[2]

This article delves deeper into the Nietzschean interpretation and provides a fresh interpretation of the story and characters using the Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy. The goal of the study is to uncover hidden meanings and reveal new insights by examining the novel through this lens.

In addition to Shacham, several commentators have emphasized the traumatic,[3] chaotic,[4] horrific, illogical, and absurd atmosphere that pervades the novel.[5] Alan Mintz has characterized the novel as a grotesque, Kafkaesque allegory of European Jewry on the eve of their extermination.[6] Along similar lines, Emily Miller Budick argues that the novel represents a powerful confrontation with the pain and horror of the Holocaust and is less concerned with analyzing the events that took place and more focused on expressing the victims' incomprehension and amazement, leaving little space for self-reflection or action.[7]

Michael André Bernstein also highlights the sense of passivity and despair that permeates the novel. He develops a threefold schema of literary practices in Holocaust literature, including foreshadowing, backshadowing, and sideshadowing. Foreshadowing underlines the inevitability of the catastrophe, backshadowing indicates the predictability and lack of historical options, and sideshadowing highlights the different paths that characters could take, freeing them from a deterministic destiny. According to Bernstein, *Badenheim, 1939* is devoid of sideshadows and is a foreshadowing narration, demonstrated by the characters' blind optimism even when the terrible fate that awaits them becomes clear. He also argues that Appelfeld never mentions the death camps by name, only because he is certain that the reader will do so in his place. [8]

Although I agree there is a prevalent atmosphere of despair, passivity, and chaos in *Badenheim, 1939*, I argue that the resort town of Badenheim is depicted as a place where both Apollonian and Dionysian forces coexist in a balanced manner. At the beginning of the novel, the city is described as a harmonious blend of order, meaning, and civilization (Apollonian) and horror and chaos (Dionysian). However, with the arrival of the Sanitary Department and their sentence of death, this delicate balance is shattered. Yet, despite the overwhelming presence of despair, the Badenheimers do not succumb to complete chaos. The narrative oscillates between moments of utter despair and fleeting re-appropriations of Apollonian order. Hence, it can be argued that the optimism of the Badenheimers is a sign not of their passivity but rather a desperate attempt of the Apollonian force to reclaim the idyllic, balanced atmosphere that once existed in Badenheim,[9] prior to the arrival of the Sanitary Department and their death sentence. [10]

Finally, this understanding of the Holocaust as an event that resulted in a Dionysian eruption of horror and chaos, brings to light a new understanding of Appelfeld's perspective on art as a response to the trauma of the Holocaust. In both *Beyond Despair* and *Badenheim, 1939*, Appelfeld asserts that art and music serve a similar function as that attributed by Nietzsche to Greek tragedy, fostering a synthesis between the opposing Apollonian and Dionysian forces. Appelfeld views artistic expression as a medium that enables survivors to engage with the chaotic and horrific experience of the Holocaust while avoiding being consumed by it. Narrative art as a logical, explanatory, and meaning-giving form, allows Appelfeld to confront the haunting anguish and traverse the unspeakable realm of terror without surrendering to it.[11]

What did Appelfeld know about the Nietzschean dichotomy?

The extent of Appelfeld's knowledge of Nietzsche's distinction between the Dionysian and Apollonian remains an open question. While it is challenging to determine whether he intentionally or unconsciously utilized this concept in his novels, the scholar Shacham notes the impact of German culture and philosophy on Appelfeld's fiction, particularly in works written from the 1970s onwards.[12]Appelfeld, moreover, studied Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew University with such German-born scholars as Gershom Sholem and Martin Buber. [13] It is therefore possible that Appelfeld learned about Nietzsche through his philosophical studies and from his German teachers. Furthermore, considering the widely known adoption of Nietzsche's ideas by the Nazis, it is plausible that Appelfeld was conscious of how Nietzsche's philosophy was employed for Nazi propaganda when writing the novel.[14]

Furthermore, the previously mentioned association of Appelfeld's stories*, Badenheim 1939* and *The Retreat*, with Thomas Mann's novels *Death in Venice* and *The Magic Mountain* further suggests the influence of Nietzschean philosophy on Appelfeld's works. [15] The Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy interpretation of *Death in Venice* is widely accepted among literary critics,[16] further supporting the argument for a potential Nietzschean reading of Appelfeld's novel. It is even possible that Appelfeld was exposed to the dichotomy not directly through Nietzsche's works, but rather through his reading of Mann's novel.

The Birth of Tragedy and the Apollonian-Dionysian Dichotomy

In 1872, Friedrich Nietzsche published *The Birth of Tragedy*, which marked his philosophical debut and revolutionized the traditional image of Greek art as being solely Apollonian, characterized by balance, harmony, and measure. According to Nietzsche, this image conceals the true fundamental aspect of Greek civilization , the Dionysian. These two impulses, the Apollonian and Dionysian, are not unique to Greece but rather characterize European culture. Nietzsche's argument in *the Birth* is that the Greeks were the most successful in embracing both the Apollonian and Dionysian elements.

According to Nietszche's scheme, Apollonian and Dionysian impulses, are characterized as instincts and physiological phenomena that exist in constant opposition to one another. Through the form of Attic tragedy, these opposing forces ultimately succeed in reaching a synthesis.[17] The terms Apollonian and Dionysian are derived from the Greek deities Apollo and Dionysius, respectively, and find expression in the realm of dreams and intoxication. [18]

The Apollonian is represented by the dream state, where everything is understood and everything has purpose without the need for explanation.[19] Dreams, according to Nietzsche, are economical in nature and lack extraneous details that do not contribute to the central storyline. The Apollonian state is characterized by beauty, reason, order, formal harmony, and meaning. However, the world of Apollo, represented by dreams, is only an appearance and not reality itself. Nietzsche equates this dream-reality with Schopenhauer's concept of the *principium individuationis* (the principle of individuation), the way in which a thing is distinguished from other things, which allows one to recognize that even in the midst of a vivid dream, there remains a persistent awareness that it is only semblance of reality. [20]

On the other hand, the Dionysian impulse, as described by Nietzsche, represents the underlying reality that exists beyond the veil of individuation, much like Schopenhauer's concept of the "will."[21] This reality is characterized by chaos, pain, and suffering. In the Dionysian state of ecstatic inebriation, individuals experience the breaking down of rigid boundaries between one another and the revelation of the primordial unity between all things. [22] The cult of Dionysius celebrates sexuality, unconscious desire, and the amoral forces of nature, seeking to destroy the cultivated individualism of the autonomous individual and reunite them with nature.[23] This suspension of individuality results in a feeling of extreme joy and a sense of universal harmony, not only between people, but also between individuals and nature. [24]

Therefore, the Dionysian state contains two contrasting elements. On the one hand, it is a state of fusion with nature and sexual frenzy, resulting in joy and celebration. On the other hand, it is a state in which the intuition of the meaningless and painful nature of existence is made most apparent. The non-figurative God Dionysus represents the emotion found in music, the power of seduction, and the innocence of play, embodying the paradoxical and dualistic nature of existence.[25] The confrontation with this paradox can result in either ecstasy or madness.[26] Thus, the Dionysian state represents a duality that simultaneously encompasses both the joyous reunion with nature and the awareness of the suffering and pain at the core of existence.

The Dionysian and Apollonian Dichotomy in *Badenheim 1939*

With the Dionysian and Apollonian dichotomy in mind, we can return to the analysis of Appelfeld's *Badenheim ʿir nofesh*, which was published in Hebrew in 1975 and in English five years later, and which established Appelfeld as an internationally renowned.

The story takes place in an Austrian resort town where middle-class Jewish residents and vacationers gather each summer to indulge in sweets, sun, banquets, alcohol, and a cultural festival organized by one of the central characters, Dr. Pappenheim.[27] The population of Jewish vacationers is diverse and encompasses intellectuals, artists, entrepreneurs, as well as prostitutes, immature academics, and charlatans.

At the beginning of the novel, Badenheim is depicted as the epitome of the Greek concept of a perfect balance between Dionysian and Apollonian elements. The Apollonian is associated with light, calm, and reason, and this is reflected in the description of Badenheim: "Spring returned to Badenheim...the sun scattered the remnants of the darkness and its light filled the main street from square to square" (1).

The houses are well-maintained, with "the small, well-kept houses put on their tranquil look again. White islands in a sea of garden" (2). The spring light is depicted as serene: "the spring light streamed forth serenely, as it did every year" (2). All of these elements evoke a sense of Apollonian harmony.

However, the narrator soon warns the reader that this harmony is not the complete story. The city of Badenheim is also a vacation spot, where an music festival is held each year, and a mysterious and inebriating atmosphere prevails below the surface:

> There was a secret *intoxication*[28] in the air. Respectable businessmen did not bring their wives here, but anyone who had breathed the air and been infected could not keep away...Here you could find a schoolgirl who had run away from school...and tall women to whose brows vague secrets clung like skin" (13-14).

This concise description warns the reader that beneath the seemingly innocuous and dull holiday village, secrets and darkness lurk. Notably, the term "intoxication" used by the narrator was also used by Nietzsche as a feature of the Dionysian state.

Many other references are made to the Dionysian forces that boil beneath the seemingly peaceful holiday town of Badenheim. It is evident that, like the Greeks, the residents and visitors of Badenheim struggle to balance the chaotic and dark Dionysian aspect with the orderly and harmonious Apollonian one. This battle is exemplified through the characters of Sally and Gertie, former prostitutes whom the town once tried to banish, "but the campaign, which began many years ago, had come to nothing in the end. The town had grown used to them." (4) Nevertheless, with some difficulties, even Sally and

Gertie manage to mitigate their perverse Dionysian behavior and become part of a more orderly life in Badenheim . With time the two prostitutes became assimilated to the other villagers' lifestyle: "In the course of time they had lost their city airs, bought themselves a little house, and begun to dress like the local girls. In the beginning they gave wild parties. But the years and the mistresses from the city pushed them aside." (4)

Badenheim can thus be seen as impregnated with Dionysian forces, as evidenced by its music festival, artists, food, eclectic residents, and being a city of holidays, release, and relief. At the beginning of the story, this Dionysian side is kept under control and balanced by the Apollonian. The prostitutes abandon their pervert behaviors, the gardens are still well-kept, and a sense of serenity reigns. That is, until the arrival of the Sanitation Department, when the balance is radically disrupted.

A key figure in understanding the place of the Dionysian/Apollonian dichotomy in Badenheim, 1939 is Dr. Pappenheim. The pastry cook of the village accuses Dr. Pappenheim of being responsible for bringing the Dionysian perversion to the village in the first place through his festival, music, prostitutes, and sick artists:

> Who invented the festival if not Pappenheim? Who filled the town with morbid artists and decadent vacationers? ... And who brought Sally and Gertie here? Inquired the pastry cook. ... I at any rate never allowed them to cross the threshold of my shop (114).

According to the pastry cook, Dr. Pappenheim needs to be punished for his twisted and perverse behavior: "Let Pappenheim emigrate, not us. What harm have we ever done anyone? We never brought any rotten artists here, we never encouraged perversity" (114).

Yet, Dr. Pappenheim, as opposed to what the pastry cook suggests, is not simply an embodiment of the Dionysian. Rather, he is the Apollonian organizing force of Badenheim, too. He does not merely introduce the festival, perversity, music, and a carnival atmosphere to the town; he also imposes (German) artistic order on these Dionysian elements. He is responsible for establishing the schedule of the festival, and thus, he embodies the Apollonian force that incorporates the Dionysian into a structured, harmonious, and systematic framework. He desires structure and constantly refers to schedules and timetables. It can be argued that Dr. Pappenheim represents Badenheim itself, and the city's efforts to bring together the Apollonian and the Dionysian into a Greek synthesis.

Throughout the novel, Dr. Pappenheim maintains his role as the Apollonian organizing force. He is the one who constantly tries to explain logically the illogical events taking place in Badenheim. Pappenheim's persistent optimism and his constant attempts to rationalize and reinterpret the behavior of the Sanitation Department and the future trip to Poland reflect a desperate, even delusional human and Apollonian effort to arrange and make sense of a chaotic and incomprehensible Dionysian reality.

Already at the beginning of the novel, we begin to see how Pappenheim's role as a sublimating or organizing force begins to disintegrate. He progressively fails at organizing the festival and maintaining its schedule, and events start to slip out of his control, his Apollonian organizational skills slowly giving way to a chaotic Dionysian counter-reality:

> The artists did not reach out to him, did not respond to his letters, did not keep their promises. How would he stick to his schedule? For the moment, it was a concern for him. The people were caught up in their own revelry and in spring, which drew them deep into the dense forest.(16)

While the people are succumbing to the dark, frightening, and unknown Dionysian forest, Dr. Pappenheim remains worried about order and plans.

First signs of the emergence of the Dionysian

The events described at the beginning of the novel are indicative of the gradual awakening of the dormant and suppressed Dionysian force and the transformation of Badenheim. One of the earliest signs of this transformation is the insatiable hunger that overtakes the inhabitants of Badenheim: "This year their hunger knew no bounds. They snapped up whatever they could get... For hours, the *intoxicated* words flew through the air... The pastry shop owner tried to calm them down, but it was beyond his power. Appetite and energy conspired against him" (13). This hunger is a manifestation of the eruption of Dionysian energy, a feral desire that begins to dominate the entire village, breaking all restrictions. The narrator notes that this hunger is different from what was experienced in previous years. It is stronger and more ravenous, suggesting that the Apollonian, controlling influence on the town's residents has diminished.

The narrator also includes a cryptic story at this point, which initially appears disconnected from the events being described in the novel, but which can be understood as reflecting a gradual overtaking of the town by a Dionysian:

> The year before, a tall, slender, good-looking woman had appeared in Badenheim. After a few days, she disappeared into the forest. When she returned, she put on a bathing suit and went out onto the balcony crying, 'I'm free! Free forever!' She no longer belonged to the people but to the scents of the forest, and there was a cold light of madness burning in her eyes (13).

As previously discussed, Nietzsche characterizes the Dionysian experience as one of reunion with nature, often accompanied by joy and ecstasy. This digression about the woman, which disrupts the flow of events in the novel, serves as a reminder of the existence of a hidden and obscure force that is gradually rising to the surface, foreshadowing what will soon happen to the holiday town as a whole.

The explosion of the Dionysian

At a crucial point in the novel, the narrator conveys to the reader that Badenheim has undergone a transformation and that a new, distinct atmosphere has taken over: "A strange night descended on Badenheim...It was as if some alien spirit had descended on the town" (32) and later: "it still seemed that some other time, from some other place, had invaded the town and was silently establishing itself" (38).

To emphasize the change in atmosphere and the shift in the balance between Apollonian and Dionysian forces, Appelfeld highlights that nature has become stronger, more intrusive, and wilder, such as "the wild growth of red-flower geranium bushes that cover the buildings," (89) which "prevent the door from being opened and crawl into the balcony" (73). These vegetative and irrational forces conquer the bastions of civilization.

In addition to the changes in the landscape, the shift in atmosphere at Badenheim is marked by the eruption of madness, excess, transgression, and the surrender of Dionysian impulses. This is exemplified by the behavior of the half-Jewish waitress who, in a fit of profound madness and desperation, displays a mixture of sexuality and violence, to the point of cutting her own thigh:

> In the bar everybody was having a good time. The musicians had brought the waitress down with them, the half-Jewish waitress. She was cavorting on the stage like a dancer, exposing her legs and saying that her thighs had not been registered at the Sanitation Department: they were made of Austrian flesh. The bartender was watering the flowerpots on the windowsill. He was unaffected by the merrymaking. He knew their madness inside out, but this year they had gone beyond everything... The waitress was irrepressible... Suddenly the waitress stood up, took off her stockings, and announced that all guzzlers and gluttons were hereby invited to feast themselves on this Austrian meat... 'Isn't my meat tasty?' She made a beeline for Pappenheim. 'Certainly', he said. 'So why don't you take this knife and cut yourself a slice?'... Sally said: 'Do you really think he's capable of it?' 'In this case, I'll cut it myself.'" (49-50)

Here, we see that the regular and controlled madness which the bartender was accustomed to in Badenheim has lost any Apollonian control. The waitress is completely overtaken by Dionysian frenzy and has lost control of her instincts. As the Holocaust approaches, it slowly unleashes the most hidden and obscure aspects of human existence, neutralizing any Apollonian influence over the town.

Another sign of the outbreak of the Dionysian into the lives of the Badenheimers is depicted by the brutal robbery of the pharmacy, as people try to steal venom to commit suicide:

> A desperate struggle was going on in the pharmacy. Two strangers had forced their way and were looting the ‘toxica’ cupboard. Martin fought them off, took the vials from them and shouted, ‘I won’t allow it!’ They were two haggard men who had arrived a few days before. On their faces was an icy despair. (65)

Thus, again, from an orderly place where madness is reserved for the wife of the pharmacist, Trude, the drugstore becomes the center of a Dionysian occurrence, where fury, chaotic emotions, and drunken frenzy, which threatens to destroy all forms and codes, prevail.

It is noteworthy that the Dionysian emerges progressively throughout the storyline and that the harsher the conditions of the residents of Badenheim become, the more the Dionysian atmosphere takes over. After the city is closed by barbed wire, the hotel becomes the meeting point of the vacationers and turns out to be animated by a Dionysian explosion of smells, tastes, and culinary temptations: “The hotel was now full of the fragrant aromas of liqueurs, Swiss chocolate, French wine, pecans, and fine peach preserves."(81) It is not a coincidence that the narrator describes in detail the food that is served, underlining the importance of this Dionysian enjoyment for the vacationers. The hotel becomes the center of a Dionysian atmosphere of madness, luxury, capitulation to urges, excess, transgression, and drugs: "The last days of Badenheim were illuminated by a dull, yellow light. There were no more cigarettes. People fed in secret on the stolen drugs." (106) and again:

> Gaiety again gained the upper hand. Sally and Gertie put on their best clothes. Salo made jokes all the time. Even the wretched Mitzi laughed to split her sides. Martin's pills succeeded where the artists had failed. Only Martin's sorrow knew no bounds. He recited all the drugs of the death by their Latin and German names. But his was a voice calling in the wilderness. (108)

We see here that as the town and its inhabitants completely lose control, the quiet voice of the Apollonian, in this case represented by the pharmacist Martin, is completely ignored. The organized and well-measured businessman, Salo, also loses all control and abandons himself to his instincts: "Salo swore an oath that he would never be a slave to anyone or anything again except for his own little caprices." (91)

Even the two ex-prostitutes reacquire some of their old manners and the provocative expression of their youth: "The old, familiar expression returned to Gertie's and Sally's faces, the expression they had worn when they were elegant young women, soliciting discreetly for customers." (82) The balance achieved by Sally and Gertie at the beginning of the story is broken, and the Dionysian emerges again, transforming their faces back to what they once were.

Thus, the closer we get to the end of the novel, the more Badenheim turns into a place where laughter, joy, sadness, and sorrow mingle with each other, where chaos prevails, and where the vacationers lose themselves in Dionysian oblivion: “Samitzky remembered a song people had sung in Poland when he was a child, and the tune took hold of him like fire [...] Gertie rolled on the floor like a ball and nobody seemed surprised.” (109).

Nietzsche and the role of Greek tragedy

We have seen that according to Nietzsche, the Dionysian experience involves the individual feeling all the sufferings and chaos of existence. This understanding is sublimated by the Apollonian through the medium of myth. Tragedy, with its representations of myths, is an Apollonian symbolization of the Dionysian experience. The myths expressed in tragedy convey the Dionysian wisdom, even though the apparent message of the play may seem to be Apollonian.

The Apollonian serves as a superficial layer of meaning, built upon a more profound Dionysian one that is present only as a symbol. The deepest layer tells the story of the horrific knowledge that the hero acquires about the world after his encounter with what Nietzsche refers to as "the primordial nature." This knowledge is concealed by the Apollonian's apparent meaning of the tragedy – the magnificent completion of the events, the concatenation of the plot, and the dialectic of the story.

Scholars Burnham and Jesinghausen explain that modern Greek tragedy operates as an allegory, drawing upon the underlying layer of tragic myth while at the same time hiding it within its external symbolic representation. The tragic myth cannot be explicit in the play, as the play's purpose is to bring the audience close to, but also shield them from, this truth. [29]

The truth about reality is darkness, pain, and suffering – a darkness hidden behind the Apollonian Greek serenity. This harmony is not a natural state, but rather the result of a struggle. It is a mask, a sublimation that enables us to survive the horrific insights we have into existence. Thus, to Nietzsche, the tragic myth is the Apollonian's concealed description of humankind's terrible fate. The myth saves us from the universality of Dionysian suffering, reducing it to the individual suffering of the hero at the center of the tragedy. The Apollonian lifts the individual up and blinds them to the universality of the Dionysian process, leading them to the delusion that they are only witnessing one image of the world. The music in the tragedy only serves to enhance the experience, adding greater profundity. [30]

Thus, to Nietzsche, the Dionysian, when it forms a synthesis with the Apollonian, manifests as a myth that expresses mythical knowledge, characterized by a sense of horror and despair, and a passivity towards life. If Dionysius and Apollo are successfully brought into alignment in a tragedy, the result is a transformation of this horrific understanding into an affirmation of some kind. The dreadfulness and chaos that arise do not sap the audience's strength, paralyze its will, or lead to demoralization, but rather invigorate the audience and push them to continue living. Appreciating tragedy requires great strength, as it brings us so close to the fundamental horror of things. However, if one can tolerate this, the result is an increase, rather than a decrease, in one's ability to live life to the fullest.

The role of art *in Badenheim 1939* and *Beyond Despair*

I argue that in the Dionysian state of despair which assails the Badenheimers, the only way for the vacationers to comfort themselves and for a moment re-establish the lost Apollonian and Dionysian harmony is through art. It is art that they crave, and which they believe to be the only thing that can save them:

> The drugs ran out and the people sank into themselves, into their sadness. Despair now stared from every wall. If only the festival could be revived! Was there no chance of reviving the festival? The drug they had become accustomed to over the years, it was this drug they now craved above all. Dr. Pappenheim stood by the great artist's floor and begged: 'Just one concert, just one, have mercy on us. (109-110)

We can see here that art is the only means by which the vacationers may survive the terrific Dionysian experience they undergo, mitigating those terrible feelings. Art was "the drug they had become accustomed to over the years,"(110) and it allowed them to achieve the perfect balance between the Dionysian and the Apollonian. This is why they are so desperate to revive the festival, as they are searching for the Greek equilibrium that will save them from the chaotic and profound Dionysian abyss in which they are falling. The role of art for the Badenheimers reminds us of the role that tragic art had, according to Nietzsche, for the ancient Greeks. Tragic art, as we have seen, allowed the Greeks to embrace the Dionysian aspect of life without succumbing to it.

It is interesting to note that the artists selected by Dr. Pappenheim to perform in the city delve into themes of despair, death, sickness, and the horrors of life, much like the subjects of Greek tragedy:

> At the end of April the two readers arrived. […] They were tall and thin and had a monkish look. Rilke was their passion. Dr Pappenheim, who had discovered them in Vienna, immediately sensed the morbid melody throbbing in their voices and was fascinated. (117)

The voices belong to twin brothers. Their behavior is considered morbid, and they show interest in the pains and the most terrible aspects of life. The two twins and their performance may symbolize the combination of the Apollonian and Dionysian aspects in an ideal work of art:

> The reader were twin brothers who during the course of the years had become indistinguishable. But the way they read was different; it was as if their sickness had two voices. The voice of the first was soft and conciliatory; […] The second voice was clear and sharp. (18)

The first twin's voice reminds us of a sense of primordial unity, which is characteristic of the Dionysian experience. Meanwhile, the second twin, with his clear voice, evokes the formal clarity associated with the Apollonian. Through their collaboration, the twins' voices—the Apollonian and the Dionysian—achieve the great sublimation and harmony epitomized by Greek tragedy.

It is worth underlining that the twins have a strong interest in Rilke, a Bohemian-Austrian poet and novelist who draws heavily from Nietzsche's writing. Kaufmann notes that both Rilke and Nietzsche value "Dionysian poetry," a type of poetry that embraces suffering as part of life. Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche's Dionysian affirmation of life with all its pain is unique and not found in German literature or any other literature before him. However, it is the central mood in Rilke's elegies and sonnets.[31] Therefore, the twins' art and lyrics, like Rilke's, celebrate the agony of life through the formal harmony of the lyrics, making it bearable. This kind of Dionysian art was used by Dr. Pappenheim to achieve a balance between the Apollonian and Dionysian, which the vacationers desire.

Thus, art appears to serve as a means for the Badenheimers to confront the terror and despair brought on by the Holocaust without being overwhelmed by it. Art offers a form of solace, allowing them to confront and yet avoid the abyss into which they are falling.

Appelfeld and the Role of Art

I suggest that the role that art plays in Badenheim for the vacationers is similar to the function of literature for Appelfeld. Through writing stories about the Holocaust, Appelfeld processes the senseless, horrific, and dark experience of the chaos of the Holocaust by transforming it into an Apollonian form. Appelfeld often describes his personal experience of the Holocaust as a Dionysian one, characterized by the loss of individuality, fusion with nature, and senselessness:

> We spent close to three years in the forests. It's strange to say, but now when we remember them, we feel no bitterness. That was a kind of childhood where reality and legend were intertwined, where the body got to know the cold of the nights, learned how to overcome fear, and how to get food from the earth—quite literally. In those years, we learned from the trees and streams. Our parents had left us and gone away, and sometimes it seemed as if we had been born there, as if the earth had given birth to us." (22)

For Appelfeld, the Holocaust was an experience of the absurd and the incomprehensible chaos and horror of existence:

> All that was revealed to the Jews during those years exceeded the limits of their logic or the capacity of their souls. It was, in essence, the realm of horror, and when they left it, they only sought to see it as a nightmare, a disruption in their lives that must be quickly healed.[32]

The role of art after the Holocaust and about the Holocaust becomes therefore for Appelfeld – similarly to the role Greek tragedy had for the Greeks – the medium which allows him to connect with the horrific and chaotic experience of the Holocaust and its incomprehensibility, while at the same time not being overwhelmed by it. Literature gives the incomprehensible events of the Holocaust a consequential and logical framework which make them tolerable,[33] Appelfeld himself writes about his book *Tzili, the Story of a Life*:

> The reality of the Holocaust surpassed any imagination. If I remained true to the facts, no one would believe me. But in the moment I choose a girl, a little older than I was at the time, I removed 'the story of my life' from the mighty grip of memory and gave it over to the creative laboratory.[34]

Moreover, literature rehabilitates the role of the individual, which was lost during the Holocaust, saving them from oblivion. Art gives back to the individual their identity that was stolen and makes their pain expressible and bearable. This process is similar to the one that occurs in Greek tragedy where, after the profound Dionysian experience of unity, the Greeks are saved and reconnected to their individuality through the story of a single hero:

> Who can restore the violated honour of the self? I cannot claim that art is all-powerful, magic, or pure faith, but one virtue cannot be denied it: its loyalty to the individual, its devotion to his suffering and fears, and a bit of light which occasionally sparkles within him. All true art tirelessly teaches that the whole world rest upon the individual.[35]

Art returns us to the individual and thus rescues us from the Dionysian destruction caused by the merging of individuals and nature. As a result, literature about the Holocaust becomes a means for Appelfeld to confront the horrors of the Holocaust and its incomprehensibility without surrendering to it. [36] This is why Appelfeld vehemently criticized the testimonial literature that emerged after the Holocaust. [37] Testimonial literature is not a means of facing the experience of the Holocaust, but rather a form of suppression:[38]

> The survivor himself was the first, in the weakness of his own hand and in the denial of his own experiences, to create the strange plural voice of memoirist, which is nothing but externalization open externalization, so that what is within will never be revealed.[39]

This form of literature tries to reconstruct the events of the Holocaust in a rational, Socratic manner, but at the same time negates its Dionysian aspects, which are dreadfully illogical. Against this type of literature, Appelfeld creates his stories and novels.

Appelfeld's literary works are not only a means of elaboration for the author himself, but also a tool for the Jewish people and the world as a whole to confront the horrors and sufferings of the Holocaust. By reading Appelfeld's fiction, the reader is exposed to the darkness of the Holocaust, but instead of being consumed by it, he is rescued by the logical framework in which the story is constructed and brought back to the individual story of the protagonist, just before sinking into the abyss.

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[1] David B. Dennis in David B. Dennis, “Culture War: How the Nazi Party Recast Nietzsche,” *Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities* 35, no. 1 (February 2014), notes that during World War II, the Nazi regime selectively adopted Nietzsche's work as a cultural and propagandistic tool. However, fitting Nietzsche's complex ideas into a single worldview was no easy feat, and the mission of the editors and writers of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi's main newspaper at the time, was to make Nietzsche's work appear to coordinate with the main tenets of Nazism. Despite this, Nietzsche himself had a critical view of nationalism and the German state, believing that nationalism was a dogma that required limitations and seeing it as the "illness of the century" because it attempted to hide its emptiness. Therefore, the Nazi's use of Nietzsche's work was a selective interpretation. On the issue of the Nazi regime's adoption and use of Nietzschean philosophical concepts, Charles M. Yablon, “Nietzsche and the Nazis: The Impact of National Socialism on the Philosophy of Nietzsche,” *Cardozo Law Review* 24 (2003), https://larc.cardozo.yu.edu/faculty-articles/216 examines the extensive adoption, interpretation, and use of Nietzschean philosophy by the Nazi regime, which influenced subsequent interpretations of Nietzsche's philosophy. Furthermore, Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Standford: Stanford University Press, 2004) discusses how the regime used allusions to great artists and their works as propaganda to remind the German people to love and worship their nation and make the "genius of the race visible to that race." Consider also: David B. Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture* (Loyola University, 2015). For more on Nietzsche's relationship with the Jewish question and the Jewish people independently from the Nazi’s interpretation see Robert C. Holub, “Nietzsche and the Jewish Question,” *New German Critique* 66 (1995): 91–121 who provides insightful analysis. Other articles worth considering include Arnold M. Eisen, “Nietzsche and the Jews Reconsidered,” *Jewish Social Studies* 48, no. 1 (1986): 1–14, Jacob Golomb, “Nietzsche’s Judaism of Power,” *Revue Des Études Juives* 147 (1988): 353–85; Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews: His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth* (Albany: SUNY, 1994); Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Anarchist,* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975), 43-46; Michael F. Duffy and Willard Mittelman,

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"Nietzsche's Attitudes Toward the Jews," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 2 (1988): 301–17;.

[2] Chaya Shacham, "Mavet beʿir qit: Hanovelot *"Badehaim, ʿir Nofesh"* leAppelfeld ve *Mavet beVenetsiyah* leThomas Mann - ʿIyyun mashveh besefer hebetim janerim vetematiyim," In *Ben kefor le ʿashan*, ed. Yitzhak Ben-Mordechai and Iris Parush, eds. (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Publishing House, 1997), 181-193.

[3] In Yigal Schwarz's book *Omanut hasippur shel Aharon Appelfeld*, one of the main characteristics of Appelfeld's writing is what he calls the "Lot's Wife Syndrome," which refers to a strong attachment to a traumatic past, including the existence of Jews in Central Europe before the Holocaust and Appelfeld's own Jewish family in Bukovina. For more information on the "Lot's Wife Syndrome," see Yigal Schwartz's article "Lo Apollo velo Alik: Aharon Appelfeld: Re'ayon umasat mavo," *Qol haʿir,* September 6, 1991. Regarding Appelfeld's worldview on the connection of his stories to different historical periods, see the articles by Hillel Barzel, "Nusaḥo shel Aharon Appelfeld," *Gazit* 29 (1973),19-27 and Gershon Shaked, "Bekhol dor vador ḥayav adam lirʾot et ʿatsmo," *Haaretz*, July 27, 1994.

[4] Regarding the chaos and indefinite aspect of Appelfeld works consider Lily Rattok, *Bayit ʿal belimah: Omanut hasippur shel A. Appelfeld* (Tel Aviv: Ḥeqer, 1989), 51-53.

[5] Schwartz in *Omanut hasippur*, 261 emphasizes the sense of guilt that permeates the novel. For farther readings on the novella *Badenheim 1939* consider: Naomi Hetherington, "Holocaust fiction: a review of Aharon Appelfeld's Badenheim 1939 and Amos Oz's Touch the water, touch the wind." *The Journal of Holocaust education*, 5 (1996), 49-60; Moshe Pelli, "Premonition and Illusion in the Pre-Holocaust years in *Badenheim 1939*," In *The shadow of Death: Letters in Flames* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2008), 23-32; Avraham Hagorni, "Safrut o safrut hashoʾah," *Moznayim* 52 246-247; Moshe Pelli, "Ḥidalon veʾashlayah beterem hashoʾah," *Hadoar* 60/20 (1981), 312-313; Chaya Shacham, "Dibbur kaful: Le baʿayat halashon uviqqoret halashon be Badenhaim, ʿir nofesh" leAharon Appelfeld," in *Biqqoret ufarshanut: Ktav et lemehkar safrut am Israel* 28 (1991), 71-81.

[6] Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 61. Similar readings of *Badenheim, 1939* include: Gila Ramras-Rauch, *Aharon Appelfeld: The Holocaust and Beyond* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 135–42; Daniel R. Schwarz, *Imagining the Holocaust* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 252– 59.

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[7] Emily Miller Budick, *Aharon Appelfeld's Fiction: Acknowledging the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 28.

[8] Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions*, 81 argues that the characters in the novel lack understanding and personality, as presented by grotesque representations. He claims that this is to avoid the documentary genre and the historical context of the Holocaust. This article tries to show that the characters in the novel are much less superficial and static that may seem. Consider also: Roy Arthur Swanson, "Michael André Bernstein, Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History" review of *Foregone conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History*, by Michael André Bernstein, *The International Fiction Review*, 1995, 94.

[9] In a way, the Apollonian order represents a specific aspect of German culture, such as a fondness for structure, timeliness, logic. However, it is eventually supplanted by another manifestation of German culture, namely the romantic tradition, which sentimental and instinctive.

[10] For an analysis of the meaning of the end of the story in Badhenahim consider: Oren Yosef, "Diyun be-"masot beguf rishon.", "Keishon haayin.", "*Badenhaim, ʿir nofesh*", "1946", "Adanei ha-nahar", "Ha'or vehakutonet", ve"Hakutonet vehapasim," in *Ishtaqfut hagoral hayehudi besipurei Aharon Appelfeld*, (Rishon LeZion: Yahad, 1987), 67-97.

[11] On the place of trauma in Appelfeld works consider: Yochai Oppenheimer and Ktzia Alon, *Omanut hasimptom, qriot beyetsirotav shel Aharon Appelfeld* (Tel Aviv: Gama, 2012), 13-47; See also: Rina Dudai, "Hasafa hapoetit keemtsayi lehitmodedut im hatrauma shel ha-shoʿah bektivatam shel Levi veshel Appelfeld," in *The World of Aharon Appelfeld: a selection of essays on his works*, eds. Risa Domb, Ilana Rosen, Itzhak Ben-Mordechai (Ben Gurion University, Keter and Cambridge University, 2005), 101-110.

[12] Shacham, *"Mavet beʿir qit*, 181.

[13] *Reayon leDror Mishani, bein rehavia lemea shearim,* 21.9.2002 https://www.haaretz.co.il/1.1558539

[14] On this issue consider note 1

[15] Shacham, "*Mavet beʿir qit*,192.

[16]Julie Park, "'The Stranger God' and the 'Artistic Socrates': On Nietzsche and Plato in Thomas Mann's Death in Venice," *TRADITION & RENEWAL*, 2018, 27.

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[17] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* and the Case of Wagner, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 1. This book's quotations are followed by the chapter number instead of the page number.

[18] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1.

[19] The perspective presented here diverges significantly from the traditional understanding of dreams, particularly as espoused by Freud, in which dreams are typically regarded as a domain of the unconscious and characterized by unrestrained chaos. See Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Anthony Storr, *Freud: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxofrd and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[20] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*,1.

[21] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1.

[22] Tobias Dahlkvist, *Nietzsche and the Philosophy of Pessimism: A Study of Nietzsche's Relation to the Pessimistic Tradition* (Uppsala University: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2007), 147-63.

[23] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1.

[24] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1.

[25] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy,* 98.

[26] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy,* 98.

[27] On the geographical space that serves as a background for Appelfeld's stories and on their alienation from their historical and social context see Schwartz, *Omanut hasippur*, 63-151.

[28] (my italics).

[29] Douglas Burnham and Martin Jesinghausen, *Nietzsche's' The Birth of Tragedy': A Reader's Guide* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010), 82.

[30] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 21.

[31] Walter Kaufman, "Nietzsche and Rilke," *The Kenyon Review* 17, no. 1 (1955): 15.

[32] Aharon Appelfeld, *Masot beguf rishon*, 16.

[33] Schwartz in *Omanut hasippur,* 25 argues that: "In other contexts, Appelfeld said that in his stories he again tries to create a kind of "reconstruction" of the world in which he lived in his early years, a large-scale "reconstruction" [...] that is not based on real memorie." On the topic of reconstruction in Appelfeld stories consider: Yifat Nevo, "Haim regilim, sipurim regilim: siha im Aharon Appelfeld im qabalat pras rosh hamemshala" *Davar* 11.7.1969; Ester Fuchs, "Thematic Distraction: Structural

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Underpinnings in the writings of Aharon Appelfeld," *Hebrew Studies* 23 (1982): 223-227; Shlomit Gingold-Gilboa "Bein trauma lemudaut," *Iton 77* (1983): 28-29; Naama Gutkind, "Aaron Appelfeld – diuqano shel oman keed shoah," *Hatzofe*, 25.4.1969.

[34] Appelfeld*, Beyond Despair*, 68-69.

[35] Ibid, 22.

[36] Regarding Appelfeld's choices of events and themes to write about, S.Shifra "Hayeholet lihiot – hayeholet lishkoah," *Masa*, 27.10.1975. See also: Lily Rattok, *Bayit ʿal Belima*, 65-88.

[37] On Appelfeld, testimony literature and the place of the mythos in his works consider: Shalom Kramer, "Metsiut veagada besipurav" In *Realism veshvirato: al mesaprim ivriyim Mignessin ad Appelfeld* (Tel Aviv: The Writers' Association in Israel Near Masada Publishing, 1968), 203–206.

[38] On the place of the memory of the Holocaust in Appelfeld thought consider: Sidra Ezrahi "Aharon Appelfeld: The Search for a Language," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 1 (1984): 366-380; Gila Ramras-Rauch, *Aharon Appelfeld: The Holocaust and Beyond*, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994),10-16. See also Moria Rahmani, "Hamakom hameushan: yahasei zikaron, shiheha vezehut beyetsirato shel Appelfeld," *Kivunim Hadashim* 32 (2015): 244-252.

[39] Ibid, 14