

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Modernism and Decadence in Mann's *Death in Venice*

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By

Khada Nanda Silwal

Central Department of English

Kirtipur

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TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**Faculty of Humanities and Social Science**

This thesis entitled "**Modernism and Decadence in Mann's *Death in Venice***" submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Khada Nanda Silwal, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of Research Committee,

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head of the

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Khada Nanda Silwal

Abstract

This thesis makes a study of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* in term of personal decadence of an artist in modern society. It presents the artistic decadence of a modern artist who is menaced by his very love of beauty, and is always prone to forget his responsibility to himself, his kind, above all his society. The novel, in fact, is the unsettling story of deeply disturbed principal character, Aschenbach, portraying his soul rending conflict between art and life. Keeping his artistic career, social norms, values and responsibility at the bay, he is totally captivated by the beauty of the boy. He exposes his extreme passion for the boy that leads him to his tragic end.

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CHAPTER - I

Introduction

This thesis makes a study of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* in terms of personal decadence of an artist in modern society. It also presents the artistic decadence of an artist in modern society. Such decadence of an artist is driven by a sense of extreme passion to fulfill his desire through beauty, but unfortunately the protagonist becomes a slave of his passion, stripped of his dignity and degraded in the society. In terms of the new knowledge, the novel seeks to relate it to the special interest and inescapable modern life, in the faith of personal desire and even shows how modern gentleman are conditioned by the reflexes and complexes.

Mann's *Death in Venice* was written in 1912 and published in 1913 when the whole Europe was indulged in the devastating First World War. The consequence of the war created frustration, alienation, identity crisis, faithlessness among people. During that period, the Europeans were highly frightened by the war which might take place again. It brought a sense of identity crisis among European artists of the time Mann's novel is characterized by subtle philosophical examination of his characters presented, who are undertaken in a detached, often ironic narrative voice. Its final destination is basically tragic. This novel presents the conflict between art and life in relation to such philosophic vision.

The present novel is not only representative of some of the issues treated in Mann's personal body of work, it also reflects many of the most vital ideas discussed in literature during the time of its composition. At the turn of the century, many European writers expressed a biting awareness of cultural and personal decadence,

social and moral decline. Literature of the era also mostly focused on the issues of destruction.

Mann's esteemed novel *Death in Venice* assimilates the tendency of the European society during the terrestrial war and consequences that the war produced. European mind was debased by the war and created the frustration, alienation among European society. The writers of the period were taken as the paragon of solemn dignity and fastidious self discipline. Determinedly cerebral and duty bound, they believed that true art is produced on in defiant despite of corrupting passion and physical weakness.

The novel has shown the central problem of modern life during twentieth century. Its hero reflects the very problem of modern life. He is a gap between what he is and what he is striving for. He is therefore, a tragic man to have been living in a whirlpool. He is a creature living in a thought tormented age. He is perplexed with new ideologies propped up in between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

Death in Venice is the story of Aschenbach, a fictitious German Writer in his early fifties whose self discipline makes him a man who has sacrificed everything for the sake of literary achievement. Having suppressed his emotional for too long, he goes on a trip to Venice ignoring all the warning of Venetian officials. As the novel unfolds Aschebanch's decisions become less clear cut and more hazardous. Then is choice of Venice, and of the rogue gondolier; the choice of escape from Venice; the destiny courted and gladly accepted in the end.

With the majestic compositional scheme, Mann enables him to escape the confusion and distraction of contemporaneity, and clearly to disengage his timeless

values and reveal the timeless laws of human life. The problem that has always concerned him: the menace of beauty, the abyss surrounding the artistic temperament, the relation of the artist to his society. He is too superior to his character and has too explicitly in the attitude.

The masterpiece creation of Mann's *Death in Venice*, is vast record of Mann's deepest experience; it is a magnificent work of art that constantly suggests even more than it expresses. It carries an enormous weight of fact and thought of contemporary modern Europeans. Despite his seeming artlessness and his old fashioned intimacy with his character and reader, Mann is a self-conscious and sensitive to woven the modernistic technique. Moreover, the novel is a profound work about art, beauty and love and taken as one of the best creations of twentieth century which is perfectly structured in its composition. It exposes the passion and its effect in the man. And it also shows how passion and quest for beauty simultaneously proceeds till the end of novel. Though he contains excessive passion for beauty, he ultimately fails to fulfill his intense desire.

Thomas Mann, therefore, contrary to his avant-grade literary contemporaries, does not rule out the possibility that man even today may develop his latent capacities and thereby right to enjoy his personal existence. He shows us the tragic and its conquest in the self-enjoyment of a realized personality. Its hero Gustav von Aschenbach was the poet, spokesman of all those who are already worn out but still hold themselves upright, of all modern moralizers of accomplishment. So, it is the common problems of modern artist who are helpless to develop their artistic career

into profession despite their restrained emotion. The main character himself represents this very problem.

The novel also exposes the decadent concept on the artist's mind who was misled by huge passion to satisfy his intention of fulfilling his motif through the beauty of the Polish boy, Tadzio. But unfortunately, the artist is dominated by his passion of beauty and misplaces his own dignity that also degrades his reputation, moral standard that ends in his ultimate collapse.

The unrest of soul and obsession with decadence, the artist, Aschenbach, ruins himself. So, the novel typically expresses the catastrophe taken by modern hero. And also shows the challenges taken by modern hero who declines or vanishes from social reputation and category. The novel not only presents the personal decadence of an artist in modern society but also indicates the reality of whole modern intellectuals.

The novel turns on a view of human relationship which has been a minority report in the past twenty years. This is the notion that the self is the sole source of its own laws and the sole arbiter—its own Judge, its own appeal court, its own god. It is followed that relationship have become a matter of need, not of homage. And increasingly modern psychology has certainly been influential of biological need. The self rejecting all external bearings, including good sense and decency, has harvested sexual sufferings on the grandest scale.

Although the text has been studied, praised appreciated and interpreted from different perspectives. The common issue of this novel is personal decadence. This issue has not yet been elaborated to a greater extent. Therefore, this research aims it

changing into completion. The introduction of what the whole thesis is going to be about has been discussed so far. Now, in next paragraph a brief outline of the present study that has been divided into four chapters will be presented.

The first chapter represents an introductory outline of the present study. A synopsis of entire work is figured out in this chapter. The second chapter is the discussion of theoretical modality that is going to be applied in this research. It explains shortly the issue of modernism and decadence; the especial emphasis is given to personal decadence of an artist who wrestles with the peculiar problem that is minaced by his very love of beauty; the artist is always prone to forget his responsibility to him self, to his kind, above all his society. Based on the theoretical modality outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter will be the analysis of the text in considerable length. Some extracts from the text will be taken out as evidence to prove the hypothesis of this study. Under this chapter, the study will focus on Aschenbach the central character of the novel. He will be portrait as tragic hero who is utterly ruined due to his excessive passion for beauty. The fourth chapter will be the conclusion of this research. Based on the textual analysis of the third chapter, it will conclude the explanation and arguments and will show the novel as a modernist text.

CHAPTER - II

Modernism and Decadence

Europe during the early phase of twentieth century produced a civilization that became a high point of world history. European civilization was imitated almost everywhere on earth and the dominated world commerce, finance, knowledge and culture generally. But the most intelligent cultivated and sensitive Europeans were deeply dissatisfied with the achievements of their vaunted civilization. They knew that something was dreadfully wrong. But in the field of literature the period has been viewed from different perspectives. Some literary historians locate the modernism revolt as far back as 1890s but most agree that high modernism marked by an the rapidity of change, came after the first world war.

The term modernism itself is an umbrella term and as such can be explained from various perspectives. The catastrophe of war has shaken faith in the continuity of western civilization and raised doubt about the traditional literary modes to represent the fearsome and harsh realities of the post world war. Futility and anarchy became main Ethos of contemporary history.

The term is discussed as a literary movement or period that one calls modernism. Modernism is viewed as a literary phenomenon and as a reflection of recent historical developments. It is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the present century. The specific features signified by modernism varies with the past, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate

and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art but of Western culture in general.

In the past hundred years we have had a special kind of literature. We call it modern and distinguish it from the merely contemporary; for where the contemporary refers to time, the modern refers to sensibility and style whereas the contemporary is a term of neutral reference, the modern is a term of critical placement and judgment. The writing of the period rendered contemporary disorder, often contrasting it to a lost order and integration that had been based on the religion and the myths of the past. *The Waste Land* is a typical example of it where Eliot through poetic language presents fragmented utterances, a deliberate dislocation of past and diverse components which are related by connections. Therefore, *The Waste Land* is a collage and as such a masterpiece of confusion. The new forms of construction, verse prose, and narrative were eliminated and carried further. It violated the standard conventions of melody, harmony, and music. Modernist writing is characterized by its emphasis on form rather than its content. Different techniques in literary writing were innovated during the time of modernism such as collage, stream of consciousness technique etc. Joyce's *Ulysses* is a typical example of stream of consciousness technique. Whatever happens, happens only in the mind of the hero which is one of the typical trends of modernist writing. So does the central character in Mann's *Death in Venice*.

Modern literature is almost always difficult to comprehend: that is a sign of its modernity. To the established guardians of culture, the modern writer seems willfully inaccessible. He works with unfamiliar forms: he chooses subjects that

disturb the audience and threaten its most cherished sentiments; he provokes traditionalist critics to such epithets as unwholesome, coterie and decadent.

The modern can be defined in terms of what it is not: the embodiment of tacit polemic. An inclusive negative modern writers find that they begin to work at a moment when the culture is marked by a prevalent style of perception and feeling, and their modernity consist in a revolt against this prevalent style, an unyielding rage against the official order. But modernism does not establish a prevalent style of its own; or it does, it denies itself, thereby ceasing to be modern.

Modernism indeed never comes to an end, or at least we do not really know, as yet, neither it can nor will come its end. This history of previous literary period is relevant but probably not decisive here, since modernism, despite the precursors one can find in the past, is a novelty in a development of western culture. What we do know, however, is that modernism can fall upon days of exhaustion, when it appears to be marking time and waiting for new avenues of release.

The most recent modernism simply makes an abstract opposition between tradition and the present; and we are, in a way, still the contemporaries of that kind of aesthetic modernity which first appeared in the midst of the nineteenth century. Since then, the distinguishing mark of works which count as modern is the new which will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style.

A modernist culture soon learns to respect, even to cherish, signs of its division. It seems doubtful as form of health. It haunts for ethical norms through underground journeys, experiments, within sensation and a mocking suspension of accredited values.

Subjectivity becomes the typical condition of the modern outlook. In its early stages, when it does not trouble to disguise its filial dependence on the romantic poets, modernism declares itself as a inflation of the self, a transcendental and orgiastic aggrandizement of matter, and event in behalf of personal vitality. In the middle stage, the self begins to recoil from externality and devotes itself, almost as if it were the world's body, to a minute examination of its own inner dynamics: freedom, compulsion, caprice.

There exists certain dilemma regarding modernism, the Marxist critic George Lukacs has charged modernism as:

Modernism despairs of human history, abandons the idea of a linear historical development, fall back upon nations of a universal condition humane or rhythm of eternal recurrence, yet within its own realm is committed to ceaseless change, turmoil and recreation. (Essay on Thomas Mann 17)

Basically, the modernism can be understood with the problem is in largest aspect the decay of faith and the confusion of tongues: the loss of certitudes in the high matters of religion and ethics, the widespread disagreement about first principles in life as in literature, the need for trans-valuation in all spheres of thought. It is the problem of how to live and what to live for once a livelihood has been assured. Most obviously, science has introduced new knowledge that has undermined certain faiths, corroded the feeling of the transcendent of human destiny. More significantly, it has introduced new modes of thought and new condition of living, weakening the habit

of faith and breaking up the settled way of life in which faith can most easily take root.

In the ways of modernistic vision, one may distrust the rational of science; one can not play fast and loose with it. In a world everything is questioned and nothing agreed upon the position of the artist is clearly a difficult one. The responsible artist stands alone in a shifting world with the winds of a hundred doctrines howling about him. There is no firmly established school to nurture. He has in real sense been cut off from the past. It remains his primary business to find meanings and values, but it can refer to no fixed points and take nothing for granted. He can not even assume the importance of what he is trying to do. Art itself may seem to him merely a childish compensation for psychic frustration.

The search for new forms is not the result of mere boredom, nor the energy that activates it merely feverish. It is the very necessary adjustment to new conception of reality, the very necessary effort to provide a scheme of orientation. One likes to think that we are sowing the seeds of a splendid new epoch; and one can not think that all this bold and brilliant experiment will come to nothing. Mean while it is at least exhilarating in modernity.

Throughout modernism one finds too much of intensity without warmth, of strength without assurance, of tumult without depth, at best of depth without breadth. Wholeness and heartiness have departed with the simplicities of the old faiths. Hence, writer attempt to return to these faiths. T. S. Eliot's effort to exorcise the demons of modernity by pronouncing old formulas (Classicist in literature, Royalist in politics, Anglo-Catholic in Religion) is most famous, but Yeats and Ezra pound in

poetry, Sigrid Undset and of late Willa Cather in the novel, the new humanist in criticism, have also packed up their mental luggage and taken out of the waste land of their society into the past into romantic legend and classic doctrine, into the arms of the church.

Modernism is in one sense an escape – a escape from the temporal into the universal, from the particular into the ideal – and to turns one's back upon interests and ideals of which one disapproves is not only natural but sensible. The important question in modernism is simply escape from what and into what. No less symptomatic of the spiritual chaos of the modern world, however, it is the tendency towards the exclusive cultivation of individuality, the retreat from social ideals or any collectivity ideology.

Modernism has created a heterogeneous society in which the trunk lines of communication have been cut across at a hundred points and finally become tangle in a maze. Its findings are still fragmentary, confusing and do not adequately replace the meaning and values it has weakened and destroyed. Its triumphant march falters at a critical moment, it does not itself give satisfying answer to the final questions that men put. So, the sterility threatens its practitioners in their creativity.

In modernistic era, everything has become immensely complicated and uncertain, the community of man still not an ideal but a fact, if at times a depressing one. Of course, it is a very sketchy picture of the modern literary world. One might point out various rashes on its surface: the weary sophisticates who cultivate the wry into their beer; the hard-boiled school, the hundred little Hemingway who have cut only the externals of the master's manner and whose strength is so often the strength

of cheese; and the faddists generally, who strike poses too numerous and too silly to mention.

In many ways modernism has promising talents been diverted into some form of futility or absurdity. It is profitless to follow into the bogs and sands all the muddy streams that stream from the center dilemma. It has attempted only to state in general terms the nature of this dilemma and a few of its important consequences.

Concerning the same, the other entire spokesman drew the same familiar picture of uncertainty and confusion. All spoke of a period of transition, most of them hopefully; but all left open the question of transition to what.

The practical problems of modernity that confront the spiritual distresses of this generation suggest a colic rather than a cancer, they are more painful than necessarily fatal, and they have been aggravated by a post war fever of disillusionment, a malady familiar enough in human history. History gives, indeed, sufficient warrant for viewing this period as a period of transition and not as a prelude to damnation, at worst as a purgatory not as a hell. These lamentations are again the sign of growing pains in a changing world, of minds left tender and exposed by the sloughing off of old beliefs before new ones have hardened into a comfortably tight shell. On the basis of mentioned lines Herbert J. Muller says:

. . . Indeed be less plastic, and its disruptive forces may finally prove unmanageable; but there is as yet no logical necessity for assuming the worst and calling for sack cloth and ashes. One would suspect those who are conducting the last rites of arts if only they make so such clamour over the corpses. Their skepticism is too dynamic, their

despair too contentions. Mean while the corpses continue to show
many sings of vigorous lie. (Modern Fiction 19)

We can not simply wave way the painful disharmonies of the modern world as were spasm in the organic evolution of human history, for they are our spasms. We can not view them loftily as mere illusion of time order, for we are ourselves of this order and we live in time. At present we are still in the wilderness and the groping in the dim light.

Modern Literature

Mostly, the modernist literature consists of chaotic situation which creates confusion in its necessary meaning. The nineteenth century literature is still relatively susceptible of neat summary and category owes chiefly to the hold of tradition; the ferment was only beginning, artist had but a glimmering awareness of what was happening. In the twentieth century this ferment exploded in a burst of centrifugal activity. We face today an extraordinary purpose, way of life-diversity less between than within classes. The intellectual as well as industrial world becomes daily specialized; new points of view multiply as rapidly as mechanical gadgets. These things do not speak our language which represents profound dilemma of modern literature.

In much modernist literature, one finds a bitter impatient with the whole apparatus of cognition and the limiting assumption of rationality. The mind comes to be seen as an enemy of vital human powers. Culture becomes disenchanted with itself, sick over its endless refinements. But if a major impulse in modernist literature is a choking Nausea before the idea of culture, there is another in which the writer

takes upon himself the enormous ambition not to remake the world but to reinvent the terms of reality.

In modern literature, the modern artist seems thrown back upon his own resources. He has at once the privilege and the burden of almost complete freedom in choice of materials and methods. The result has been an immense and daring experimentation that makes this one of the most exciting of literary periods. Modern literature is no longer an art of fixed forms or contents or appropriate imitation, but an endless, ever changing scripture and revelation, the scripture and revelation of the life of man.

Everyday sees another refinement of the technique of communicating experience and intensifying consciousness. Everyday another banner is raised, another company goes whooping into battle. Now materials are unearthed new devices tried out, and the old art forms are constantly wrenched into new shapes freighted with new meaning, shanghaied under new flags. Therefore, modern literature is as fluid and intricate as life itself.

A modern writer with the modern spirit will be predisposed toward experiment, not only because he needs to make a visibly dramatic break from tradition, yet it is an error and an error indulging the modernist desire to exempt from historical inquiry to suppose that where one sees the tokens of experiment there must also be the vision of the modern.

The rise of the avant-garde becomes a special caste which attributes modernism, forming a kind of permanent if unacknowledged and disorganized opposition. The modernist writers and artists constitute a special caste within or at

the margin of society, and avant-garde marked by aggressive defensiveness, extreme self consciousness, pathetic inclination and the stigma of alienation. The avant-garde, therefore, abandons the useful pieties towards received esthetic assumptions. The modernist literature apprehended with an unrivaled power the collapse of traditional liberalism, its lapse into formalism ignoring both the possibilities of both the possibilities of human grandeur and the needs of human survival is not to be questioned.

Modernist writing shows that twentieth century man has lost a meaningful world and a self which lives in meanings out of spiritual center. It exposes that man has sacrificed himself to his own productions. But man still aware of what he has lost or continuously losing. He reacts with the courage of despair. Art and literature can show their ambiguous structure: the meaninglessness which drives to despair. They reject as meaningless the meaningful attempt to reveal the meaninglessness of our situation. The anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness is, as we have seen, the anxiety of our period. The feeling of meaninglessness became despairing and self destructive. On the basis of existentialism, the great art, literature, philosophy reveals the courage to face the things as they are and to express the anxiety of meaninglessness.

In modernist literature, the problem of belief becomes exacerbated, sometimes to the point of dismissal. At a time, when there are numbers of competing who would look each radically in conflict with the other, there arises severe difficulties in trying to relate the tacit but controlling assumptions of the writer to those of the reader. The reader bonds of premise between the two are broken, and must now become a matter

of inquiry, effort, conflict. The problem appears with great force in the early phases in the modernist period and is then reflected in the criticism of T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards; but after there arises a new impulse to dissolve the whole problem and see literature as a historical, a structure beyond opinion or belief, a performance weariness sets in, and to merely with this or the other belief, but with the whole idea of belief. Through the brilliance of its straining, the modern begins to exhaust itself.

A central direction in modernist literature is toward the self-sufficiency of the work. Stretched to its theoretic limit, symbolism proposes to disintegrate the traditional duality between world and its representation. It finds intolerable the connection between art and the flaws of experience; it finds intolerable the commonly accepted distance between subject and act of representation; either as an objective mimesis or subjective expression. It is equally distant from realism and expressionism, faithfulness to the dimensions of the external and faithfulness to the distortions of the eyes. The symbolist hopes to abandon for the most part logical structures and to create a revelation of insight as a substitute for orderly and formal resolutions. They also hope to depend heavily on the association of images, sometimes on kinesthesia and dissonance of images.

The idea of aesthetic order is abandoned or radically modified in modernist literature. To condemn modernist literature for a failure to conform to traditional criteria of unity, order and coherence is to miss the point, since; to begin with, it either rejects these criteria implicitly or proposes radical new ways of embodying them. In the assumption that the sense of the real has been lost in conventional realism, modern writings yields to an imperative of distortion. Modernist literature

replaces the traditional criteria of esthetic expressiveness, or perhaps more accurately, it downgrades the value of esthetic unity in behalf of even a Jagged and fragmented expressiveness.

In modernist literature, nature ceases to be a central subject and setting of literature. Nature ceases to be natural. The most part of natural scenes and places are as a token of deprivation and sometimes as a mere willed sign of nostalgia. They are elsewhere, not our home.

Perversity which is to say: surprise, excitement, shock, terror affront – becomes a dominant motif in modernist literature. The modernist writer strives for sensation, in the serious sense of the term; his epigone, in the frivolous sense. The modernist writer thinks of subject matter not as something to be rehearsed or recaptured but to be conquered and enlarged. He has little use for wisdom; to be dug out of the mines of tradition and to be won for him through an exercise in self penetration, sometime self disintegration. The modernist writers negotiates the full journey into and through these depths into the common place streets of the city and its on going commonplace life. The traditional values of decorum, both in the general ethical sense and the strictly literary sense, are overturned. Everything must now be explored to its outer and inner limits; but more, there are to be no limits.

Primitivism becomes a major terminus of modernist writing. A plentitude of sophistication narrowing into decadence – this means that primitivism will soon follow. The search for meaning through extreme states being reveals a yearning for the primal; surely man can not have been bored even at the moment of his creation. The rage against cultivation is so important part of modernism. One of the seemingly

hopeful possibilities is a primitivism bringing a vision of new manliness, health, blood consciousness, a relief from enervating rationality. But within the ambience of modernism there is another, more ambiguous and perhaps sinister kind of primitivism: the kind that draws us not with the prospect of health but of decay, an abandonment of civilization and perhaps, its discontents. In this version of primitivism which is perhaps inseparable from the ennui of decadence, the overwhelming desire is to shake off the burdens of social restraints, the disability and wearisome moralities of civilized inhibition.

In the modern novel, there appears a whole new sense of character, structure and role of the protagonist or hero. The problematic nature of experience tends to replace the experience of human nature as the dominant subject of modern novel. A novelist turns to establishing a bridgehead into known ability. His task becomes not so much depiction as the hypothesizing of sets and he may lend a temporary validation to his material. Characters in the novel can no longer be assumed as in the past. Character, for modernist like Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, regarded not as a coherent, definable, character into a stream of atomized experience.

The modern world has lost the belief in a collective destiny. In novel the problem often appears as a clash between a figure of consciousness and a society moving in an impersonal rhythm. In traditional heroes, there was union of value and power, a sense of good and the capacity to act it out. But in novel, value and power are taken to be radically dissociated. For example, in the novel of Thomas Mann, the apprehension and the deed fall in shadow of uncertainty. Mann's hero remains

divided between the absolutism of his individuality and the frustration of his societal instinct.

Nihilism becomes the central preoccupation, the inner demon, at the heart of modern literature. Modernism is endlessly open to portraiture and analysis. Modernism strains toward a life without fixity or conclusion. In literary modernism a dominant preoccupation that the writer will surely be destroyed, it is the specter of nihilism. It is a rebellion against traditional authority. Nihilism concerns to imply a loss of connection with the source of life, so that both in literature is always related to. This very power of art is seen by Mann as demon of nihilism trailing both himself and his surrogate figure from novel to novel, as portent of disease in *Death in Venice*, as a creator – destroyer in Doctor Faustus who disintegrates everything through parody. Nihilism lies at the center of all modern literature, both as subject and symptom. Modern mind is always haunted by meaninglessness and eternal death. The modern sensibility struggles with its passion for eternal renewal. It keeps searching for ways to secure its own end. One can not find himself the pure air of neglect which is the torment of modern literature. The noise of revolt, magnified in a frolic of emptiness; and what little remains of modernism, denied so much as the dignity of opposition. The passion with sensation becomes a kind of savage parody which way indeed be the only fate worse than death,

The quality which is called modern shows in the realized sensibility of style and form more than in the subject matter. The faith of the modern is that by allowing their sensibility to be acted upon by the modern experience as suffering. The modern is the realized consciousness of suffering, sensibility and awareness of the past. In a

world turn by passionate conflicts he can not have a contemporary attitude which sees modern life as a whole. The modern tends to see life as a whole and hence in modern conditions to condemn it as a whole. In modern the past becomes conscious at certain points which are ourselves living in the present. Pattern of hope is also an important element in modern literature which might transform the contemporary environment.

Modern literature is centered in some obsessive theme or some biased images of human affairs, growing out of the fixation author. It is also concerned with the break down of identity and personal life. It gives the image of the creative man; inspired rebellious, dedicated, obsessive, and alienated. It also suggests the experience of irrational underworld, loneliness, self doubt, hypersensitivity, loss of identity, estrangement from the community. The artist finds himself, willy-nilly, integrated with the present civilized phase. The artist is not responsible for the future but he is in a certain sense, responsible to the future. In modern literature, man-the maker has become debauched by machine, threatened by automation. So, disparity exists between the artist and the culture that surrounds him and he is forced to swim against the stream instead of being carried along by it.

To sum up, modern literature is merely strident, explosive, fragmentary and chaotic. No audacity of innovation or brilliance of technical achievement can conceal the hollowness of some of its products. In the absence of the strong tradition there is more temptation to exploit, more compulsion to express own voice in loud and in confident way, presently the striking in substance or style becomes an end in itself. Accordingly material is confused with meaning, technique with value, eccentricity

with originality. The fascinating work of Thomas Mann, for example, lacks a spiritual center. So, does the still more fascinating work of James Joyce and other typical, modernist writing. Undoubtedly modern literature is going every where at once, the more furiously as it becomes more uncertain of its destination. It distracts its follower.

The Modern Hero

Concerning modern hero in modernist writing, the hero is man who believes in the necessity of action. He knows that traditionally the hero is required to act out the part of bravery, but he discovers that his predicament requires courage. Bravery signifies mode of action, the courage the mode of being. The sense of burden he must carry brings him close to the situation. Even though he tries to escape every moment. The modern hero begins with the expectation of changing the world but he question himself whether he himself can be changed or not. The hero finds hard to accomplish his mission in modern novel. They do not feel themselves bound in a sacred. Therefore, the hero finds hard to believe in himself.

The typical modern hero desires to struggle renewal and honorable defeat. They often continue to believe in quest, and sometime in the grail too. But he is not sure that how and where the grail can be found. The hero moves from the heroic deed to the heroism of consciousness, heroism often available only in defeat. He comes as conqueror and stays as a pilgrim. But in his consciousness he seeks moral ends which the hero is traditionally said to have found through the deed. The modern hero discovers that he can not be a hero. Yet only through his readiness to face the consequences of his discovery can be salvaging a portion of the heroic.

In modern literature the approach to the mystic physical sexual union which were more important than that he should create literature. All the alternate life of art attempts to discover spiritual, sensual or esoteric forces, which restore the balance of inner life against industrialized society. Modern literature shows its difficulties, at first blush; they are literal and doctrinal difficulties. The alienation of modern man is exemplified in modern literature. By modern artist modern men have sought to revive in order to escape from positivism and common sense. Modern hero feels quite overtly its dreadful attraction, but indeed it is hostile irony for him. The death threatens him, can know it only as a weary grayness, marks the difference between the ordinary man and the hero of the spirit. It is the nature of modern artist who goes down into the hell.

Modern hero has desire to escape burden of human life, but he has not where to escape to. He suffers because of his past actions, motives in the present and the uncertainty of the future. The stagnant situation leads him to the world of nothingness. Absurdity comes from discontentment which makes life miserable consciousness is like a sin, it keeps on torturing a man and begets tragedy.

A modern hero suffers not because of society outside but because of oneself. It is tragedy of self contradiction. The terrible burden of life creates a highest form of conflict which always dwells on modern hero. We can envisage tragic human conditions in the writings of Samuel Backette, Kafka, Hemingway, Joyce and Thomas Mann. Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* is disillusioned by the surrounding and is suffered to defeat. It is very difficult to understand the mystery of human predicament. We can feel Aschenbach's acute suffering. Life is chaotic for him. As a

tragic hero he seeks his identity though he is incapable of doing anything else in the condition he is in. he becomes the spectator of his own tragedy. One has to sacrifice to a noble purpose to be a heroic figure in the classical sense. The nobility of purpose to be a heroic figure is in the classical sense. The nobility of purpose does not matter in this world to be a heroic character. The heroic activity as opposed to inactivity lies in the mind. It is the matter of mental and emotional faculty of human life that creates tragedy in the texts of Thomas Mann.

The end of modern hero in modern literature is not merely freedom from the middle class but freedom from society itself. The idea of losing oneself up to the point of self destruction, of surrendering oneself to experience is escaping wholly from the societal bonds.

Aestheticism/Beauty

In modernism, aesthetic pleasure leads a man into his interest presented to him by his destinies. Love and hatred, joys and sorrows of the personage are common happenings in real life. Passion and pain became a tool to proceed him towards his destiny. The attention and activities are directed by his passion which can be devastating. Mann's main character in *Death in Venice* also falls in the same devastating state due to his passion. Though, becomes unaware of it.

When we talk about the aesthetic value in modern literature, beauty is compared with confused ideas that it contains. The values of modern aesthetic literature may expand as widely as they go to natural objects, to act of living, eating and drinking, playing and loving, and even dreaming. Aesthetic value is distinguished by positive and negative value. Pleasure is equated with positive value

and pain or unpleasantness with negative value. In the broadest sense, aesthetic value is taken as an intrinsic pleasure or the liking or the liking of the things for itself. The aesthetic value can be conceived as building up from elementary, sensory pleasures and likings. The virtues of aesthetic are the emphasis it spontaneously gives to the aesthetic delights.

The term beauty denotes aesthetic values in the highest sense. The beauty is higher type of pleasure which gives the immediate satisfaction. Concerning the beauty, pleasure is regarded as the quality of things which depends upon the degree of objectivity and pleases. The symbol has great value and contribution in aestheticism. The beauty is not so much in the symbol as in what it symbolizes. It is aesthetic of meaning. All languages are involved in this realm so that literature is the outstanding art of expression. To obtain pleasure and satisfaction, an artist even in the moment of tragedy, deliberately seeks out unpleasant, even horrible, subject matter.

The decisive factor for the decline of modern artist seems the difference between him and the usual elegist of cultural decline while conscious of being surrounded by modern decadence. The artist, instead of devoting himself, he takes pleasure in the questions this decadence raises for him. The artists bear witness to the actuality of the personal crisis by embodying the principle of difficulties in their work.

The impact of the First World War fragmented and dispersed into the brilliant but unstable individual performances of the writer and the artists of the 1920s. The

artist seems to be suspended by his own personal decadence. They can not control their internal desire rather they face the forthcoming challenges.

The concept of beauty is quite important source of modern writings. They declare that the world's wonder has been enriched by a fresh beauty: the beauty of speed. They feel that there is no more beauty except in struggle; no master piece without aggressive character. The aggressiveness of character with excessive passion leads to the ruin, a declaration of the failure and the death of civilization. The man who accepts passion to achieve beauty can not possibly be sincere. It is also way to be sunk into the great maze and becomes incapable to escape of that. Mann's main character in *Death in Venice* also faces the same fate and finds no escape from the maze he undergoes.

CHAPTER - III

Modernism and Personal Decadence in *Death in Venice*

The Artist and the Society:

Mann's central character in the novel Gustav von Aschenbach who is also a good artist finds quite difficult to create a good art in the prevailing society. He is in search of harmonious, peaceful society, but the society where he is living is quite opposite to what he has expected. The society was in horrible situation where each members of the society was in tough identity crisis. Everyone of the society was searching their life and status within the miserable condition.

The transition period from Victorian age to modern age disillusioned the majority of conscious population. There was dead silence for out break of World War I. The incessant over flow of dozens of new ideologies and doctrines have disillusioned the mass. The people were facing the transition period which provided nothing but fear, uncertainty, and illusion to the future. People lived a meaningless, sterile, frustrated and socially alienated, despairing, gloomy, impotent, selfless and heartless life.

Modern man has desired to escape burden of human life, but he has no where to escape to. He suffers because of his past actions, motives in the present and the uncertainties of future. The stagnant situation leads him to the world of nothingness. Absurdity comes from discontentment which makes life miserable. Consciousness is like a sin. It keeps on torturing a man and begets tragedy. The central character of the

novel, Gustav von Aschenbach also faces the same stagnant situation. He is mouth piece of European civilization in general and German civilization in particular.

German civilization, especially, had been viewed by Germans and other cultivated Europeans as the acme of the human accomplishment. German science, German music and art, German scholarship, German ethical philosophy, had set standards for the rest of the world was considered to be higher than ever before. The artist of the then period hated the idea of civilization. They felt it as a intolerable burden as Aschenbach felt Mann's *Death in Venice*. Aschenbach, having good fame in society as an artist was unsatisfied with such civilizational restraint The change and rapidity of change signaled the stagnant situation of the individual in that society. Mann, therefore, depicts Gustav von Aschenbach, as the same. Aschenbach felt whole society gloomy, disordered and as such cultivates the idea of changing location for his literary writing:

When Europe sat upon the anxious seat beneath a menace, that hung over its head for months. Aschenbach has sought the open soon after tea. He was over thought by a morning of hard, nerve taxing work, work which has not ceased exact his uttermost in the way of sustained concentration, contentionsness, and tact; and after the noon meal found himself a powerless . . . system had come to make a daily nap more and more imperative – and how under took a walk, in the hope . . . (1)

In the given lines of the novel, gives the clear glimpse of the main character and his intention. Though he is an ageing writer is successful, honored, supremely disciplined and self – disciplined man, he is suddenly disturbed by the ongoing

atmosphere. He desires to change the place that enables him to uplift the potency of literary creation. He thinks himself that he might find artistic inspiration from a change of scene. The objective that he settled in his mind is for the betterment of art. His temptation is to create intellectual status as an artist. We know from the very beginning that Aschenbach had been dedicated in achieving public fame through his art. The desire for fame, which preserves him from despair and dissipation, becomes guiding passion of his life. He does not allow obscure impulse to rule him. But he learns to reunite impulse with direction and power. He wanted to teach the whole grateful generation that a man can still be capable of moral resolution even after he has plumbed the depth of self – knowledge:

Too busy with his tasks imposed upon him by his own ego and European soul, too laden with the care and duty to create, too preoccupied to be an amateur of the gay outer world, he had been content to know as well as he could without string far outside . . . which was the daily theatre of a vivid, cold an passionate service. That service he loved had even almost come to love the enervation daily struggle between a proud, tenacious well tired will and this growing fatigue. . . . (6-7)

We see Aschenbach pushes the point of art into service, making art itself a text for disciplined hard work. The impulse of salvation involves, however, a rejection of all those who fall in life's battle and resolute flight from their bitterness and from their claims. The moral sensitivity generated in him is clearly higher than self - righteousness. The starting move of Aschenbach artistically conveys the idea in

subjective term. During the publication of this novel, Europe was on the verge of impending danger, at the same time outstanding scientists and artists were predicting great achievement that mirrored the society of time. So, it shows that their rational behaviour and good social practices make people happy, wealthy and healthy. Having such passion he was led to the place where he might find bliss for his creativity and self-satisfaction: "It is a seed that give early fruits, whose powers seldom reach a ripe old age. But his favorite motto was "Hold fast" (9).

From the very beginning of novel, the characteristics of Aschenbach seem very praiseworthy. He is pushed on every side of achievement. He has the constant tension of his career: "He deeply desires to live to a good old age, for it was his conviction that only the artist to whom it has been granted to be fruitful on all stages of our human scene can be truly great . . ." (9).

As a reputed artist, Aschenbach, feels his certain responsibility in the society. He does not want to be the burden of society. He has to serve the society with his skill which can exist till his death. He does not want to waste his ability being idle. Even he does not want to be awarded by anyone else. He thinks it, merely a sympathy:

. . . the idea that almost everything consciously great is great in despite: has come into being in defiance of affliction and pain; poverty destitution, bodily weakness, vice, passion and other obstruction. And that was more than observation. It was the fruit of experience; it was also the fixed character, the outward gesture, of his most individual figure? (11)

Gustav von Aschenbach has his own peculiar vision. He has his own philosophy through which he proceeds. His idealism is seen deviant and motored. He lived under the rules he believed right. But his nature does not fit the ideals other people created. His life does not have energy but tiredness. He could have lied with his existing society if he had not been an artist, someone who needs the freedom of the spirit. These are the fact; he is directed, motivated, isolated and felt anxiety. His own artistic vision is a cave of his occasional suffering.

. . . as absolute, as problematic, as an youth of them all. He has done homage to intellect, had over worked the soil of knowledge and ground up her seed corn; had turn his back on the "mysteries", called genius itself in question, held up art to scorn- yes, even his faithful following reveled in the characters he created, he, the young artist, was taking away the breadth of twenty years olds with his cynic utterances on the nature of art and the artist life. (12)

We studied the nature of main character is self-detective figure. From the very beginning of the novel, he is destined to think and act alone. Perhaps it might be one of the causes of his destruction. It also seems that he is destined to think to conspire his own completeness. Aschenbach must be wrestled from his hard-won dignity and propriety, and consigned to the destructive powers. He declares his journey towards peaceful area; and isolated from the busy and crowed society: "He couldn't feel this was the place he sought; and inner impulse made him wretched, urging him on he knew not wither; he racked his brains, he looked up boats, then all at once his goal stood plain before his eyes" (15).

When Gustav von Aschenbach has the urge to travel, he tells himself that he might find artistic inspiration from a change of scene. Aschenbach's subsequent trip to an Island in the Adriatic, not far off the Istrian coast is the first he has allowed himself in a year; it signals the beginning of his decline. When he reached the Island, though, he is not satisfied and again wants to have change the place. Immediately he decides to leave the place. It shows that he is stubborn figure who has terrific mission to be completed. This sort of activity of Aschenbach indicates his gradual process towards destruction. When he becomes irritated by that Island, suddenly he heads to the Venice: "An excellent choice, "he rattled on" Ah, Venice! What a glorious city! Irresistibly attractive to the cultured man for the past history as well as her present charm" (16).

Venice is symbol of freedom, under-development, and exotics, near his home, near to Europe's heart. It is exotic city in the world. It is Venice that beckoned to Aschenbach from the first. The place that he has chosen is most fertile and center for literary creation and from different aspect i.e. music and art, civilization etc. Aschenbach achieved fame at early age, and the pressure to produce, which he always felt, prevented him from ever knowing the carefree idleness of youth. With the great framework of artistic passion he has reached to Venice. But his excessive impulse that drives him to Venice might be determining factor of his decline. Aschenbach, in Venice, seems not static in his objectives. He seems fluctuating and unstable among the crowd of Venice: "Aschenbach was moved to shudder as he watched the creature and his association with the group could they not see he was

old, that he had not right to wear clothes they wore or pretend to be one of them"?
(17)

We can see the problem with Aschenbach in largest aspect the decay of faith and loss of certitudes in high matter of ethics. His concentration in his business has been questioned till the moment. Uncertain attitude of main character might fall in dislocation. He is weakening the habit of faith. It seems that he is breaking the settled life. It has shaken and confused his mind more whether he gets victory over his mission or not. He is enjoying the city. He thinks that the city has given him a brilliant welcome. At the present moment, he praises the city rather than denying his job: "Looking he thought that to come to the Venice by the station is like entering a palace by a back door. No one should approach, save by the high seas as he was doing now, this most improbable of seas" (19).

Aschenbach in real sense has been distracted from the past. He has to act to fulfill his primary business to find meanings and values but in the very time he can not assume the importance of what he is trying to do. This notion presents his ecstatic pleasure within him but not to his artistic career: "Closing his eyes for very pleasure in an indolence as accustomed as sweet. The trip will be short, he thought, and wished it might last forever" (21).

As a popular artist Aschenbach, duels on his ideas. He does not care what the mission is. Perhaps he is fully satisfied with the city but he has not used the city for his work. He has an impression that he is in blissful situation. He is thinking about his permanency in Venice. He is creating confusion within himself. He is not sure whether the trip will go longer or shorter. In this phase, he is haunted by the beauty

of the city. It is his one of the most important weaknesses. Aschenbach as modern artist he is free to choose materials and method but the upcoming consequences are making him failure. Aschenbach passes into the new experience that awaits him. He is isolated from his own past and from any possible future. He also passes out of the range of effectual communication. Each and every moment in Venice, Aschenbach hiding is consciousness in the perfect beauty of Venice. He is highly fascinated by the atmosphere surrounded by the people of different civilization. He receives warm perfection everywhere:

Round a wicker table next him was gathered a group of young folk in change of a governess or companion – three young girls, perhaps fifteen to sixteen years old, and a long haired boy of about fourteen. Aschenbach with astonishment the lad's perfect beauty. His face recalled the noblest moment of Greek sculpture pale, with a sweet reserve, with clustering honey coloured ringlets, the brow and nose descending in one line. The winning mouth, the expression of pure and godlike serenity. (25)

We are forced back on the perception that Aschenbach is marked out and prepared for destruction: but it is through his failure of will. Excitedly, we are adventured in the unexplored realm but ultimately we are like to find this excursion tiring and unsatisfying. It also seems that he is trying to escape from paralytic reality to imaginary. But question can be raised, for what this escape is. His confusing state of mind does not adequate the meaning and values. It weakens and destroys his qualities. Aschenbach thinks himself attached with his internal desire to external

world: "For in almost every artist's nature is inborn a wanton and treacherous proneness to side with the beauty that breaks hearts, to single out aristocratic pretensions and pays them homage"(26).

Aschenbach inclined to think about the scenario. His life and thought could not have developed as they do. The artist's sensitivity inevitably in coronate in his creation, refined sensitivity is one of the conditions of greatness of art.

Aschenbach's Passion for Beauty

Aschenbach has haunting sense of absurdity and sum city of his behaviour. His attention and inclination to the beauty is profitless to follow which is to be understood by Aschenbach. It is futile. So, it can be a powerless reason of his uncertainty of life and career: "Inside dinner was being served; but the young polish still sat and waited about their weaker table. Aschenbach felt comfortable in his deep arm chair, he enjoyed the beauty before his eyes, he waited with them" (26).

Aschenbach's destiny might have lead him to such inclination. Love and affection is common phenomenon in real life. But unnatural behaviour is always harmful to us and as it is being harmful to Aschenbach. Perhaps his rising passion to the beauty is settled by the fate. His gradual increment of passion directs him to his failure. Surprisingly, a famous artist, Aschenbach, is unaware of it. The same unawareness can be the cause of his suffering. He foreshadows his necessary ethos. His passion is further elevated:

In a corner diagonally to the door, two tables of his own, Aschenbach saw the polish girls with their governess. They sat there very straight,

in their stiff blue linear frocks with little turnover collars and cuffs, their eyelids red from sleep; and handed each other the marmalade.

They had nearly finished their meal. The boy was not there

Aschenbach smiled." "Aha, little Phaeax", he thought. It seems you are privileged to sleep your self out. (28)

Aschenbach's interest to the boy is purely aesthetic, so, he tells himself. But there is not any warrant giving factor to Aschenbach. His looking and praising to the polish boy indicates his growing pains. His abnormal practicality confronts his distresses coming to him. He is badly assimilating the uncertain as well as irrational activities towards the polish boy. His passion can be the determining factor for his degradation. The situation can be unmanageable in his days passing in Venice. His motivation towards the polish boy creates disharmony among the reader that they are compelled to think his distractful monster heading to him:

The lad had on a light sailor suit of blue and white striped cotton, with the red silk breast – not very elegant effect yet above this collar the head was poised like a flower, in incomparable loveliness . . . good, oh, very good indeed!" though Aschenbach, assuming the patronizing air of the connoisseur to hide, as artist will, their ravishment over a masterpiece. 'Yes', he went on the himself, "if were not that sea and beach were waiting for me, I should sit here as long as you do. (28-29)

Aschenbach for his sensory pleasure keeps on praising the lad. He does not care about his unnatural praise to the boy. He also seems unaware about the consequences that come to him. It is kind of aesthetic value for his intrinsic pleasure. Aschenbach's

motto is to acquire delight from the figure appeared to him. The beauty of the boy for him is a higher pleasure that gives him immediate satisfaction. But the necessary intelligentia has to be implemented by Aschenbach that immediate satisfaction can lead him to the tragedy. An artist, even in the moment of tragedy, forgets every things to obtain pleasure and satisfaction. He does not feel any hesitation to implement his fact for achieving beauty. He does not think any, except his desire to welcome pleasure. These kinds of unnatural behaviour will take him to the rough tragedy: "The figure of the half grown lad, a masterpiece from nature's own hand, had been significant enough when it gratified the cyclone, and now it evoked sympathy as well" (31).

Aschenbach's mind has been preoccupied by the beauty of the boy. He wants to rest in the perfection. For him, the perfection can be obtained by beauty. He is just dreaming himself. Most of the time he consumes in vain. His one sighted appreciation does not penetrate the mind of the boy. But he is self-directed and motivated. He is not concerned with his final result. He has broken his path. It is his great error. His activities are really a dramatic performance in the sense of his objectives. The moral sensitivity generates in him clearly. Aschenbach thinks his days are armour-plating. But the fact is different as we come to understand the extent to which Aschenbach's movement is against himself and creates sufferings:

The Tadzio was bathing. Aschenbach had lost his sight of him for a moment, then described him for out in the water . . . the sight of living figure, virginally pure and austere, with dripping locks, beautiful as a tender young god, emerging from the depth of sea and sky, out running

the element it conjured up my theologies, it was like a primeval legend, handed down from the beginning of time, of the birth of form, of the origin of the gods. (32-33)

Aschenbach extremely expresses his praising attitude to the boy, Tadzio. Aschenbach is forced by the internal thoughts to appreciate the boy. This problematic nature becomes a dominant subject for his failure. The search for extreme pleasure through beauty reveals his degradation. It is of course, a serious, boring and disgusting behaviour of Aschenbach. He has shaped immense intention of skilled craftsmanship to praise the Tadzio. But it collapses the real form and order and also creates chaos in the situation of time. It is disappointing and danger. Aschenbach finds himself superior. This superiority feeling and disconnecting with other remaining world is his divorced situation which is unknown to him:

Today, the crowd in this narrow lanes oppressed the stroller instead of diverting him. The longer he walked, the more was he in tortured under that state, which is the product of the sea air the sirocco and which excites and innervates at once. He perspired painfully. His eyes rebelled, his chest was heavy, he self feverish, the blood throbbed in his temples. He fled from the huddled, narrow streets of the commercial city, crossed many bridges, and came into the poor quarter of Venice. Beggars waylaid him, the canals sickened him with their evil exhalations. (34)

Aschenbach's present situation is quite sickening. He is forcibly indulged in the beauty of the boy. It seems quite difficult for him to escape from this difficulty. He has planned his final destination to see and get, Tadzio.

Aschenbach is massively disturbed by the beauty of the boy; his passion grew up more and more. Though his journey to Venice is a fertile land for literature he is displaced by the unnatural beauty. His journey to Venice is for literary creation but he creates nothing except his longing for beauty. Aschenbach becomes highly tortured when his vision is disconnected with the boy. In this moment, forgets his kind, whole responsibility and above all is society. Such notion of self satisfaction grows out of incertitudes of modern era. It is his desperate business with the appalling catastrophe. Aschenbach's obsessive and biased nature disturbs his peculiar literary fame. He has forgotten all the literary sensibility that he had. He has lost his belief and finds hard to be concentrated on, is personal job except beautifying the boy:

The appeared and said that the trunk had already gone off. "Gone already"? "Yes it has gone to come." To Como?" a hasty exchange of words any question from Aschenbach Aschenbach found hard to wear the right expression as he heard this new. A reckless Joy, a deep incredible mirthfulness shook him with almost as with a spasm Aschenbach said he wouldn't travel without his luggage; that he would go back and wait the hotel des Bains until it turned up. (38)

Aschenbach's response to Tadzio is predominately aesthetic, in both sense of that term. Tadzio is an object of beauty and the cause of the sensual response on the part

of the perceiving subject. These two aspects are intimately related. The connection with his genuineness has been broken off and become unnatural. As a modern artist, he suffers from this disconnection. If we understand the figure of Aschenbach in these terms, then we are better prepared to understand how he finds in Tadzio precisely and what he has been seeking and moreover, how what he finds become his sentimental creation. His concentration and self-dignity has been paralyzed that might haunt him and create suffering:

At midday he saw Tadzio, in his striped failure suit with red breast knot, coming up from the sea, across the barrier and along the broad walk to the hotel. Aschenbach recognized him, had it is mind to say to himself. "Well, Tadzio, so, here you are again too!" . . . he self the rapture of his blood, the poignant pleasure, and realized that it was for Tadzio's sake the leave taking has been so hard. (39)

Aschenbach characterizes Tadzio in a flattering manner. He is the artist who is in his own words, sculpts images of spiritual beauty from the mass of the languages, who wants to recognize Tadzio's from the mass of languages, who wants to recognize Tadzio's form as manifestation of a noble and naïve spirit. But it is argued that Aschenbach's love is in fact erotic and obsessive. Aschenbach's love becomes his desire to possess Tadzio. Such demands would be seen as totally harmful except in marriage, and the surest way of soiling and destroying love. The kind of self-discipline which mistrusts love and raises barriers against it may be precisely the kind which responds, as Aschenbach does, to irresistible love:

He encountered him everywhere in the salons of the hotel, on the cooling rides to the city and back . . . But it was the regular morning hours on the beach which gave him his happiest opportunity to study and admire to lovely apportion. Yes, this immediate happiness, this daily recurring boon at the hand of circumstance, this it was that filled with content, with joy in life, enriched his stay, and lingered out the row of sunny days that fell in to place so pleasantly one behind the other. (41)

Desperately fearing that Tadzio would fall victim to the sickness which for Aschenbach, would equal to the destruction of absolute beauty, he tries to come into periphery of the boy. It is a platonic love. In disguised form, Aschenbach was a homosexual. Homosexuality is a psychiatric disease which can or should be cured. It is not one condition, but that it may be a set of conditions in which both genetic and environmental factors play vital role. Aschenbach desires to perceive image of member of his own gender. But homosexuality is also a major social problem. It will be seen that friendship- a love rich and pervasive life has been the chief casualty of our modern obsession with sex. But such gains have been owned at great cost in confusion and suffering, which Aschenbach's own characters illustrates as well. The loses stem from a strange and illogical leap from the understanding that deep love usually arouses sexual feelings, to the dogma that sex is love's root cause and sole end: "Then he settled down; he had three or four hours before the sun reached its height and the fearful climax of its power; therefore hours while the sea went deeper and deeper blue; three or four hours in which to watch Tadzio" (42).

Aschenbach's duty is to spend time having viewed on him. He does not feel himself found in a sacred. It raises the question of morality which is radically dislocated: "There could be nothing lovelier on earth than the smile and look with which the playmate thus signaled out rewarded his humbled friend and vassal" (43). The concept of beauty is quite important source of entertainment. Aschenbach thinks that world's wonder has been enriched by the fresh beauty. He feels that the beauty lies in the struggle. His passion is to achieve beauty of Tadzio. Homosexuality and the realm of the aesthetic, the one figuring the other in his argument by virtues of what he sees as their divorced from utility, fecundity the ends of life. The artist is involved with beauty and beauty is deathly blessing, just looking is not just but already the turn from mortality and life. What can be seen and experienced in the writing of Aschenbach is struggle with the question of what his art can be and the question of what his art can be and against erotic aestheticism, that is, indeed, in him more than he can allow, that he seeks to, but can not, push out of the frame. Aschenbach's longing for Tadzio as merely an instance his disastrous career heading towards wrong destination: "He told himself that what he saw was beauty's very essence; form as divine thought, the single and pure perfection which resides in the mind, of which an image and likeness, rare and holy, was here raised up for adoration" (43).

The feeling for boy goes quite deeper. Aschenbach futilely attempts to distance himself from Tadzio by taking a connoisseur's critical view of the body. The struggle to maintain emotional poise becomes more stressful as affectionate yearning become more stressful as affectionate yearning to become or make something

worsened, or serious: "His mind was in travail, his whole mental background in a state of flux" (43). It may be seen tragic that so much beauty sweetness, divinity, is not allied to goodness. We can see it largely through the activities performed by Aschenbach, which is violation of sexual norms. He is unstable and fluctuated that create him a kind of difficulty which lead him into the labyrinth.

The edifice of his personality, his morality, and form hold on reality are all in cracked position. It is only left to be the piled up:

Thought that can merge wholly into feeling, feeling that can merge wholly into thought these are the artist's highest joy. And our solitary felt in himself at this moment power to command wield a thought that thrilled with emotion, an emotion as precise and concentrated as thought: namely, that nature herself shivers with ecstasy when the mind bows down in homage before beauty. He felt sudden desire to write, Eros, indeed, we are told, loves idleness, and for idle hours alone was the created. (45)

Aschenbach's intuition and experience of the erotic and sexual as the source of the art, rather than leading as it to fruitfully can to renewal, due there to its archaic force and its alienating and horrible primitivism, overwhelms Aschenbach's defenses and integrative capacities. He is emotionally intoxicated and intellectually deluded; now prolongs his stay in Venice indefinitely. Tadzio becomes the image of Eros himself; and then he becomes the beautiful but doomed figure for the survival of Aschenbach. The whole dependency becomes the cause of decay of Aschenbach:

He would write, and moreover, he would write in Tadzio's presence. This lad should be in a sense his mode, his style should be follow the lines of this figure that seemed to him divine, he would snatch up this beauty into the realms of the mind, as once the eagle bore the Trojan shepherd aloft . . . his idol full in his view and the music of this voice in his ears, and fashioned his little essay after the model Tadzio's beauty set: that page and half of choicest prose, so chaste, so lofty, so poignant with feeling (45-46)

Aschenbach, as a powerful artist, in Venice, the great capital of art and pleasure, becomes the reeking and contaminated by his erotic and aggressive impulse. What can we observe from the characteristic of Aschenbach is, his life, art and popularity lies in the beauty of Tadzio. He can write only in the presence of Tadzio.

Comparatively his inclination is motivated to the Tadzio. He feels nothing to the Venice. His model beauty and object of art is only Tadzio. He can write and create only by the given direction of Tadzio's figure. Tadzio's figure shapes out his creativity. He is seen as a suspended man. His emotional passion rooted in him compels Aschenbach to set his destiny. He is debauched by the beauty of Tadzio. Tadzio's mechanical beauty run to Aschenbach's mind from the prospect of beauty, Aschenbach is acting processing with anti-social activities. To an artist, society does not give permission to fell in love with passion to the fourteen years boy. Society takes it as sin and anti-social act. For this crime, he has to be punished by the society but he is badly punished by his own fate:

Regarding this novel George Lukacs comments: . . . can one by restraining the emotions, by a policy of 'composure' turn artistic activity into a career? Mann here takes artistic activity as a symbol for any kind of genuine culture, for any profession or career that comes from within. Of the impost of his hero he says: Gustav von Aschenbach was the poet spokesman of all those who are already worn out but still hold themselves upright; of all our modern moralizers of accomplishment. (22-23)

It is the common problem of modern artist who are helpless to develop their artistic career into profession despite their restrained emotion.

Aschenbach's one sided love to Tadzio invites his ultimate failure. His love with Tadzio is like to the seated under the sword hanged with tiny thread. He is losing himself in front of the beauty. Losing one-self is kind of surrendering one self to experience. He knows all his responsibilities, duties but ignores and becomes unable to follow the societal bond which he has to follow, till this moment Aschenbach forgets himself except the beauty of Tadzio. A source of knowledge for him is only the beauty of Tadzio: "Since knowledge of the artistic inspiration might often but confused and alarm and so prevent the full effect of its excellence. Strange hours, indeed, these were and strangely unnerving the labour that filled them" (46).

Aschenbach's mind is highly occupied by the presence of Tadzio. He is the finest source of inspiration, for the artistic excellence. He pays his hours justifying the beauty. He is debased by the beauty that Tadzio has: "Strangely fruitful inter course this, between one body and another mind! When Aschenbach put aside his

work and left the beach he felt exhausted, he felt broken – conscience reproached him, as it were after a debauch". (46)

Aschenbach's craze to the boy is deeply rooted in the mind. The period of absence of Tadzio becomes quite boring to Aschenbach. When he disconnects his view to the boy becomes exhausted and feels as he was broken and fragmented: "His sole concern was that the polish family might leave, and a chance question put to the hotel barber elicited the information that they had come only very shortly before himself"(47). Aschenbach is afraid of about their leaving. He desires them to stay longer or forever: "His sleep was fitful; the priceless, equable days were one from the next by brief nights filed with happy unrest. He went, indeed early to bed, for at nine o'clock, with the departure of Tadzio form the scene the day was over for him" (47). Aschenbach's duty has been fixed. He is accustomed to see the boy continuously. He has his daily routine. According to routine, Aschenbach moves on. Everyday he has to wait and watch the boy till Tadzio's departure. He feels very happy with viewing the boy. He does not feel tired in his task rather he enjoys. Aschenbach's days are fantastic for him, though, his vision gets nothing and priceless: "The lonely watcher sat, the splendor of the god shown on him, he closed his eyes and let the glory kiss his lids. Forgotten feelings, precious pangs of his youth quenched long since by the stern service that had been his life" (48).

Aschenbach is alone. He is detached with the other activities going in the Venice. He has his own business. He observes the boy as the gift of god sent particularly for his entertainment. He forgets everything. He wants to prove his life as good service holder. It shows his detached situation from the Venetian society.

"When he was going down btheind Venice, he would sometime, sit on a bench in the park and watch Tadzio. White – clad, with grey colour . . . it was to Tadzio whom he saw but Hyancinthus . . . (49). Aschenbach's encounter with Tadzio lead up to the imaginary images even in the absence of him. He creates an image of Tadzio and enjoys sucking his image of beauty. He makes his imaginary figure and rushed towards it. It evokes his complete detachment with society. Aschenbach's main task becomes to watch the polish boy and his every activity: "The polish brother and sister, with their governess, had missed the evening meal, and Aschenbach had noted the fact with concern. He was restive over their absence . . ." (50).

Aschenbach's love to the polish boy increased in excessive form. He forgets himself. But the presence of the boy becomes his need. His satisfaction remains only in the presence of the boy's beauty:

The sight of that dear form was unexpected; it had appeared for, without giving him time to compose his features. Joy, surprise, and admiration might have painted themselves quite open his face and just at this second it happened that Tadzio smiled. Smiled at Aschenbach, unabashed and friendly, a speaking winning, captivating smile, with slowly parting lips. With such a smile it might be that narcissus bent over the mirroring. Pool a smile profound infatuated. . . . (50)

The sudden encounter with boy and his smile to Aschenbach becomes a valuable gift for him. It is just a consequence. The boy does not know the reality. He is innocent in this matter. But the Aschenbach's vultured vision keeps on recording the boy's overall activities. The boy's all activities are just friendly. Aschenbach has becomes

the neurotic concerning the boy. Therefore, Aschenbach feels joy even in small inclination to him. Aschenbach becomes overwhelmed by the sudden smile of the boy: "How dare you smile like that? No one is allowed to like that! He flung himself on a bench, is composure gone to the winds, and breathed in the nocturnal fragrance of the garden" (51).

Aschenbach's love to the polish boy is purely one sighted. He could not share his intention to the boy. But his love can not be measured by any weapons.

Aschenbach loves more than he himself. Aschenbach does not feel greed to praise the boy. He praises the boy and expresses his gratitude to him. He whispered the hackneyed phrase of love and longing impossible in these circumstances, absurd, abject, ridiculous enough, yet scared too, and not unworthy of honour even here: "I love you"! (51).

Aschenbach massively haunted by the obsessive love with the boy. He feels the boy is synonymous to beauty. For him, the boy becomes an object with which is not error made by the god. His whole world exists in the boy. He is staying in a hotel. He can not think outer world except the boy: "Aschenbach did not find his idol in Pizza" (51). His whole vision is captured by the beauty of the boy. He does not care outside and his personal hygiene. He completely negates the situation going on:

At the street corners placards were stuck up, in which the city authorities warned the population against the danger of certain infections of the gastric system, prevalent during the heated season; advising them not to eat oyster or other shell-fish and not to use the canal waters. The ordinance showed every sign of minimizing an existing situation. (52)

The main character, Aschenbach buried himself in the beauty. This situation is himself created. There is not any external force to mingle him into such labyrinth rather himself. He becomes incomplete if he missed the sight of the boy. He negates all devastating situation heading to him. He does not want to be aware of the activities that he is doing: "Since in his infatuation he cared for nothing but to keep Tadzio that he could not exist were the lad to pass from his sight" (53).

Aschenbach's Decadence

Aschenbach's decline starts from the very beginning of the novel. When he declares to travel Venice, his devastating moment starts. But when the Venice becomes the contaminated by destructive disease Aschenbach's inability to leave Venice really meets the decadence of him. Aschenbach's unnatural love and intolerable sacrifice is the proof of his decline. Aschenbach can not imagine himself complete figure, without presence of the boy. His identity is in crisis. His identity only remains in the beauty of the boy. He has to assimilate with the boy to secure his identity. But the boy even at the climax does not know the reality. Aschenbach has become sick within himself. It seems that Aschenbach is presenting wild behaviour, which create his own identity crisis: "Mind and heart were drunk with passion, his footstep guided by the demonic power whose pastime is to trample on human reason and dignity" (54).

When Aschenbach lost his view to the boy, he is haunted feverishly, and feels filthy. The moment for him is a moment of panic fear. He is skeptic about his love. He thinks whether the boy missed from him or can be achieved. It is his supreme ideals. His activities becomes a unnatural drama which is not tolerable to the audience. To have a

view with the boy, he hides sometimes on the fountain, sometimes in terrace etc. He appeals his sense to give him glimpse of the boy.

Aschenbach follows the boy wherever he goes. He thinks that the boy is sent to display solely for him. If the situation disturbed him to have glance over the boy, Aschenbach becomes too furious with the event that bothered him:

. . . displaying his misery to view, showing the whites of his eyes, holding out his hat for alms. Farther on the dealer in antiquities cringed before his lair, inviting the passer by to enter and be duped. Yes, this was Venice, this the fair frailty that fawned and that betrayed, half fairly tale, half share! the city in whose stagnating air the art of painting once put forth so lusty a growth, and where musicians were moved lascivious. (54)

As a prominent artist, Aschenbach knows the reality and the ornate city Venice properly. He also knows about the existing scenario of Venice. He is well equipped with his personal intelligencia but fails to manipulate these all qualities that he has. He is accustomed viewing only to the boy, not to the Venice. His all capabilities are concentrated on the appearance of the boy. He has completely forgotten the cause of living homeland, his fame in his own society. It shows, how the beauty menaces a modern artist. Aschenbach is semi-aware about his attitude. As a foreigner, he is sunk deep into the belated bliss. He becomes blind to the danger of being caught in so mad pursuit of the boy: "And yet there were not wholly lacking moments-when he paused and reflected, when in consternation he asked himself what path was this on which he had set his foot" (55).

The city was infected gradually. It was already warned by the authority. The necessary precautions are to be followed. Aschenbach was aware of it but he desires to conceal it as he tries to get fantasy from the image of the boy:

Why in the world are they forever disinfecting the city of Venice?" "A police regulation", the adroit one replied; a precautionary measure, intended to protect the health of the public during this unseasonably warm and sultry weather." very praiseworthy of the police", Aschenbach gravely responded. (56)

Aschenbach negates what is happening outside. He is dismantled with the bliss. He can abandon everything except the boy. As a renowned artist, leaving every thing at stake, he proceeds with his self- discipline. It might be his bad destiny that leads him to the uncertainty. He does not have time to recorrect him. Nor he thought about the correction. These intentions of Aschenbach lose his esteemed artistic qualities. Therefore, he left everything and asks why the god has created such personality. But he merges his silly behaviour with his quality. These silly activities lead him up to his total destruction. It is merely an illusion for him.

The last moment in Venice, Aschenbach's unsuccessful love parallels with pleasure ridden Venice. Everyone of the city is quite alert of the disease except Aschenbach:

"Listen!" said the solitary, in a low voice, almost mechanically;" they are disinfecting Venice—why?" The mountebank answered hoarsely. Because of the police. Orders, signor. On account of the heat and the sirocco. The sirocco is oppressive. Not good for the health". He spoke as though

surprised that anyone could ask, and with the flat of his hand he demonstrated how oppressive the sirocco was. " So there is no plague in Venice " Aschenbach asked the between his teeth, very low. (60)

Aschenbach spends his days gazing Tadzio play on the beach and even following his family around the streets of Venice. Plague infects the city. Aschenbach was well learnt about the lethal epidemic. However, he can not bear to leave Tadzio and determines to stay in Venice:

For the several years Asiatic cholera had shown a strong tendency to spread. Its source was the hot, moist, swamps of the delta of the Ganges, where it bred in the mephitic air in that primeval island Jungle, among whose bamboo thickets the tiger crouches, where life of every sort flourishes in rankest abundance, and only man avoids the spots. Thence the pestilence had spread throughout Hindustan, raging with great violence; moved eastward to china, west ward to Afghanistan and Persia. . . (62)

It is the disease that has its long history. It has affected many places of the world. Many people who visit Venice are mostly affected by it. An Austrian provincial, having come to Venice on a few days:

Pleasure trip, went home and died with all the symptoms of the plague:
 "Thus was explained the fact that the German peppers were the first to print the news of the Venetian outbreak, The Venetian authorities published in reply a statement to the effect that the state of the city's health

had never been better; at the sometime instituting the most necessary precautions." (62-63)

The spreading sickness in Venice, which is an important aspect to the story's plot, is also symbolic of the sickness of passion overtaking Aschenbach:

His thoughts dwelt upon the image of the desolate and calamitous city, and he was giddy with fugitive, mad, unreasoning hopes and visions of a monstrous sweetness. Take tender sentiment he had a moment ago evoked, what was it compared with such images as these? His art, his moral sense, what were they in the balance beside the boons that chaos might confer? He kept silence, he stopped on. (65)

Aschenbach 's unrest soul and obsession is leading to his final catastrophe. He is just imagining the situation. He becomes progressively daring in his pursuit of the boy, gradually becoming more and more debased. It is also his moral decline. He is unsatisfied with the present atmosphere. The people who are coming to Venice are leaving as soon as they could. But Aschenbach, as a peculiar character, undergoes into total displacement from one extreme of art to the other:

The unhappy man woke from this dream shattered, unhinged, powerless in the demon's grip. He no longer avoided men's eyes nor cared whether exposed himself to suspicion. And anyhow, people were leaving, many of the bathing, cabins stood empty, there were many vacant places in the dining room, scarcely any foreigners were seen in the streets. The truth seemed to have leaked out, despite all efforts to the contrary, panic was in the air. (66)

The whole scenario of Venice seems hollow. The atmosphere is presenting in a silence. It is like a dry desert. Aschenbach knows it all but becomes unable to escape from it.

Aschenbach's skills, objective and whatever is swamp into nothing. He is badly captured by the beauty. He became permanent slave of it. He has excessive lust. As a true lover, he follows the boy through streets. He attempts to please his lover. To please the beloved, his all moralities were fallen:

Like any lover, he desired to please; suffered agonies at the thought of failure and brightened his dress with smart ties and handkerchiefs and other youthful touches. He added Jewellery and perfumes and spent hours each day over his toilette, appearing at dinner elaborately arrayed and tensely excitedly. The presence of the youthful beauty that had bewitched him filled him with disgust of his own again body; the sight of his own sharp features and gravy hair plunged him in hopeless mortification he made desperate effort to recover the appearance and freshness of his youth and began paying frequent visit to the hotel barber. (67-68)

Aschenbach's activities are entirely against his personal life. He is just for the beauty. He missed the freedom of privacy and life style that does not belong to that time. He could have lived like this if he had not been an artist, someone who needs the freedom of spirit. This fact explains Aschenbach's declining resistance, anxiety and tiredness towards his life. His quest for happiness meets the odds and troubles. His mad rush leads us to return to over nature and the awareness of our values.

The situation appears to Aschenbach more serious but his all motivation still goes to the boy continuously. Aschenbach has nothing to do and thinks little else except not losing the sight of the boy:

He didn't even know the points of the compass; all his care was not to lose sight of the figure after which his eyes thirsted. He slunk under walls, he lurked behind buildings or people's back; and the sustain tension of his senses and emotions exhausted him more and more, thought for a long time he was unconscious of fatigue. (69)

Aschenbach gradually succumbs to disease. But still he has certain hopes to obtain the love of the boy. When the boy passes through Aschenbach, he assumes that the boy still follows him. Aschenbach sees him and thinks Tadzio would not betray him, but when Tadzio passes through him then he realizes himself cheated:

The polish family crossed a small vaulted bridge, the height of whose archway hid them from his sight. And when he climbed it himself they were nowhere to be seen. He haunted in three directions-straight ahead and on both sides the harrow, dirty away - in vain, worn quite out and unnerved, he had to give over the search. (69)

Aschenbach now begins to suffer by the cholera epidemic. His body was wet with clammy sweat and intolerable thirst: "He looked about for refreshment, of whatever sort, and found a little fruit shop where he bought some strawberries. They were overripe and soft; he ate them and went"(69-70). At the moment, he is serious and situation is quite miserable. The overripe strawberries signify his last moment of his life. Even though Aschenbach gradually succumbs to diseases, he does not abandon his sense of manhood:

"Now tell me, my dear boy, do you believe that such a man can ever attain wisdom and true manly worth, for whom the path to the spirit must lead through the senses?" (70)

Aschenbach becomes overwhelmed by the miserable situation and speaks more, remembering the boy:

For you know that we poets can't walk the way of beauty without Eros as our companion and guide. We may be heroic after our fashion, disciplined warriors of our craft, yet are we all the women, for we exult in passion and love is still our desire- our craving and our shame. And from this you will perceive that we poets can be neither wise nor worthy citizens. We must need be wanton, must need rare at large at the realm of feelings. (70-71)

Aschenbach at last philosophizes the artistic career. He is existed by whole event where he performs as dignified personality. Now, he has realized the fact but realization does not work due to belatedness:

And to teach youth, or the populace, by means of art is a dangerous practice and out to be forbidden. For what good can an artist be as a teacher, when from his birth up to his headed direct for the pit? we may want to shun it and attain to honour in the world; but how ever we turn, it draws us still. (71)

Aschenbach realizes that "knowledge is all knowing understanding, forgiving; it takes up no position, sets no stores by form. It has compassion with abyss- it is the abyss"(71).

The circumstances that appear in front of Aschenbach is useless. His realization is just a futile achievement for temporary satisfaction. He poeticizes the experience: "And beauty

we mean simplicity, largeness and renewed serenity of discipline; we mean a return to detachment and . . . "(71).

The period Aschenbach spent in Venice swiftly mounting dreadful situation, a sense of futility and hopelessness. Aschenbach's physicality is weakening. He does not have any options. His quest of achieving love of Tadzio embracing beauty made him abandon morality and dignity, abandoning himself to passion, decadence and ultimately death: "Some minute passed before anyone hastened to the aid of the elderly man sitting there collapsed in his chair. They bore him to his room. And before nightfall a shocked and respectful world received the news of his decease" (73).

Finally, Aschenbach meets his tragic death. He could not fulfil his mission. He is unable to maintain his artistic popularity. Neither he could get love and affection of the boy nor fulfil the artistic passion. His all practices went in vain. Ultimately, he accepts death. He achieves nothing rather invites frustration and utter ruin. All these instances create a sufficient ground where central character, Gustav von Aschenbach, having supreme artistic quality, meets his ultimate collapse. He passes innumerable phases but he could not fulfil the passion he felt. In Aschenbach's destruction, he himself is solely responsible. Thus, the novel presents the personal decadence of Aschenbach who is utterly ruined due to his excessive passion for beauty.

CHAPTER - IV

Conclusion

After having discussed the novel *Death in Venice*, by Thomas Mann suggests that the central character is heavily swayed by his passion for beauty. The profound excessive passion results the decadence of an artist. The novel, in fact, is the unsettling story of deeply disturbed principal character, Aschenbach, portraying his soul rending conflict between art and life. It shows the bloody twist and the ultimate physical, moral and mental degradation and disintegration of a modern artist.

An ascetic and austere man, Aschenbach has achieved literary fame by strict adherence to discipline, channelling loneliness into an ordered existence. Suddenly at the middle age, he finds himself unable to write. Although he dedicates himself to the ideal existence he avoids introspection of his own depressed state which is the root cause of his tension and suffering. To reduce this tension, he winds up to Venice which is his desire to escape his paralytic situation. Indeed, the image of Venice, is decadence itself, beautiful and romantic yet rotting and corrupted at its very foundation.

Aschenbach was taken away from his past when he happens to see the scenic view of Venice. He is totally isolated, grown up solitary man without comradeship. He is attracted by the fanciful impression of polish boy, Tadzio. He develops excessive passion towards the boy that paved the way for his destruction. His relationship with the boy exists only in fantasy that he experiences a loosening of the rigid boundaries he has maintained between himself and others. Aschenbach experiences the beauty of the boy; he ultimately pours all his energies into Tadzio and resorts to an obsessional preoccupation with him in the absence of real relationship. Aschenbach calls Tadzio's

beauty a perfect beauty, claiming that his face recalled the noblest moment of Greek sculpture and that his expression was that of pure and godlike serenity.

Aschenbach's love becomes his desire to possess Tadzio, and this supersedes his reverence for the boy's beauty and grace. For him, the beauty of the boy is the greatest achievement. The excessive sickness and irrational love to the boy leads him to his ultimate failure. His suffering intensifies when he finds vision disconnected with the boy. Aschenbach has devoted his life to the creation of beauty. He perceives beauty from the boy, possessing the boy as his own property. Passion as confusion and as a stripping of dignity is really the subject of Aschenbach pathetic decline and fall. Aschenbach's struggle to maintain emotional poise becomes more stressful as affectionate yearnings escalates. Aschenbach himself has created a labyrinth, which did not allow him to escape. In the very beginning of the novel, he justifies his lust for Tadzio by elevating him to an object of perfect beauty. This beauty of the boy completely detached him from the real world. His journey to Venice was for literary creation but he created nothing. It is his deliberate business that paralyzed his artistic dignity. Later on, his real objective becomes to acquire the boy. His deep erotic and sensual feeling leads him to his ultimate collapse. Aschenbach's longing is nothing but homoeroticism and that is the cause of his dreadful devastation. His edifice personality, morality and form are at stake. He becomes emotionally intoxicated and intellectually deluded.

Aschenbach develops deep attachment towards the boy. He becomes incomplete in absence of Tadzio. He is contaminated by his erotic and aggressive impulses of love. The endeavour of Aschenbach to acquire beauty are meaningless and cause of his decay

as well. Aschenbach is slaved and debased by the beauty of the boy. His relentless to the boy is completely unnatural and anti-social.

Aschenbach can not accept any flaw in Tadzio. In order to maintain his idealized view of the boy, he distorts everything. The boy is the permanent dweller of his mind. He feels completely restless when he misses the sight of the boy. Aschenbach feels himself incomplete as if he is born for the boy and boy is there for him only. When he fails in his attempt to possess the boy, he is utterly ruined due to his excessive passion for the boy's beauty. He seeks and demonstrates the deep passionate action to the boy. This connection between love and destruction is evident in Aschenbach's vivid dream. Aschenbach embracing extreme passionate, primitive self, totally disregards moral restraint and discipline.

Love, disease and death are inevitably interwoven in Aschenbach's pursuit of Tadzio in a plague-ridden city. Aschenbach puts Tadzio at risk, by showing a sexual interest upon the boy in an unusual way. Aschenbach spends the days and nights shamelessly being obsessed with Tadzio, and follows him, wandering through the plague-ridden streets of Venice. Throughout the novel, parallels are drawn between his moral sickness and the physical illness that pervades the city. But Aschenbach becomes unable to maintain balance between his passion and discipline. Although Aschenbach has knowledge about the lethal disease, he declines to leave Venice. The city dwellers left the city with the fear of plague but his excessive lust to Tadzio makes him blind. The sickness of Venice is symbolically the sickness of passion overtaking Aschenbach. Aschenbach is an extremist who is off balance and destined to fall. Neither he could fulfil his artistic passion nor the boy's beauty. His sheer mad quest to locate his beloved Tadzio

is futile. These all off activities of Aschenbach are the causes of his decadence. In the final scene of the novel, Aschenbach gazes and gazes at Tadzio from his beach chair and his tired head falls upon his chest and he expires.

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