

Friedrich Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian Dichotomy in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

Rawiya Kouachi

Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 University (Algeria),
r.kouachi@univ-setif2.dz

Received: 29/08/2022

Accepted: 03/11/2022

Published: 31/12/2022

Abstract:

*Human nature is a thorny topic that triggers a myriad of discussions all over the world. In this regard, researchers endeavor to understand human behavior as a result of rational or emotional impulses. Accordingly, this article attempts to diagnose the controlling power of human nature in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and the real cause of the characters' downfall from Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical ideas. Hence, the analysis reveals that some characters' behavior, like the protagonist Edna Pontellier and Victor Lebrun, is controlled by emotional Dionysian impulses; while, the behavior of Léonce Pontellier, Robert Lebrun, Mademoiselle Reisz and Adèle Ratignolle reflects rational Apollonian tendencies. Yet, most of the characters fail to make a balance between Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics that led to their tragic downfall inasmuch as the best life, for Nietzsche, demonstrates the combination of both Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. Therefore, human life is based on the harmony between Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies.*

Keywords: Nietzsche; Dionysian impulses; Apollonian tendencies; Chopin's *The Awakening*.

1. Introduction

Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is one of the most outstanding novels of American literature. It has been hailed as Chopin's masterpiece. When *The Awakening* was published in 1899, it elicited a wide range of critical responses of either admiration or disdain. At the beginning, it was not widely appreciated. Some critics have viewed the novel as an artistic masterpiece, while the majority of readers and critics attacked the novel. *The Awakening* created a sense of shock because of its subject matter. It explores

taboo issues including human sexuality. Furthermore, by placing the novel within its historical context, it displays many inspirations, like the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche.

In fact, *The Awakening* is not the only book that was banned, the works of Nietzsche were also forbidden. Nietzsche is undoubtedly one of the most influential and provocative thinkers of the nineteenth century. He has an immense influence on other writers. One of his major works, which was published in 1872, is *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. It

tackles a myriad of philosophical issues, but the most important topic is the relation between the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. Hence, the research focuses on reading *The Awakening* in the light of *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. It seeks to show the controlling force of human behavior and the philosophical secret behind the characters' downfall in the novel from a Nietzschean perspective. This research attempts to demonstrate to what extent is Chopin's *The Awakening* influenced by Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. It highlights the intertextuality between the two texts. The research endeavors to diagnose whether human nature is based on rational or emotional forces and most importantly it scrutinizes the reason behind Chopin's characters' tragic downfall, especially the heroine Edna Pontellier, from a Nietzschean standpoint. In other words, is the characters' tragic downfall the result of relying on Apollonian or Dionysian tendencies or their failure to reconcile both tendencies in human life?

2. Apollonian and Dionysian Tendencies in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*.

Nietzsche's outstanding work, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, examines the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. For Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, "*The Birth of Tragedy* is a specific intervention in a debate that was conducted during the nineteenth century about what form modern society and modern culture should take. Roughly speaking, *The Birth of Tragedy* asks how can we remedy the ills of 'modern' society"

(Geuss & Speirs, 1999, p. x). Actually, the backbone of the book is that life, art and literature originate from the duality of the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies which are absent in modern life. In this regard, there is a need to revive Nietzsche's ideas about human nature.

Apollonian and Dionysian are terms derived from the names of two Greek gods: Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo is the god of sun, light, youth, dream and plastic arts. He stands for reason, discipline, form, clarity and culture. Apollo relies on reason because rational thinking is structured and it makes distinctions between people. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs say: "Apollo embodies the drive towards distinction, discreteness and individuality, toward the drawing and respecting the boundaries and limits; he teaches an ethic of moderation and self-control" (Geuss & Speirs, 1999, p. xi). Hence, Apollo represents individuality. He is associated with critical and rational assessment. In this regard, Apollo has a moderate spirit and music is an Apollonian art. However, as an opposition to Apollo, Dionysus is the god of wine. He stands for creative and imaginative power, chaotic emotions, irrationality, ecstasy, disorder and drunkenness. The latter is regarded as Dionysian because it breaks down the individual character of a man. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs ascertain that Dionysus is "the drive towards the transgression of limits, the dissolution of boundaries, the destruction of individuality and excess. The purest artistic expression of the Dionysiac was quasi-orgiastic forms of music, especially of choral singing and dancing" (Geuss & Speirs, 1999, p. xi). That

is to say, Dionysus is associated with emotional qualities and he has an excessive spirit. He is the source of primal instincts.

In *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, Nietzsche associates Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies with dream and intoxication. According to Nietzsche, Apollo is "the god of all shaping energies ...is the 'shining one', the deity of light, also rules over the fair appearance of the inner world of fantasies. The higher truth ...the deep consciousness of nature, healing and helping in sleep and dream" (Nietzsche, 1909, p. 24). However, Dionysus is "brought ... by the analogy of drunkenness. It is either under the influence of the narcotic draught ...or by the powerful approach of spring penetrating all nature with joy, that those Dionysian emotions awake, in the augmentation of which the subjective vanishes to complete self –forgetfulness" (p.26). Dionysus is associated with mirth and emotions. Furthermore, it stresses disorder and chaos: "All the stubborn, hostile barriers, which necessity, caprice, or 'shameless fashion' has set up between man and man, are broken down ...each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, blended with his neighbour, but as one with him" (p. 27). Accordingly, Dionysus breaks the rational barriers between people. Yet, in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, the Apollonian and Dionysian polarities are reconciled together to create a harmonious life.

3. Apollonian and Dionysian Characteristics in Chopin's *The Awakening*:

Chopin's *The Awakening* implies Nietzschean philosophy. It introduces new different ideas to the American audience. For such reason, the novel was banned as Nietzsche's philosophical works. According to Patricia L. Bradley,

The possibility that as she wrote *The Awakening* Chopin could have been responding to a Nietzschean cast of the philosophies of the early nineteenth century might explain her work's celebrated difficulty in finding an appreciative audience, as it heralded modernist... and Nietzschean ideas well before American readers were culturally prepared for such approaches. (Bradley, 2005, p.45)

In this regard, there are certain affinities between *The Awakening* and *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. *The Awakening's* major characters stand either for Apollo, Dionysus or both of them.

The Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics are embedded in *The Awakening*. The protagonist, Edna Pontellier reflects such tendencies. She "is capricious" (Chopin, 1899, p. 37). At the beginning of the novel, she stands for Apollo that refers to light, dream and individuality. For Edna:

There were days when she was very happy without knowing why. She was happy to be alive and breathing, when her whole being seemed to be one with the sunlight, the color, the odors... she liked then to wander alone into strange and unfamiliar places. She discovered many a sunny, sleepy corner,

fashioned to dream in. And she found it good to dream and to be alone and unmolested. (Chopin, 1899, p. 76)

The Apollonian tendency is apparent in Edna's behavior and her love of painting and drawing: "She is becoming an artist" (p. 83) because Apollo is the god of plastic arts

However, the Apollonian tendency for Edna gradually vanishes. That is to say, during Edna's gradual awakening, the Apollonian tendency is dominated by the pressures of the Dionysian impulses. Edna dares to challenge the norms of her society and she denies the conventional family roles. She increasingly abandons the power of reason (Apollo) and begins to follow her emotions (Dionysus). In fact, *The Awakening* depicts Edna as a woman with strong sexual desires. She has undergone a transformation from Apollonian to Dionysian tendencies. She "herself is different" (p. 53). Edna's behavior has changed. She "doesn't seem like the same woman" (p. 81). She "began to feel like one who awakens gradually out of a dream" (p. 41). She awakened from a dream (Apollo) to satisfy the Dionysian desires and emotions.

From the novel, Edna's transformation from Apollonian to Dionysian is shown during Lebrun's party. Listening to Adèle's music, Edna "was what she herself called very fond of music. Musical strains, well rendered, had a way of evoking pictures in her mind" (p. 33). The pictures that Edna imagined represent Apollonian images because for Nietzsche, the lyricist "interprets music by means of pictures, he himself rests in the quiet calm of Apollonian

contemplation" (Nietzsche, 1909, p. 54). In addition, "under the Apollonian dream-inspiration, this music again becomes visible to him as in a symbolic —dream picture" (p. 45). However, when Edna listens to the music of Mademoiselle Reisz, she "saw no pictures ...But the very passions themselves were aroused within her soul" (Chopin, 1899, p. 34). In this regard, passions reveal Dionysian impulses. When Edna responds to her emotions, she is "intoxicated with her newly conquered power" (p. 36). Furthermore, "a thousand emotions have swept through [her]" (p.38). That is to say, Edna's life is sometimes chaotic because it is controlled by the Dionysian tendency. It is stated in the novel: "There were days when she was unhappy, she did not know why, when it did not seem worth while to be glad or sorry, to be alive or dead; when life appeared to her like a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms struggling blindly toward inevitable annihilation" (Chopin, 1899, p.76). That is to say, her life is uncontrollable and aimless. She sometimes "feel[s] this summer as if [she] was walking through the green meadow again; idly, aimlessly, unthinking and unguided" (p. 22). It can be said that she is no longer at ease.

Edna's Dionysian transgressions follow her growing awareness of her sexual nature. Hence, "her whole existence was dulled" (p. 60). During her awakening, Edna is under the spell of her emotions. For Nietzsche, the Dionysian tendencies arise from "the influence of narcotic draught" (Nietzsche, 1909, p. 26). When Alcée Arobin kisses Edna's hand, "the touch of his lips upon her hand had acted like a narcotic

upon her" (Chopin, 1899, p. 102). At the end of the novel, Edna is no longer able to control her emotions which get strength over her mind and she is unable to fight them. Edna is "like a child ... [she] seem[s] to act without a certain amount of reflection" (p. 127). That is to say, Edna "felt she had been childish and unwise" (p.136). Edna is like a child whose Apollonian tendencies are controlled by his Dionysian emotions. She repudiates the Apollonian tendency and her situation led Reisz, her friend, to remind her to be wise and reasonable. Reisz says: "Soyez sage" (p. 118). At the end, Edna's behavior reveals much of Dionysian impulses.

In *The Awakening*, Robert Lebrun represents Apollo. Although Robert loves Edna and his love stands for Dionysian tendency, he tries most of the time to avoid her love to keep the Apollonian tendency the most prominent element in his character. Robert represents sun and light. When Edna and Robert go to the isle of Chênrière, they go to rest at the house of Madame Antoine. The latter "would have opened the door to let the sunlight in" (Chopin, 1899, p. 47). At the beginning of the novel, Mr. Pontellier saw Edna was "burnt beyond recognition" (p. 3). In other words, it is a foreshadowing of the love between Edna and Robert who stands for the sun (Apollo). Robert's eyes "gathered in and reflected the light" (p. 4). In addition, when Robert goes to Mexico, Edna misses him "just as one misses the sun on a cloudy day without having thought much about the sun when it was shining" (p. 35). He "had some way taken the brightness, the colour, the meaning out of everything" (p. 60), but when Edna knows that Robert

is coming back to New Orleans, she says: "don't you know the weather prophet has told us we shall see the sun pretty soon" (p. 109). In a nutshell, Robert represents the Apollonian principles.

Adèle Ratignolle is another major character in *The Awakening* that represents a foil for Edna Pontellier. Although Adèle is Edna's close friend, she is completely different from Edna. She is an ideal "mother-woman ...who idolized [her] children, worshiped [her] husband" (Chopin, 1899, p. 10). Adèle is a doting wife and mother. She reveals an Apollonian tendency because she is fond of music and plays piano. Adèle "played very well, keeping excellent waltz time and infusing an expression into the strains which was indeed inspiring" (p. 31). Moreover, music is an Apollonian art: "The music of Apollo was Doric architectonics in tones, but in merely suggested tones, such as those of the cithara" (Nietzsche, 1909, p. 32). However, the Dionysian music "excited awe and horror" (p.31). Adèle's life is organized and is not chaotic. She "keeps up her music, she doesn't let everything else go to chaos" (Chopin, 1899, p. 75). Adèle, indeed, reveals Apollonian characteristics.

Mademoiselle Reisz is the most unpopular person in the Creole society, but she has a vital influence on Edna. She is "a disagreeable little woman" (p.32). Although Reisz has dissimilarities with Adèle, she also has an Apollonian tendency. She is an old, single and independent woman and all her life is devoted to art. She is a pianist and likes music which is an Apollonian art. Reisz is much concerned about herself and does

not pay any attention to the social conventions. Reisz' Apollonian tendency is not overwhelmed by the Dionysian one because she ignores her emotions and desires. In other words, she is old and remains single without a husband and children and her life is filled only by art. Reisz has an immense influence on Edna. In fact, she encourages Edna to be an artist by saying: "the artist must possess the courageous soul....The soul that dares and defies" (Chopin, 1899, p. 84). Reisz, stressing the Apollonian tendency, reminds Edna at the end of the novel to maintain rational control over her excessive Dionysian impulses by saying "soyez sage" or be wise.

Reading *The Awakening* in the light of Nietzschean philosophy, Léonce Pontellier reflects an Apollonian tendency. He is more rational (Apollo) than emotional (Dionysus). Although Mr. Pontellier is economically successful, his marriage has failed. He provides Edna with everything except love. He is always busy with his work and reputation. Furthermore, he treats Edna as his property and shows little affection to her. Mr. Pontellier was "looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property" (Chopin, 1899, p. 3). In addition, when Edna moves to the pigeon house, Mr. Pontellier is much concerned about his reputation. He pays little attention to Edna's feelings and emotions; all what concerns him is following social norms and maintaining his good reputation. He begs Edna to "consider first, foremost, and above all else, what people would say" (p.123). In this regard, Mr. Pontellier's Apollonian tendencies are more apparent than Dionysian ones.

In contrast to the previous characters which reveal Apollonian tendencies, Victor Lebrun reveals Dionysian impulses. His emotions and desires are powerful. Victor is "the younger son and brother —a tête montée, with a temper which invited violence and a will which no ax could break" (Chopin, 1899, p. 28). In fact, Victor's Apollonian tendencies are overwhelmed by the Dionysian ones. The latter are more excessive during Lebrun's party. Victor stresses excess in his words and actions. He is "urging everyone to partake of [ice-cream] to excess" (p. 32). According to Nietzsche, "getting above oneself and excess were regarded as the true hostile demons of the non- Apolline sphere" (as cited in Geuss & Speirs, 1999, p.27). Victor's excess has a great influence on his behavior to the extent that he "became so insulting and abusive that Robert gave him a thrashing on the spot that has kept him comparatively in order for a good while" (Chopin, 1899, p. 64). Thus, the Dionysian tendency is clear in Victor's behavior.

Regardless of the most important characters of *The Awakening*, the Creole society, the setting, puts much focus on the Apollonian tendencies. It stresses reason rather than emotions. A person, especially a woman, is accepted in the Creole society as far as he/she shows his/her Apollonian tendencies and obeys social conventions. In addition, a woman is supposed to be an ideal mother-woman. A Creole woman is good as far as she is like Adèle Ratignolle. She devotes and sacrifices her life for her family. Although Reisz reveals Apollonian tendencies, she is unpopular in the society because she deviates from the social norms

and she is not an ideal mother-woman. Edna also violates the social constraints because the Creole society denies women's emotional and sexual freedom. When Edna and Robert go to the isle of Chênrière, she feels herself free from the social chains. Edna "felt as if she were being borne away from some anchorage which had held her fast, whose chains had been loosening...leaving her free to drift whithersoever she chose to set her sails" (Chopin, 1899, p.45). In the Creole society, Edna and Robert are unable to express their emotions and feelings because of social constraints. When they are alone, they remain silent. Robert "smoked in silence. Neither did Mrs. Pontellier speak" (p. 39), but when they go to the isle of Chênrière, they go free to relax and stay all the day together far from the social shackles. Yet, Chopin's characters fail to cope with their social milieu, especially the protagonist Edna. Thus, what is the secret behind their downfall?

4. The Absence of Reconciliation of the Apollonian and Dionysian Tendencies in Chopin's *The Awakening*.

Reading Chopin's *The Awakening* in the light of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* reflects certain similarities between the two books. However, what is the reason behind the characters' downfall? Is there any reconciliation between the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies in the characters of *The Awakening*, especially the heroine, Edna?

According to Nietzsche, the best art, literature and human life reflect "the reconciliation of Apollo and Dionysus"

(Nietzsche, 1909, p. xxvii). That is to say, "the continuous development of art is bound up with the duality of the Apollonian and the Dionysian" (p. 21). In other words, the marriage of the two forces, Apollo and Dionysus, gives birth to literature. The Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies should be interwoven to reflect human life. B.R. Hergenhahn states that "Nietzsche believed that there are two major aspects of human nature. The Apollonian and the Dionysian....The best art and literature reflect fusion of these two tendencies and the best life reflects controlled passion" (Hergenhahn, 2005, p.222). That is to say, to get a peaceful life, there should be a kind of balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses. Without the Apollonian tendencies, life would be chaotic and without the Dionysian tendencies, life would be meaningless and without any emotions and imaginations. According to Nietzsche, "Apollo could not live without Dionysus" (Nietzsche, 1909, p.41) and Dionysus also cannot live without Apollo: "The Dionysian is actually in the service of the Apollonian" (p. 104). Thus, life is both Apollo and Dionysus and the Dionysian impulses need to be controlled. In addition, for Hergenhahn, "Nietzsche anticipated Freud by referring to these [Dionysian] barbarian urges as *das es*, or the *id*. For Dionysian impulses...to gain expression, they must be modified ...by Apollonian rationality" (Hergenhahn, 2005, p. 222). Therefore, the control of Dionysian impulses by Apollonian powers is the key to a successful good life.

In relation to Chopin's *The Awakening*, the analysis of the major characters reveals

that most of them are unable to apply the Apollonian-Dionysian duality, especially the heroine Edna. She fails to reconcile the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses. She suffers from emotional turmoil because she has undergone a transformation from the Apollonian to the Dionysian tendency.

Edna considers marriage and children as a burden and repudiates the social norms. For Patricia L. Bradley, "Edna is unable to perfect the Nietzschean ideal—to reconcile the Apollonian and Dionysian in her life because she recognizes in this philosophy, as Chopin did in Schopenhauer's, a latent misogyny or, at the very least, a predisposition against the feminine" (Bradley, 2005, p.51). Edna wants to be an independent woman from patriarchal shackles and she sets her emotions and sexual desires free without any rational control. She even denies her motherhood emotions which are considered as the strongest emotions for any woman. Patricia L. Bradley says:

After having achieved a greater awareness of the role society expects of her, Edna is unable to accept even a hard-won reconciliation of the Dionysian and Apollonian elements basic to Nietzschean metaphysics since even that presupposes feminine suffering and the limiting of the feminine role in art to procreation as the necessary first steps to masculine understanding of metaphysical balance. (Bradley 2005, p. 54)

Her repudiation of the reconciliation of the Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies is an important sign to refuse patriarchal practices to advocate her independence. Dionysian tendencies overwhelm and transgress her behavior. The narrator says: "She grew numb with the intoxication of expectancy" (Chopin, 1899, p. 148). Edna, at the end, could not control her irrational passions. For Lynda Boren and Sara de Saussure, "Subscribing to Nietzsche's argument in *The Birth of Tragedy*...Edna's latent Dionysian desires for irrational ecstasy are brought to the surface...while the Apollonian demand for order, required by art, is only feebly realized or negatively imaged as 'encaging', 'paternalistic', 'silencing'" (1992, p.187). In this regard, Edna's behavior is biased by Dionysian tendencies that led to her tragic ending.

As a result, Edna's excessive Dionysian impulses led to her death inasmuch as she is unsuccessful to reconcile her desires with the conventions of her society that stresses the Apollonian tendencies. Although the Dionysian impulses are important in the life of human beings, they should be controlled by the Apollonian rationality. According to B.R. Hergenhahn, "What Nietzsche was urging was not a totally irrational, passionate life but a life of reasonable passion, a life worthy of both Apollo and Dionysus" (Hergenhahn, 2005, p. 222). In addition, Edna, in the moment of her drowning, remembers Reisz. The latter "would have laughed, perhaps sneered, if she knew! And you call yourself an artist!...The artist must possess the courageous soul that dares and defies" (Chopin, 1899, p. 152). That is to

say, Edna is unable to defy her Dionysian impulses.

The Apollonian and the Dionysian tendencies should be balanced like the wings of a bird. Edna, because of her failure to make a balance between the two forces, is like "a bird with a broken wing ...beating the above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down , down to the water" (p. 152). Her failure to reconcile both Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies led to her tragic downfall. Patricia L. Bradley ascertains: "Thus Chopin's broken-winged bird could figure Edna's refusal of Apollonian/Dionysian reconciliation and the imperfections of the limited feminine role therein, and it could also speak symbolically to her recognition that the Dionysian cannot show her 'the way' to a cultural space for the female artist" (Bradley, 2005, p.58). Therefore, her failure to make a balance between Apollonian and Dionysian impulses unravels her refusal of patriarchal practices that oppress women in the American society.

Victor Lebrun, who reflects the Dionysian tendencies, is also no exception. Although it is not clear what happened to his life, he is also unable to combine his Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. His life is chaotic, so he fails to apply the Nietzschean philosophy of the Apollonian - Dionysian duality.

Mademoiselle Reisz and Léonce Pontellier are also unable to combine their Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. Although the Apollonian impulses make life regular and ordered, they need the Dionysian tendencies to have a harmonious life. Reisz rejects her Dionysian impulses by remaining single

and devoting all her life to art. In addition, Mr. Pontellier is a married man and has children, but his life is regular lacking emotions and love. All what concerns him is his work and reputation. His Dionysian impulses are embedded and neglected which led to the failure of his marriage.

Adèle Ratignolle reflects much Apollonian tendencies and she is respected in the Creole society because she follows the social norms. She tries to balance between her Apollonian and Dionysian impulses to live a harmonious life. However, her devotion to her husband is exaggerated. Adèle is like a slave because she worships and obeys her husband who is like a master that controls her life.

Robert Lebrun is the only character that applies the Nietzschean philosophy of the Apollonian and Dionysian duality. Although the Apollonian impulses are the most apparent impulses in his behavior, he tries throughout the novel to control his Dionysian tendencies. Despite the fact that he loves Edna, he tries all the time to avoid a relationship, with a married woman, that is against rationality and morality. Robert goes to Mexico to avoid Edna's love and he tries to control his irrational passions to have a successful life. He refuses to marry Edna until she gets free from her husband. He does not submit to his Dionysian impulses. In fact, Robert is successful in controlling his Dionysian passions.

From the aforementioned analysis, the tragic downfall of the characters, particularly Edna Pontellier, is the result of their failure to reconcile both Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies in a harmonious way or the excessive control of one

tendency over the other. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs say: "Although these two impulses are in some sense opposed to each other, they generally coexist in any given human soul, institution, work of art....It is precisely the tension between the two of them that is particularly creative. The task is to get them into a productive relation to each other" (Geuss & Speirs, 1999, p. xi). Thus, there is a sort of misbalance in Chopin's characters' life. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs ascertain:

Individuals have developed their talents and powers in an overspecialized, one-sided way; their lives and personalities are fragmented, not integrated, and they lack the ability to identify with their society in a natural way and play the role assigned to them in the world wholeheartedly. They cannot see the lives they lead as meaningful and good. (Geuss & Speirs, 1999, p. xiii)

In other words, people's plight is due to lack of balance between Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. Therefore, the remedy is to go back to Nietzsche's ideas to make a reconciliation of both Apollonian and Dionysian impulses to be productive and creative.

5. Conclusion:

Chopin's *The Awakening* is one of the most enduring novels of American literature. It is undoubtedly one of the most compelling stories about human life because it is considered as a revolutionary

novel that tackles taboo issues about humans' freedom of sexuality. In addition, *The Awakening* implies many inspirations and among them the Nietzschean philosophy. The analysis unravels certain affinities between Chopin's *The Awakening* and Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. The research diagnoses the controlling force of human nature and the cause behind the characters' tragic downfall from a Nietzschean perspective. In fact, there are many Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics in the characters of *The Awakening*, but most of them lack the Apollonian and Dionysian duality. That is to say, the results show that while some characters, like Edna and Victor Lebrun, exhibit Dionysian impulses in their behavior, other characters, as Mademoiselle Reisz, Léonce Pontellier and Adèle Ratignolle show apollonian tendencies. Thus, the analysis reveals that the secret behind the characters' downfall is their inability to reconcile both tendencies because human life is based on controlling Dionysian impulses and creating a balance between the two tendencies. The only character that shows such duality between Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies is Robert Lebrun. He escapes his tragic downfall. Yet, this research is open to future research and other interpretations.

5. Bibliography List:

Boren, S & Davis, S. (Eds). (1992). *Kate Chopin Reconsidered: Beyond the Bayou*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

- Bradley, P.L. (2005). "The Birth of Tragedy" and "The Awakening": Influences and Intertextualities. *The Southern Literary Journal*, 37 (2), 40-61.
- Gaur, A. et al. "Apollonian-Dionysian Dichotomy" <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Apollonian-Dionysian-dichotomy>: (consulted on 12/5/2022)
- Chopin, K. (1899). *The Awakening*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Geuss, R. & Speirs, R. (Eds). (1999). *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hergenhahn, B.R. (2005). *An Introduction to the History of Psychology*. Belmont: Wadsworth .
- Nietzsche, F. (1909). *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*. London: George Allen & Unwin LTD.
- Zhang, Z. (2006). *Selected Readings in Classical Western Critical Theory*. Beijing. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.