

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again – beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

**Xerox University Microfilms**

300 North Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

76-21,165

FROSCH, Mary Alfred, 1945-  
NARCISSUS: THE NEGATIVE DOUBLE.

City University of New York, Ph.D., 1976  
Literature, English

**Xerox University Microfilms**, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

© 1976

MARY ALFRED FROSCH

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

NARCISSUS: THE NEGATIVE DOUBLE

by

MARY FROSCH

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate  
Faculty of English in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1976

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

28 April 1976  
date

J. W. Wolk  
Chairman, Examining Committee

12<sup>th</sup> May 1976  
date

Allen Mandelbaum  
Executive Officer

Armas Fletcher

Jimmy Hoo

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
Preface . . . . .	1
One Narcissus: Early Transformations of the Myth	14
Two Narcissus and the Literary Imagination: From Ronsard to Laclos . . . . .	58
Three The Spenserian Double . . . . .	84
Four The Romantic Double . . . . .	113
Five From Romance to Novel . . . . .	163
Epilogue . . . . .	212
List of Works Consulted . . . . .	220

## Preface

In Edgar Allan Poe's Masque of the Red Death, the resourceful Prince Prospero, his dominions ravaged by pestilence, retires with a thousand of his favorite followers to the seclusion of one of his fortified abbeys. There, amply provisioned and splendidly entertained, he and his revelers remain in self-absorbed security. But during a masqued ball, there arrives one uninvited guest, indec-  
orously disguised as the plague. Prospero, mad with rage and fear, confronts this intruder, dagger in hand; the stranger leads him through each of the six magnificent chambers of his imperial suite to the seventh, an ebony-velveted apartment, appointed with a brilliant red stained-glass window. As his horrible guest turns to face him, Prospero utters a cry and drops to the floor, dead. Thus the Prince is killed by the plague, the Red Death he has so ardently tried to avoid--the link between the destructible self and its indestructible image in death. This is what Prospero finds after a voyage through the chambers of his mind, chambers with stained-glass windows of uniform, incandescent color, until he reaches that last, innermost chamber where the contrast between the scarlet and deep black evinces a final contradiction.

Herein lies the subject of this study, an examination of a particular, life-denying form of doubling whose nature is contradictory and that has its typological origins in the myth of Narcissus. According to Ovid, when Narcissus tries to evade the external world and so chooses as his love-object a reflected image of himself, he mistakes the appearance of reality for the reality itself. The object of his affection becomes, at the same time, its subject. Similarly, in Poe's tale, Prince Prospero retreats into his abbey, a metaphor for his eccentric and august imagination, and in this way also withdraws from the outside world. But, inevitably, the spectre of his retreat--that part of his imagination which, through his denial of death, only makes death more real--finds him out. In attempting to escape the reality of death, Prospero misapprehends the reality of life; like Narcissus, he fails to acknowledge the contradictory nature of their simultaneous distinction and identity.

This contradiction is often characterized in literature by what has come to be called the double. Sometimes, as in Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov, character doubles can illuminate an aspect of the original self, so that the original self grows into a moral awareness (self-awareness) even if the occasional cost of this awareness is death-- Father Zossima does this for Alyosha, Smerdyakov for Ivan,

the elder Karamazov for Dimitri, Grushenka for Katerina. But the double also performs a negative function, as in a Narcissus-like reflection--it deceives and obscures so that self-awareness is impossible. When Prospero mocks life by seeking refuge from death, life's mysterious, ineluctable counterpart, he etches death's durability on his imagination, and that shadow, the emanation of his perverse imagination, kills him. The revel he celebrates while in seclusion only suggests a desperate and futile parody of vitality, the vitality of one condemned by his own imagination to die.

This study centers on the narcissitic or negative double, that is, the emanation of the self which, like Narcissus' false image, obscures or prevents moral illumination, or even life itself. Instances in literature of negative doubling are manifold; its importance is evident when examining the difficult but necessary distinction between romance and novelistic modes of fiction, or when exploring the mysterious relation of the artist to his work. The negative double can be allegorized to provide complex moral alternatives--an obstacle course, as in Spenser's Faerie Queene--and thus present a world rich in conflict; it can be explored as potential but thwarted desires of the original self, as in the prose romance or the so-called gothic novel; or it can be explicitly and implicitly embodied in character

and theme, as in the unconscious, often contradictory world of the novel. Like Narcissus, gazing on his own reflection, the idea of the negative double conveys the ongoing attempt by the imagination to reconcile opposites, to divine a world through the self and so court self-delusion. Self-delusion, then, becomes the medium for a failed form of perception.

In Ovid's poem, the myth of Narcissus points to the advisability of reciprocal, sexual love rather than a sterile, self-contained travesty which Narcissus favors. The travesty, represented by Narcissus' reflection, poses two problems: first, that every ideal form suggests its opposite; second, that this opposite may be perceived independently and misapprehended as the original. Renaissance mythographers were quick to elaborate on these aspects, and introduced a variety of moralizations collected from Ovid and other Ovidian analogues. Yet amid this plethora of interpretation remains the link between what happens to Narcissus, and death, the notion that the perverse imagination brings about disaster. Milton speaks to this in a radical manner in Paradise Lost, where it is clear that Satan has lost forever the kingdom of heaven for daring to conceive of a kingdom of his own, and where Adam and Even fare somewhat better owing to their remorse--their acquired ability to understand the nature of goodness. But Spenser,

the innovator of later romance form, returns to the problem intimated by Ovid: whether or not Narcissus' error means that there are phantoms who can haunt the imagination to the grave. By expressing a profound element of doubt at the end of The Faerie Queene, Spenser suggests a falling away from the Miltonic subline; the Blatant Beast, that peer of negative doubling, embodies this last, unconquerable fear that the imagination has its limits. The idea of boundaries imposed on the imagination by itself, as when Narcissus becomes enchanted with his own reflection and hence confines himself to this image, is an underlying theme of the romance and of Romantic Poetry. In ending his great poem by showing, through the Blatant Beast, that other vital emblems cannot suppress finally the gloom of continuing danger, Spenser heralds a post-Miltonic universe, where the threat of Narcissus' false image shadows all artistic endeavor.

Nowhere does this concern manifest itself more acutely than in nineteenth-century prose fiction. In the fairy tale, for example, the double can openly portray a certain kind of identity anxiety inappropriate for more realistic modes--whether, as in Jean Ingelow's Mopsa the Fairy, Jack should allow his fairy-double to presume a more significant role in his imagination than, say, his father, thus suggesting that fairies, creatures of the imagination, are preferable to real people. Another permissive form for the imagination is the detective story. In Wilkie Collins'

Armadale, the central mystery involves a fatal name--Armadale--fatal, because although the two Alan Armadales share the same name, they are not related. This strange association makes them rivals and finally victims of each other. Like Narcissus, they are grotesquely trapped by their failure to perceive a distinction between the fatal image of a heritage which now hunts them down, and the possibility of two separate lives. Even when the mystery of identity is solved, the pattern of self-destructiveness continues for one of the Armadales who falls prey to his original misconception about naming.

The novel, as a combination of social fable and mystery or detective story, borrows much from the romance, especially from the romance as it evolves through Spenser. Richard Chase has noted that the main difference between the novel and the romance is the greater importance given to reality in the novel.<sup>1</sup> But the novel and the romance have different uses for the real world. The novel's "reality" consists of a familiar historical setting, though not necessarily historically accurate, as a background for plausible action. Novels are thereby saturated with paraphernalia from everyday life; this clutter promotes an atmosphere in which art can be disguised as life in its adhesion to detail, as well as in its submersion in objects for the most part bereft of the traditional emblematic echoes native

to the romance. Events, in the novel, form the substance of the action as it is played out by the characters. A prevailing interest in defining time, in making the notion of time reliable and important, in effect, localizing, distinguishes this fictional mode. There are no conscious allowances for imaginary time, unfamiliar moments which may exist separately or simultaneously with "real" moments. The everyday life depicted in the novel does not evoke these instants, although they may still be there. In the romance, however, such moments prevail. There, the imagination invents everything--setting, time, action-- and characters are left to create their own interpretations of the world. There is no strong necessity to distinguish between "real" and "imaginary," because both are understood to draw freely upon each other, most often through the transforming agency of allegory.

Imagination as it serves the novel describes what is, and it must go underground to express anything that does not conform to this generally recognizable concept of reality. By going underground, the imagination can be internalized as an aspect of characterization; it can then create a larger choice of action for the character, similar to the possibilities offered in the romance. Hence characters may use the imagination to conjoin the elusiveness of the unknowable or unfamiliar imaginary world with the

literal vision of the everyday; the notion of time in the novel is thereby given the inventive possibilities intrinsic to the romance. Characters who cannot straddle both real and imaginary notions of time develop "second" selves, doubles who express by their very existence another dimension of time and the original "real" self. Thus characters in novels, like their counterparts in the romance, assume the responsibility of innovators and manipulators of time, because they have the power to invent their own relationship to their real or imagined situation.

In the nineteenth-century English novel, unknowable or unfamiliar experiences are those which do not fall within the novelist's imaginative conception of his work--the terms of everyday life. To portray such experiences characters are often shown to be discontented with their present experience in the world, as Lady Dedlock is in Dicken's Bleak House, when she lives every moment through an inadmissible image of her past, thus negating the "real" experience of living with Sir Leicester. This dialectic between past and present--between suppressing the past so that it becomes a mystery, and localizing these memories so that they can be demythologized and form a part of everyday life--is the focus of Dickens' novel, a novel in which the narcissistic double abounds both in character and theme. And here can be seen the ways in which the romance has

influenced the novel, has even become incorporated into the canon of realism. For the mystery central to the novel is also the mystery central to the romance, the suggested mystery which lies beyond the work at hand. What the narcissistic double shows is the ever-present danger of reductive self-consciousness--of the artist's overextending of himself by creating his own world out of his own imagination. Narcissus is swept away to nothingness by the delusive, daemonic myth he shapes out of his reflection, a mere vestige or copy into which he projects himself. In this way, the negative double stresses an inherent duplicity in the concept of the self. The narcissistic double of the romance explicitly embodies both the mystery and the literal vision of such a divided concept. Following along the lines adduced by Spenserian romance, the novel employs this same double in an exploratory, inductive way rather than as a deductive, heuristic device.

Perhaps the duplicity that characterizes Narcissus' self-destroying impulse can best be explained in a work about the relation of the artist to his work. Heine's twentieth poem in the homecoming section of his *Book of Songs* describes this relationship. In it, the poet returns home to confront a memory which renews an old source of suffering:

Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen,  
 In Diesem Haus wohnte mein Schatz;  
 Sie hat schon längst die Stadt verlassen,  
 Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben Platz.

Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die Höhe,  
 Und ringt die Hände, vor Schmerzengewalt;  
 Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe --  
 Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt.

Du Doppeltgänger! du bleicher Geselle!  
 Was äffst du nach mein Liebesleid,  
 Das mich gequält auf dieser Stelle,  
 So manche Nacht, in alter Zeit?<sup>2</sup>

(The night is still; the streets are quiet;  
 My beloved once lived in this house;  
 She left the city long ago,  
 But her house still stands in the same place.

There also stands another who stares into space,  
 And wrings his hands in despair;  
 I shudder when I see his face--  
 The moon shows me it is my own.

You double! You pale phantom!  
 Why do you come to ape the woe  
 That haunted me under these windows,  
 So many nights, long ago?)

The poet's lost love, who no longer lives where she used to, who perhaps no longer lives at all, fills him with despair and causes him to dedicate a poem inspired by this loss. But, in the midst of his sorrow, the poet perceives "ein Mensch," another man also standing before the house of his former beloved, also wringing his hands in the agony of his pain. He recognizes that this man is none other than his double, a reflection of his past loss and continuing sense of abandonment; the recognition of his double creates in him a new feeling of self-consciousness, a new despair--

despair over the presence of a double who acts as a parody of himself, who intrudes into his poem and changes its tone and its intention. At this point, the poet considers the painful memory of his love song (the poem this poem started out to be) ruined by the presence of his double, his own sense of himself as a poet; his poem now becomes another poem, a poem which only speaks to the impulse to imitate by re-living a past memory. The new poem is adduced by the intruder who thrives on distortion and destroys the poet's original inspiration by forcing him inward, on a reductive, self-mocking quest. This is the quest of the Alastor poet and Victor Frankenstein, and it embodies the problem of Narcissus, what self-knowledge unmediated by self-awareness can mean.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books, 1957), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Heinrich Heine, xx of Die Heimkehr in Samtliche Schriften (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1968), vol. I, p. 118.

## Chapter One

### Narcissus: Early Transformations of the Myth

Ovid's Metamorphoses was completed in the year 8 A.D., bringing together at the beginning of the Christian era, a collection of pre-Homeric and post-Homeric myths. The time, because it wavered between old and new, was difficult and transitional. Ovid's fifteen-book poem reflects this in its organizing principle, the very notion of transformation or metamorphosis. The idea of metamorphosis, of a marked change not only in appearance but also in condition, connects thematically the episodic yet ongoing narrative of the poem. Various narrative types, such as the creation epic, stories of divine love and divine vengeance, histories of heroes and the rise and fall of nations, are all used in the telling of a continuous story; but what is characteristically Ovidian about the poem is its energy, emphasized by Ovid's reverence for the forward-moving experience of living, an experience he expresses in the constant process of change from one state to another. Part of this experience includes myths celebrating fertility, both divine and human; here, Ovid's humanization of the gods and deification of mortals recall older epics like The Iliad, The Odyssey and

The Aeneid. Another part of this experience, less typical of the traditional epic and more distinctly Ovidian, is expressed through the story of Narcissus and Echo, when transformation is used not to preserve but to deflate, even to reduce to the point of extinction. Here, Ovid subtly criticizes energy misspent, energy wasted more destructively than the energy of vengeance, where at least the act of retribution can effect some occasional change, possibly for the better, or where it can inform the misguided of a higher wisdom. The kind of metamorphosis that reduces Echo to repeating the words of others or reduces her further to only a voice seems less offensive than that which reduces Narcissus first to a repetition of himself, when he mistakenly infuses his reflection with a being of its own, and then to a flower, which though beautiful and fragile, is earthbound and impermanent.

It is interesting to note that the story of Narcissus, located at the end of Book III of Ovid's Metamorphoses, is wedged, along with the brief story of how Tiresias became a prophet, between two stories about Bacchus, one describing Bacchus' birth (the myth of Semele) and the other about Pentheus, who is literally ripped apart by his family for not honoring Bacchus. These are obviously myths concerning divine vengeance: Semele is destroyed by Juno's jealousy when, under Juno's advisement she asks Jove to sleep with

her and suffers the consequences of the union between mortal and god; Pentheus, an unbeliever, refuses to acknowledge Bacchus' divinity, thus placing his own will above the god's, much like those who would refuse to pay tribute to Christ. Narcissus and Echo, too, suffer the punishment of divine vengeance. But for Ovid and for the implication of the Narcissus tradition in centuries of literature that follow, the most serious punishment takes the form of Narcissus' fatal, inevitable choice of sterility over fertility. In showing Narcissus to prefer futile love for his own reflection over the possibility of reciprocal love with Echo, Ovid has depicted the constant threat that Narcissus-like sterility poses to Bacchus-like fertility. If one then considers how Ovid places the Narcissus myth in between stories dealing with Bacchus, it seems likely that Ovid intends to equate one occasion for vengeance--when divinity is taken for granted or altogether denied--with another--when humanity is denied. It also seems likely that Bacchus, the god of fertility, is meant to contrast with Narcissus, an emblem of human sterility. Narcissus, interpreted in this way, appears as a parody of Bacchus, Bacchus' negative, human counterpart, his ever-present, potentially "dark" aspect.

The story of Tiresias, which connects the myth of Semele or (the birth of Bacchus) with the myth of Narcissus, focuses first on Tiresias' apparent ability to transform

himself into a woman, and second on how Tiresias receives the gift of prophecy from Jove. Tiresias has chosen to side with Jove in a dispute with Juno over whether men or women enjoy greater sexual pleasure. Here, also, Ovid emphasizes the idea of fertility implicit in Tiresias' abundant sexuality (Tiresias' advice is asked because he, presumably, has experienced manhood and womanhood) and explicit in Jove's and Juno's sexual bickering. The prophet, like Bacchus, embodies fertility, even when its excess brings punishment. The introduction of Tiresias at this point also serves the narrative function of leading into the Narcissus myth. It is Tiresias' prophecy, that Narcissus will live to great old age only if he never comes to know himself, which sets the tone for the story of Narcissus, a tone conducive to the rhetoric of paradox.

The character of Narcissus as first presented by Ovid is that of a self-absorbed adolescent; but the youthful analogy fails when Ovid shows Narcissus shunning the attentions of both male and female lovers. This departure from Bacchic preoccupation with sex is further explored by the introduction of Echo, a nymph who has been punished by Juno for distracting her while Jove is off with other nymphs. Echo suffers Juno's vengeance for protecting Jove, for enhancing the possibility of fertility in prolific (or promiscuous) sexuality. Echo's ability to distract through

conversation is now changed by Juno; her once independent power of speech becomes only the power to repeat the last words of others. In this way, also, Echo is actually set up to be the ideal mate for Narcissus. Because Narcissus does not respond sexually or otherwise to others, he should respond to Echo, for she can only throw the ends of his own words back at him, complementing him vocally. In addition, because Echo is another person, she can save Narcissus from only "knowing" himself if he returns her love; hence, Echo becomes Narcissus' positive double, an alternative for Narcissus. If he will join her, then he might learn about himself from another person who resembles him. Narcissus' visual obsession, along with Echo's aural one, yields a potentially fruitful combination of sight and sound. Together, they would create at least a modicum of balance against their individual shortcomings. But Narcissus spurns even this accommodation to his self-absorption, preparing himself for the full thrust of Tiresias' paradoxical prophecy. Echo retreats from Narcissus and pines away, becoming a bodiless voice, finally reduced to the property of sound.<sup>1</sup>

Ovid now concentrates on Narcissus' fate. The tone and language of the poem employ paradox as a rhetorical device. Revenge is asked, so that Narcissus, too, might love in vain; but the resulting hopelessness of Narcissus' love is far worse than ordinary unrequited love. Ovid sets the

scene in an appropriately false paradise, a pool surrounded by refreshing greenery, where Narcissus comes to rest after hunting. Here he quenches his thirst, and, while doing so, engenders another one:

Hic puer et studio venandi lassus et aestu  
 Procubuit faciemque loci fontemque secutus,  
 Dumque sitim sedare cupit, sitis altera crevit,  
 Dumque bibit, visae conreptus imagine formae  
 Spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod  
 unda est.<sup>2</sup>

Instead of satisfying himself, Narcissus paradoxically invites a crucial problem of the imagination. He immediately becomes infatuated with his own reflection, his negative double which, unlike Echo, is only imagined by Narcissus to be real. Ovid stresses the perversity of Narcissus' imagination by indicating that his imaginary lover, his shadow or reflection, cannot be placed anywhere in time or space. When Narcissus goes, it must go; it does not exist on its own because it has no substance of its own. Still, Narcissus persists in his delusion, futilely attempting to embrace his reflection, until even the discovery that the reflection is merely that cannot move him. Tiresias' prophecy begins to be realized; Narcissus has come to "know" himself, but this "knowledge" does not instruct or illuminate. The "knowledge" only adds to the finely structured rhetorical paradox illustrated in the myth. Narcissus, because of his inability to love anyone but himself, cannot be parted from his love, a love that can never be substantiated.

His only recourse is to die, a victim of his imagination's own misrepresentation. As a final gesture of ironic contempt, Ovid notes that even on the banks of the Styx, Narcissus can be found admiring his reflection. Only an emblem of his beauty and his brief life in the world above remains; a flower with a yellow center, surrounded by white petals, grows where Narcissus' body, now perpetuated in Hades, once gazed upon itself.

Ovid uses the story of Narcissus as a rhetorical example, both to point to the paradox of self-knowledge without self-awareness (knowledge leading to sterility), and to insist again on the importance of Bacchic fertility, or reciprocal, sexual love as opposed to self-contained love which kills. The kind of self-knowledge precluding self-awareness resembles more one discovery made about the self than knowledge gained of the self, a discovery therefore not necessarily yielding enrichment. All of Narcissus' potential for long life is attendant upon his recognition of life around him; when he fails to acknowledge this life by denying the natural desire to love another, the denial prevents the possibility of procreation, and Narcissus becomes the antithesis of Bacchus. Just as Bacchus represents fertility in Ovid's Metamorphoses, Narcissus represents sterility, the life-affirming principle paradoxically turned in upon itself until it can beget only a shadow of itself.

Permutations of the Narcissus myth in the literature that follows Ovid are as various as they are vast. Appropriately enough, both shadows and reflections, even the mirror itself, often become closely linked with the notion of death. In Zauber des Spiegels, G. F. Hartlaub shows an unusual number of paintings and etching from Dürer to the present day devoted to the representation of death or decay appearing over the shoulder of a subject gazing into a mirror.<sup>3</sup> In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, allusions to the Narcissus myth commonly refer to the lover's inability to reach his beloved, but although the idea of confused judgement is implied, no direct connection with conscious self-absorption, Ovid's version of Narcissus, is made. Yet, even at this stage, the connotations of umbra (shadow) used interchangeably with imago (image) in Ovid to mean both reflection and shadow, and flos (flower) whose roots are earthbound and whose lifespan is brief, emphasize the perishability of worldly things.

At the end of the thirteenth century, a period begins in which there is a great moralization of the Narcissus myth, and in 1480 William Caxton's translation of Ovid moralisé uses Narcissus' failure to achieve immortality to chastise those who would belittle the importance of Fama, or (good) reputation. The characterization of Fama, here,

is represented by Echo, whom Narcissus rejects. This interpretation seems to incorporate both the Ovidian focus on Echo's significance and future Renaissance concern with the value of memorability, linking man with God. In Caxton's translation, Narcissus' reflection represents the fusion of the ideal, which informs and enriches human experience, with the actual, the formlessness and impermanence of earthly life that mocks the ideal. This interpretation explains the paradox of the mirror as an object reflecting the appearance of the ideal without emulating its substance.<sup>4</sup>

Caxton's version of The Metamorphoses, although in part a translation of a much earlier version of Ovid, was probably influenced by the work of Marsilio Ficino and the revival of Platonism. In Ficino's essay which served as commentary for his translation of Plato's Symposium, he explains that because of man's double nature, spiritual and physical, and because he is located midway between God (spiritual) and the earth (material, or physical), man is simultaneously drawn to the beauty of God and the beauty of his own body. Ficino describes man's dilemma through the example of Narcissus and his reflection. Narcissus' error, when he chooses to love his reflection, is not just perceptual but conceptual. Man's soul strives mistakenly for union with man's body because it actually seeks its own beauty and is deceived by bodily beauty; bodily beauty, confined entirely in time, is only the image of the soul's beauty,

which connects man's body with eternity and therefore exists partly in time and partly in eternity. Narcissus does not recognize that physical beauty merely reflects spiritual beauty, that physical beauty is not actually spiritual beauty. His longing for the union of the spiritual and physical in his reflection is misguided because, according to Ficino, man must be able to distinguish and appropriately choose between the spiritual and the physical. Ficino also considers the Narcissus myth as a parody of self-knowledge, the hidden truth of which is revealed through the myth itself.<sup>5</sup>

Ficino's attempt to inspire a new attitude toward Platonism as a vehicle for humanism, and his example of Narcissus as the danger inherent in man's quest for the highest good, was followed, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by a group of mythographers and iconographers who all use the story of Narcissus to expound on this view. In Alciati's Emblemata (1531), the first collection of emblems with attached epigrammatic explications, Narcissus appears in an emblem entitled *φιλαυτία* (self-love), under a section entitled superbia (arrogance). The picture shows Narcissus leaning over a stream, gazing at his reflection; to one side of him, a clump of narcissus flowers is prominent. In the background, there is a female figure, perhaps Echo, with one hand lifted as if

in lament or supplication. The epigram below this emblem warns of Narcissus' folly and restates in different terms the danger pointed out by Ficino:

QUOD nimium tua forma tibi Narcisse placebat,  
 In florem, & noti est versa stuporis olus.  
 Ingenii est marcor, cladesque *φλαυτρία* doctos  
 Quae pessum plures datque, deditque viros:  
 Qui veterum abiecta methodo, noua dogmata quaerunt,  
 Nilque suas praeter tradere phantasias.<sup>6</sup>

Here, Alciati, like Ficino, emphasizes the difficulty of recognizing the highest good, especially since intimations of it remain in traditional views. But the emblem introduces something new, and that is the pictorial presence of the Narcissus flower. The epigram further elaborates on this by noting that Narcissus, because he regards his beauty too importantly, is transformed into a flower and a stuporous herb. It goes on to define the folly of self-love as death and the decay of genius. The flower, then, as the vestige of Narcissus and his error, would also seem to suggest death and decay.

This interpretation, apparently the first since Ovid's to connect visually and linguistically the Narcissus flower to Narcissus himself, is also casually taken up by Natale Conti, whose handbook on moralized mythology, appearing in 1551, was perhaps the most influential of its time. Conti refers to Pausanias' version of the Narcissus myth, where it is adduced that the Narcissus flower may have antedated the actual story of Narcissus. According to Conti, Pausanias claims that Prosperine, first discovered by Pluto with a

lappful of Narcissus flowers, was more susceptible to his wiles because of the flower's languorous, hypnotic nature. Conti prefers the Ovidian version of the myth, however, where he understands Narcissus' transformation into a flower to result from arrogantly and imprudently considering his beauty above the generosity of God. This mythographer adds to earlier interpretations of the myth by introducing the idea of the greater responsibility which goes with greater endowments. He sees Narcissus as beautiful beyond the ordinary and so, at least innately, capable of greater deeds. Thus, to Conti, Narcissus' punishment should be that much more severe because Narcissus is potentially that much more gifted.<sup>7</sup>

Following Alciati's Emblemata, Cesare Ripa's handbook, representing ideas by way of pictures, distributes (among descriptions of several pictures) the reflection episode and the poisonous effect of the flower, and Narcissus' transformation. The most interesting of these is the picture of a garlanded woman holding a sign in her left hand inscribed  $\phi\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$  (self-love), and a Narcissus flower in her right hand. At her feet is a peacock. Ripa's commentary on this picture stresses the difficulty of self-knowledge which, as he points out, Socrates taught and even Apollo had engraved on the door of the Temple at Delphi ( $\tau\upsilon\omicron\sigma\epsilon\lambda\iota\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\ \acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ , know thyself). Ripa argues that the problem of

self-knowledge is complicated by self-love or pride, because these feelings allow each person to feel superior. He goes on to refer to Aristotle's distinction between two kinds of self-lovers; those who are blameworthy for their viciousness in that they only follow the dictates of their passions to suit their own interests; and those who should be praised because their self-love or pride in themselves is their only guiding principle, presumably, to do good for others.

Ripa then ascribes significance to each object in the picture. A woman is chosen to represent the idea of self-love because women are usually entranced with themselves, even if they have no reason to be. Her garland, made of a plant resembling ivy, if reduced to a powder, convinces even the ugliest person of his beauty. Here he intimates that the Bacchic element (the ivy-like plant) can be dangerous if abused; just as Narcissus has abused his beauty by contemplating it alone, so the woman in this picture represents potential fertility rendered sterile by self-love. Ripa attributes the Narcissus flower of this picture to the transformation of Narcissus in the myth; he claims that the poets suspect Narcissus of effecting his transformation so that he can better admire himself. As a flower, Narcissus may constantly gaze upon the shadow he projects, a shadow incapable of moving because Narcissus

as a flower is literally rooted to the spot. Ripa concludes by depicting the peacock, a bird consecrated to Juno, obtaining pleasure from examining its own plumage. The peacock resembles a proud man's admiration of himself, as if he is covered with peacock feathers. While Alciati is expressly referred to as the model for Ripa's work, Ripa highlights the ridiculous element of self-love; Narcissus' flaw is shared by any man who thinks too much of himself.<sup>8</sup>

iii

In Francis Bacon's De Sapientia Veterum (1609), the Narcissus story acquires new moral implications. Not only does Bacon collate older interpretations in his own version; he also makes explicit what has been previously only suggested. Bacon, too, attaches to the story of Narcissus the subtitle self-love. He then begins to relate the myth, following Ovid's presentation up to a point; when he describes Narcissus' actions after encountering his reflection, however, Bacon especially emphasizes the flower transformation and only casually mentions Echo:

Narcissus is said to have been a young man of wonderful beauty, but intolerably proud, fastidious, and disdainful. Pleased with himself and despising all others, he led a solitary life in the woods and hunting-grounds; with a few companions to whom he was all in all; followed also wherever he went by a nymph called Echo. Living thus, he came by chance one day to a clear fountain, and (being in the heat of noon) lay down by it; when beholding in the water

his own image, he fell into such a study and then into such a rapturous admiration of himself, that he could not be drawn away from gazing at the shadowy picture, but remained rooted to the spot until sense left him; and at last he was changed into the flower that bears his name; a flower which appears in the early spring; and is sacred to the infernal deities-- Pluto, Prosperine, and the Furies.<sup>9</sup>

Bacon's commentary on the story further explains his interpretation. Narcissus resembles those persons who "from consciousness either of beauty or some other gift with which nature unaided by any industry of their own has graced them, fall in love with themselves."<sup>10</sup> Such persons usually prefer solitude to public display of themselves, either engaged or otherwise, because they are easily disturbed by any exposure to possible criticism. Their only contacts are with others who are "devoted admirers" and who "assent like an echo to everything they say, and entertain them with mouth homage."<sup>11</sup> Thus, Echo, here, is completely relegated to the property of sound; she does not represent an alternative for Narcissus, but functions as a symptom of his disorder. Bacon goes on to observe that because these persons become so "puffed up, and besotted at last with self-admiration," they "grow utterly stupid, and lose all vigour and alacrity."<sup>12</sup> The flower of spring, Bacon contends, is the perfect emblem for this; both the flower and self-lovers flourish and are talked of at the beginning, but disappoint in maturity the promise of their youth. Bacon continues to comment on the significance of the Narcissus flower:

The fact too that this flower is sacred to the infernal deities contains an allusion to the same thing. For men of this disposition turn out utterly useless and good for nothing whatever; and anything that yields no fruit but like the way of a ship in the sea passes and leaves no trace, was by the ancients held sacred to the shades and infernal gods.<sup>13</sup>

Here, Bacon seems to combine the traditional notion that a flower (flos) connotes the perishability of earthly things, with his own idea of uselessness, those who, like flowers, only represent potential fruition, but who are not actually fruitful. Bacon also, in this interpretation, describes Narcissus' transformation into a flower as an emulative process; the flower, in imitation of Narcissus, remains "rooted to the spot," and Narcissus, before he becomes a flower, loses all sense, thus preparing himself for his dehumanizing transformation, as well as referring again to the numbing effect of the Narcissus flower.

The impact of Bacon's moral point, that Narcissus is not ultimately memorable or useful (and therefore not Christian) because of his self-love, was to contribute to other examinations of the Narcissus myth, and also to the idea of reinterpreted myth as a guide for correct Christian behavior. One examiner of the didactic potential of myth is Henry Reynolds, whose Mythoystes, Wherein a Short Survey Is Taken of the Nature and Value of True Poesy, and the Depth of the Ancients Above Our Modern Poets, published in 1632, considers myth and its interpretation extensively.

The very fact that "Mythomystes" is not defined in the OED leads immediately to the problem taken up by the work itself:

...myth refers both to the story or fable of a poetic work and to the parable which attempts to verbalize it, while mystes (i.e. plural of mist) entertains both the meanings of 'obscure', 'hidden', and 'mystical', 'spiritual'.<sup>14</sup>

In Mythomystes, Reynolds tries to combine the expressible and the ineffable to provide evidence for "true poesy" as being something more encompassing than the traditions called "Pagan" or "Christian." The Ancients (Plato and the Pythagoreans) are lauded over the Moderns (with such exceptions as Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Chaucer, Sidney and Spenser), because they are more "anagogical," more inclined to search for truth, than the more trivial, less inspired, "tropological" Moderns. The full range of what is "true," for Reynolds, cannot only exist in symbol or metaphor, or even in allegory or in correct, emulative action. In fact, even a combination of these will not yield the necessary transcendent harmony possessed by the poet-philosopher-diviner, which could reduce philosophy to "the senses and meanings of fables taken out and separated from their husks and involvements."<sup>15</sup> According to Reynolds, and the Platonists, harmony is found only in the contemplation of "Celestial or Intellectual Love," which is the "excellency of the Beauty of Supernall and Intellectual thinges."<sup>16</sup> This

kind of love inspires the creation of "true poesy" through the interpretation of Divine Mystery: apprehended through the intellect. The emphasis on mystery, Reynolds, says, is to keep the Word "inviolable from the profane Multitude."<sup>17</sup> Hence, ancient wisdom, as well as Mosaic law, takes a hermetic form; "Hiërogllyphichs," "enigmas," "mystical riddles," together with the "true explanation" of Mosaic law, were not to be divulged without first searching for "the knowledge of the wise, and hidden wayes & workings of our great Gods handmaid, Nature."<sup>18</sup> These ways, Reynolds insists, were found in those closest to the mysteries of nature, those "who lived nearest to the time of the gods; meaning the old wise Ethnicks."<sup>19</sup>

The connection between Reynolds' Platonism and his Hebraism can be seen in his description of the elite quality of "truth" (as revealed, for example, in the symbolic dicta of Pythagoras or in the "secreter Mysteries" of Mosaic law); Christian doctrine, as observed in St. Paul's more mundane instruction, presumably to a larger, more socially integrated audience, might seem to present more of a problem for Reynolds and other Renaissance mythographers. But even Paul pays homage to the Platonic concept of the realm of the pure spirit to which the poet, the seer and the lover aspire: "Fow now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then I shall know even also as I am known." Reynolds, like Ficino, is

more concerned to show in Mythomystes that Paul's teachings cannot be correctly understood or even applied to the problem of knowing at all without help from Plato, or without "the exact and absolute knowledge of all natural things (which the Auncients were Masters of)." <sup>20</sup> The quest for knowledge, through unity between the senses (body) and the intellect (spirit or soul) is concomitant with the quest for truth (God and immortality). Myths become prototypes of the stories in the Old Testament as well as the receptacles of "the difference in our selves between Nature alone, and Nature and Grace united...to wit, the knowledge of all Natures most high and hidden wayes and workings; and though far short in the safer part of wisdom, of their more enlightened successors, yet was the bare light (or rather fire) of nature in them, enough to draw them as high as Reason could help flesh and bloud to reach heaven with." <sup>21</sup>

Reynolds takes special note of the example of Narcissus. Appendixed to his essay, is The Tale of Narcissus, briefly Mythologized, with little explanation why this particular myth is chosen to elucidate, other than

finding in but this one among a million of the Ancient fables, somewhat he perhaps before, heeded (or understood) not, (though a tale frequently read by everybody) he might the lesse erre in his search of humane knowledge. <sup>22</sup>

The poem comes not directly from Ovid as Reynolds claims, but probably paraphrases Giovanni Andrea Dell'Anguillera's

Italian version of the Metamorphoses, where the moral dimensions of the Narcissus myth are enlarged by stressing the universal significance of Narcissus' love for his reflection; this kind of exclusive self-love disrupts the laws of nature, requiring supernatural powers to restore order.<sup>23</sup> What Reynolds' version does, in a larger sense, is to reinterpret the meaning of the story so that it can serve as a pre-Romantic object lesson for poets not interested or inspired enough to pursue "truth."

Included in both Reynolds' version of the myth and in his commentary, is a perception about the retention and transcendent nature of certain "timeless" values, such as concentrating on the pursuit of knowledge leading to truth. Narcissus, as analyzed by Reynolds, embodies the most problematic of contradictions: a flawless body without the intellectual ability to discriminate between itself as an image and itself in an image. Obviously Reynolds intends to use the myth to chastise poets and philosophers who, in their strictly Christian or empirical approach to knowledge, frivolously reject the old, except insofar as they choose to imitate it for esthetic purposes. The esthetic emphasis is, to a great extent, fused with the moral emphasis in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century use of myth, where, following Horace's directive (Dulce et utile), myths mostly tend to be considered as structural or literal models.

Reynolds was not impressed by those poets and philosophers of his day who were beginning to respond to myth in this reductive way. Whether intentionally or not, he points out in his version of the Narcissus myth what the problem of self-absorption unmediated by self-awareness can mean. The problem is a radical one. Reynolds also provides, in his commentary, an explanation of the seriousness of Narcissus' mistake; he then presents a possible alternative, culled from Iamblichus' interpretation of a Pythagorean symbolic dictum. These observations (in that they are concerned with the nature of "truth") illuminate the nature of "true poesy," and they reflect the Renaissance obsession with myth as a formula for life--what to do about good and evil, appearance and reality--in short, the plight of "fallen" man.

Reynolds begins his poem, as does Ovid, with Tiresias' prophecy, that Narcissus cannot aspire to the immortality of his parentage (the union of the water nymph Liriope and the River-god Cephissus) except if he "live a stranger to himselfe for ever."<sup>24</sup> Immediately the riddle is posed, and immediately, it seems, as George Sandys says in his commentary on his own translation of Ovid which also appeared in 1632, it is "contradictory to that Oracle of Apollo: To know a mans selfe is the chiefest knowledge."<sup>25</sup> But Narcissus, as Ovid and Reynolds show, cannot come to

"know" himself in the sense that the Oracle implies. Instead, Narcissus "only lov'de, ador'de, and deifi'de/Himselfe, dispizing all the worlde beside."<sup>26</sup> Narcissus comes first to love himself, yet in that love he shows no awareness of self-knowledge. His "proude hawty minde" does not seek to align itself with nature, with either the "choycest Virgins," nor "riper women."<sup>27</sup> He insulates himself with his earthly beauty; it is not to share, not to be directed outward or upward. Already this can be seen to be antithetical to Platonic ideas about beauty and the role of love. Plotinus warns:

There are souls to whom earthly beauty is a leading to the memory of that in the higher realm and these love the earthly as an image; those that have not attained to this memory do not understand what is happening within them, and take the image for the reality. (*italics mine*)<sup>28</sup>

Narcissus, even before he mistakes himself in an image (and so, the image for the reality), has left himself open to this kind of deception by not recognizing the necessity for perspective. It is not self-pride which is his undoing; self-pride is only a warning of Narcissus' exclusion of the outside world.

At this point, both Ovid and Reynolds introduce the nymph Echo, who, although she spoke "but halfe wordes, and them not her owne," still retained her "forme and substance... of flesh and bone,"<sup>29</sup> reminding of the resemblance, literal and figurative, between Echo's "halfe wordes" and

Narcissus' half vision. Both Ovid and Reynolds digress to tell why Echo's ability to speak has been reduced to reiteration. Juno has been distracted from catching Jove with various nymphs by Echo. Reynolds says:

Wordes which the beautyest grievance and displeasure  
could mitigate, and easyer make to beare,  
(of sweete and safe so equall was the measure;)   
For still she kept them by discretion good,  
Within the seemly bounds of womanhood.<sup>30</sup>

Ovid does not stress the quality of Echo's words, nor does he, as Reynolds does, bring in Echo's fame for settling disputes, an observation culled, perhaps, from the older Medieval idea that such a reputation guarantees immortality:

Farre was this faire maydes faire touns glory spred,  
Winning the mindes of all men, by the swaye  
Of her imperious eloqution ledd,  
Wherewith a thousand brabbles every daye  
Among the Nymphs, Silvans, and Shepherds bredd  
She easily atton'de.<sup>31</sup>

Through Reynolds' interpretation of her, Echo becomes a mediator, who to be sure, tricks Juno, but who nevertheless exhibits positive, ameliorative qualities. Once Juno reduces Echo's voice to mere fragments of words, to a property of sound itself, she can "speake plaine no more."<sup>32</sup> When she is stricken with love for Narcissus, she must hide because she must remain silent until he speaks. Both Ovid and Reynolds make Echo's reiterations conform to Oracular formula. Reynolds especially notes this:

Heare I not one? quoth he; One, sayes the mayde;  
Framing a troth from the last word he sayd.<sup>33</sup>

"Troth" possibly has the double meaning, here, of good faith and truth.<sup>34</sup> But, it would seem, Reynolds means to stress the combination of truth and mystery which is intrinsic to Oracular utterance. Echo, deprived of her speaking talent, now acquires, as we shall observe later, another sort of power.

Narcissus, perhaps intrigued by Echo's repetition of fragments of his own words, wishes Echo to disclose herself. But Narcissus, concerned only with himself, does not wish to "know" Echo in the same way that she has come to "know" him, namely, through her love for him:

For as I heare, faine would I know thee. She  
Replies I know thee: so she did; for none  
Ere came so neere her harte as he had done.<sup>35</sup>

Narcissus has withdrawn from knowledge beyond what will come to be his delusive perception of himself in his own image. He does not want to "know" Echo, since such knowledge is outside his range of perception and is to be equated with love for her; Reynolds stresses the literal impact of this rejection by having Narcissus refrain from speaking altogether, thus necessarily cutting Echo off: "He held his peace, and she could speake no more."<sup>36</sup> Echo, whose extension of herself through her love for Narcissus is turned back unrequited, now becomes further reduced. She virtually wastes away into a bodiless voice, the essence of a word, a sound. Reynolds creates from her pathos a sense

of the failed poetess, while again indicating Echo's former role as a speaker of "halfe wordes":

But Halfe the grieffe that in her bosome lyes  
Were utt'red, she might moove with her laments  
The heav'ns, the Earth and all the Elements.<sup>37</sup>

Narcissus goes on to "withstand/Nature, and heav'n, and all the world"<sup>38</sup> through his disdain for the love of others. No substantial other, man or woman, interests him. eventually, in Ovid and in Reynolds, Ramnusia (Nemesis) is invoked by a lovelorn youth to pay Narcissus back. But Narcissus' fate, the one for which he has been formed, is, according to Reynolds, "of so strange a nature,/ As nere before possessed human creature."<sup>39</sup> One day, Narcissus finds himself at the end of a long and exhausting hunt before a fountain whose water is

...of that transparency,  
that his deepe bottome seemes to rise, and neere  
Offer it selfe to the behoulders eye.<sup>40</sup>

There, in the most appealing of pastoral settings, Narcissus meets "that trech'eraus mirhor.../Wherein he hapt his own fair shade to see." Reynolds makes Narcissus "Laye by his bow and quiver from him first,"<sup>41</sup> thus leaving him physically disarmed. Narcissus is now prey for Cupid's golden arrows, and so becomes spiritually disarmed as well:

The beautious image that he sees so cleerely,  
And his owne Shadow in the fountaine makes;  
Not for a Shadow immaterial meerely,  
But for a body palpable, he takes...

And his affection so his reason blindes,  
 As all this faire for which all eyes adore him,  
 He still imputes to what he sees before him.<sup>42</sup>

Narcissus' initial failure to perceive himself as an image leads him to confuse his image with himself; the falseness of the perception only entices him more. It is a falseness into which he has grown, as Ovid and Reynolds show, from birth. All of Narcissus' actions have led to this.

Narcissus' actions have revealed a kind of internalized, nefarious magic, the sort Plotinus claims, that withdraws one from the positive activity of the life process:

...there is no magic when actions recognized as good are performed upon sheer necessity when the recollection that the veritable good is elsewhere....

When, on the contrary, the agent falls in love with what is good in those actions, and, cheated by the mere track and trace of the Authentic Good, makes them his own, then, in his pursuit of a lower good, he is the victim of magic. For all dalliance with what wears the mask of the authentic, all attraction towards that mere semblance, tells of a mind misled by the spell of forces pulling towards unreality.

The sorcery of Nature is at work in this; to pursue the non-good as a good, drawn in unreasoning impulse by its specious appearance: it is to be led unknowing down paths unchosen; and what can we call that but magic?<sup>43</sup>

By focusing on wrong actions, Narcissus has, in fact, brought upon himself the ultimate obstruction to any positive action. Now falseness can only lead to more falseness--to an increased desire for falseness which Reynolds expresses in Narcissus' self-hypnotic and desperate gestures:

He opes his armes to'imbrace it at first;  
 The shade consents, and doth like gesture make:

He nothing gripes; but turns, and rudely teares  
His haire, and drownes his rosy cheekes in teares....

Th'enamoured eyes will nere avverted be  
From their owne splendour, that enthralls him so,  
As (spight of any reason can instruct him)  
They sure will to a speedy death conduct him.<sup>44</sup>

Now Narcissus expresses himself to the surrounding woods in the words of a lover, but his words are as empty as his actions are impotent. Ovid makes Narcissus recognize his delusion at this point. Reynolds, however, extends the moment to read as a sick parody of attainable possibility. Narcissus calls out to his image; its silence reflects his silencing of Echo. He longs for his image to emerge from the fountain to embrace him, just as Echo has yearned for Narcissus' embraces. The fountain, with its reflection, becomes the medium for falseness because it also reflects Narcissus' failure to recognize the existence of others.

Finally, in Reynolds' version, Narcissus discovers that the image in the fountain is "my owne shadow meerely."<sup>45</sup> But self-discovery, for Ovid's and Reynold's Narcissus, is not the same as self-recognition. Reynolds' Narcissus says:

I know that I am it, and it is I,  
That both the loved am, and lover too;  
But to allay my feav'rous malady  
Alas what shall I say, what shall I doe?  
Shall I my selfe, to woo my selfe, apply,  
Or stay perhaps till other do me woee?  
Aymee, wealth makes me poore: accursed blessing  
To pine in want, with over-much possessing.<sup>45</sup>

Narcissus' discovery does not let him come to "know" himself in a way which would make him whole. Reynolds shows him still to be deceived:

Ah could I this flesh-frame asunder parte  
 And take a body from this body free;  
 And (having what I love so well, aparte,)  
 Devide my love betweene them equally,  
 So as they both, one interloving harte  
 Possesst; I might perhaps contented be.<sup>47</sup>

Narcissus continues to see himself in his image; this projection is established in that image and therefore remains problematical. His only desire is to divide, to split, to fragment. It is a triumph of pernicious desire over fundamental common sense:

His armes (though well he knowes the labour vaine)  
 He needs will plunge into the fount againe.<sup>48</sup>

Narcissus' "knowledge" amounts to nothing because it is rendered void by his inappropriate actions. As he pines away, Echo returns, here as in Ovid, to mournfully and ironically reiterate the dying words of his faithful, yet false and hopeless love. Narcissus dies, a victim of self-anihilation. In place of his corpse, Reynolds also mentions a flower, a "Lilly" or "Daffodill" which grows, an emblem of "much of his beauty."<sup>49</sup>

Kinney points out that Reynolds, in his "Observation upon the Tale of Narcissus," analyzes his version of Ovid's poem through a Medieval tropic interpretation, divided here into "the Geographick sence," "the Physick sence," "the Morall sence," and, of main interest, "the Divine sence."<sup>50</sup> The "Georgraphick" comment merely localizes the poem (Cephissus, the river, and Liriope, "a narrow brooke so

named," are described, indicating their source and where they join to encompass "the medowy groundes" where the Narcissus flower grows).<sup>51</sup> The "Physick" comment concerns the nature of the Narcissus flower as it figures in the story of Narcissus:

....the seedes thereof especially (as applyers of them in medicine have observed) do powerfully extinguish the ability and desire of carnall copulation, by overcooling of the Animal seed.<sup>52</sup>

Reynolds goes on to note that the genesis of the name "Narcissus" is "(...torpedo, languor, segnities--slothe, stupide, laziness)," which comes through the "vegetable."<sup>53</sup>

Reynolds then relates the notion that Prosperine was more vulnerable to Pluto because she was discovered by him with a lapful of Narcissus flowers, as Conti's understanding of Pausanias also suggests. But Reynolds, carefully building to his main analytical point, stresses the Baconian observation that

this fraile flowre therefore (the symbole of such like imperfect and dificient inclinations,) was among the number of lost, dead, and soone-to-be-forgotten things, by those Auncient investigators of Natures truths, particularly dedicated to their Infernall gods.<sup>54</sup>

In the "Morall" comment, this point is then interpreted through the personae of the Narcissus story. Echo, according to Reynolds, means "Fame (a faire voice)." Narcissus, the "selfe-loving man," through his rejection of Echo, "despises and slightes the more to be imbraced

happinesse of lasting renowne, and memory."<sup>55</sup> Narcissus is thus reduced to "charus dis inferis," because he is ignorant of the "true" meaning of love. Ficino's comment on Plato's Exhortation to Love in the Symposium draws the following distinction between "simple" and "reciprocal" love:

Simple love occurs when the loved one does not return his lover's affections. In this case the lover is completely dead, for he neither lives in himself... nor does he live in his loved one, since he is rejected by him. Where, then, does he live? In air, water, fire, earth, or in some animal carcass? In None of these, for the human soul does not live in any but a human body. Will it perhaps eke out an existence in the body of some other person whom it does not love? No, not there either, for it does not live in that which it most fiercely desires to live, how can it live in any other? Therefore, the unrequited lover lives nowhere; he is completely dead.<sup>56</sup>

This description of the sterility of unrequited love (especially unrequitable self-love) best expresses the process of Narcissus' demise and, in fact, emphasizes the Ovidian view of Narcissus' problem, that because Narcissus loves his reflection, his love has no substance, no "life" on its own.

But what of Echo? Echo, through her physical demise, has acquired another "self," one which survives and is immortal. She is all "other," while Narcissus is all "self." Reynolds turns to the Pythagoreans, in particular, to Iamblichus, for an explanation of the "divine sence" of his

Narcissus poem, an interpretation he finds central to the significance of Echo:

Pythagoras who (as the most authentick Iamblicus the Caldean tells us) delivered also the most part of his doctrines in figurative, tipick, and symbolick Notions: among which one of his documents is this--While the winds breathe, adore Ecco. This Winde is (as the before-mentioned Iamblicus, by consent of his other fellow-Cabbalists sayes) the Symbole of the Breath of God; and Ecco, the Reflection of this divine breath, or Spirit upon us; or (as they interpret it)--the daughter of the divine voice; which through the beautifying splendor it shedds and diffuses through the Soule, is justly worthy to be revered and adored by us.<sup>57</sup>

Iamblichus, in his Exhortation to the Study of Philosophy, lays the groundwork for the notion of an inspirational "other self," when he says

...there is a clear manifestation of the daemon given and allotted to each of us from the Gods, by which we are recalled to the Gods. For neither is one otherwise able to ascend to that which is essentially most divine and primary unless he uses a genius (daemon) of this kind, by whom it is necessary that every lover of the Gods should be genuinely purified. To whom we owe, first, a liberation from the evils adhering to us from generation,--and, secondly, a true knowledge of the character and quality of the divine and felicitous life by virtue of which knowledge we may ascend and behold the principal and divine race of men, received into which we will have gained the most felicitous life offered to men by the Gods.<sup>58</sup>

Then Iamblichus interprets the eighth Pythagorean symbolic dictum:

When the winds blow, worship the sound. This is a sign of divine wisdom: for it intimates that we should love the imitation of or becoming similar to the divine essences and powers, and when their words accord with the energies to honor and reverence them with the greatest zeal.<sup>59</sup>

Echo, therefore, is the "imitation of or becoming similar to the divine essences and powers," according to Reynolds' understanding of Iamblichus.<sup>60</sup>

Echo represents the linking of the Divine with the human through the metaphor of sound phenomenon, but the reflected sound (like the reflected image) seems only indirectly connected with Echo's actual function. Phenomenon should not be confused with essence; Echo's function also is to serve as a medium, in fact, a mirror, through which Divinity (as it is manifested in Goodness, Intellectual Beauty, Knowledge, Truth) can be reflected, so that it can be apprehended and applied towards, what Reynolds calls "celestial virtue, and ability."<sup>61</sup> Echo becomes, then, not simply a reflection or a resonance, but part of the thing itself; she is an emanation of the Divine, of the possible relationship between God and man. While Reynolds shared this view of the role of Echo with other Renaissance mythographers, it is certainly a digression from the role of Echo in Ovid. There, Echo is reduced to a sound, but her significance as a sound is not moralized or elevated to the realm of metaphysical principle; in Ovid's poem, Echo actually resembles Narcissus in her restricted potentiality.

As Reynolds concludes, Narcissus' self-love, through his inability to recognize even what the Divine is, much less the importance of unifying himself with it, makes him a

prisoner of the flesh. His intellect or reason has been more than defective; it has been absent. Iamblichus, in his Epistle on Truth, explains what this serious misapprehension means:

Truth, as the name implies, makes a conversion about the Gods and their undefiled energy; but doxastic imitation which, as Plato says, is fabricative of images, wanders about that which is atheistic and dark. And the former indeed receives its perfection in intelligible and divine forms, and real beings which are always the same, but the latter looks to that which is formless, and non-being, and which has a mutable existence, and about this its visive power is blunted. The former contemplates that which is; but the latter apprehends such a form as appears to the many. Hence truth associates with intellect, and increases our intellectual nature; but doxastic imitation, looking to that which always seems to be, hunts after folly and deceives.<sup>62</sup>

Narcissus cannot make the leap from looking "through a glass, darkly," knowing only himself "in part," to seeing himself as part of some greater "knowing" beyond the self. This is where the Platonic concept of love, as Erwin Panofsky in his essay on Blind Cupid points out, is transformed by the Christian Fathers into an extension of caritas (appetitus boni, Amor Dei, amor spiritualis) -- "the unselfish love of man to God and to his fellow-beings"--and where it forms a sharp contrast with various forms of cupiditas (appetitus mali, amor mundi, amor carnalis).<sup>63</sup> Panofsky, in this essay, traces the genesis of two types of Cupid (blind-folded and not). In the process of doing so, he uncovers the conflicting principle suggested by Reynolds and others in their

interpretation of Narcissus, namely, that there are two kinds of love, love which is not concerned with "seeing" beyond the self (the blindfolded Cupid, Profane Love) and love which seeks an outlet beyond the self (Sacred Love, Cupid without the blindfold). Panofsky includes one remarkable emblem to characterize this. The two types of Cupid (Eros and Anteros) are fishing, and the inscription below them reads:

Mittam vobis piscatores multos  
O Saint Amour peche mon coeur  
L'amour mondain n'est qu'un mocqueur.<sup>64</sup>

Narcissus, through his blindness, his cupidatas, mocks the real, positive, "Sacred" notion of love. Reynolds equates true love with trueness, a quality not always immediately apprehensible because not easy to apprehend. Echo, more than a voice, more than a sound, embodies the mystery that Narcissus has failed to take into account because his imagination is limited. "True poesy," because "true," is not deceived by imitative self-consciousness; it reaches out to transcend such reduction by attempting to discern and then unfold that which is ineffable--another reality, eternal ideas which the self is gifted to resemble through its participation with them.

iv

Reynolds' Mythomystes was followed by other learned commentators of the seventeenth-century, among them,

Alexander Ross. In his Mystagogus Poeticus, or the Muses Interpreter (1647), Ross repeats Tiresias' paradoxical prophecy and then directly goes on to discuss the implications of Narcissus' error. He begins his discussion with the definition of Narcissus' self-love: "Narcissus doted on his own shadow, and for not enjoying of it, died."<sup>65</sup> This definition serves to describe those "men of this world" who because they focus on the "empty vanities" of "riches, honours, pleasures, beautie," abandon the quest for true happiness in favor of "the shadowes thereof."<sup>66</sup> To further emphasize this point, Ross also mentions the folly of Ixion, whose "shadow" embrace of Juno brought about Jove's fatal wrath against him. Ross finds in Narcissus' punishment "an example of God's judgements on such as are puft up with self-love, or doat on their own beautie," and he quotes from St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians to illustrate the implicit Christian reading of the moral:

...and what hast thou that thou didest not receive?  
 now if thou didest receive it, why dost thou glory,  
 as if thou hadst not received it?<sup>67</sup>

In this way, Ross translates the Narcissus myth into a Christian directive: "I would have all Ladies and young men think on this, who commit idolatry with their beauties, spending more time on that, then on their devotions and oftner gazing on it, then on the Bible."<sup>68</sup> Such persons, Ross claims, resemble the unfortunate Narcissus, in that

they "doat upon...a shadow, which at last vanisheth to nothing."<sup>69</sup> Again, stressing the Christianized Platonic view that man is only a reflection or shadow of God, Ross exclaims as an ultimate comment on Narcissus' mistake, "...surely if man himself be but a shadow, his beautie is but the shadow of that shadow."<sup>70</sup> Narcissus, then, not only mistakenly imbues his image with reality, but also ignores his position in the universe as God's image; in this way, Narcissus attributes far too much importance to himself as an autonomous entity, divorced from any connection with a Higher Being.

Both Reynolds and Ross were precursors of the Cambridge Platonists, who, like them, turned to the past for proof that true philosophy is never opposed to Christianity. Ernest Cassirer claims that the Cambridge school added no essentially new feature to what Ficino and the Florentine Academy had introduced centuries before; this was the notion that Plato represented one link in the chain of divine revelation including also Moses and Zoroaster, Socrates and Christ, Hermes Trisemegetius and Plotinus.<sup>71</sup> Yet the Cambridge Platonists, stress the value of reason as the last criterion of morality, thus pointing to a method of seeking true knowledge, as Reynolds has. The elements for this method, the Cambridge Platonists further contend, are located within the individual soul, not in the world at large. No

source of knowledge is to be considered inapproachable or profane, since all knowledge, pagan and Christian, is but a medium employed by God to illuminate the soul. Although the Narcissus myth is not specifically mentioned as an example of how such "reason" can be subdued by misdirected passion, the idea of man's soul and beauty reflecting God's perfection and grace is implicit throughout the writings of this school.

Concentration on the moral "truths" which form the basis of all "true" philosophy, and the quest to find a method to uncover these "truths," refer the Cambridge Platonists back to the ancient philosophers, in the same way that Reynolds and others before him have contributed to the revival of Platonism in Renaissance England. This revival created a new conception of poetry, its spiritual mission and moral worth, culminating in the Elizabethan Age with Spenser, who will be examined in a later chapter. Concern with morality, with a method of discerning what kind of knowledge contributes to morality, also connects the Cambridge Platonists with what will follow in the later part of the century. The Age of Enlightenment, which seems to reject traditional concepts of morality in favor of its own methodology, actually draws on tradition as it is manifested in the doctrines of the Cambridge Platonists; just as the spiritual represents the highest form of the rational

for the Cambridge Platonists, for Rousseau, reason represents an unimpeachable moral source, the only strictly reliable foundation for a better society. Narcissus, explicitly used by precursors of the Cambridge Platonists to express the potential power of misguided perception to impede moral development, is used by the eighteenth century to illustrate how excessive self-esteem, because it excludes others, interferes with the concept of a rational social order, and is therefore dangerous to the individual and to society.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>According to the OED and The Oxford Greek-English Lexicon, this is the original meaning of the word (ἦχῶ related to ἦχῆ [sound]).

<sup>2</sup>Ovid, Metamorphoses, ed. Rudolfus Ehwald (Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1915), Vol. II, Bk. III, ll. 413-17.

<sup>3</sup>G.F. Hartlaub, Zauber des Spiegels. Geschichte und Bedeutung des Spiegels in der Kunst (Munich: R. Piper, 1951). See especially figs. 160-65.

<sup>4</sup>The Metamorphoses of Ovid, trans. William Caxton (1480; facsimile rpt. New York: George Braziller, 1968), Vol. I, Bk. III, n.p.

<sup>5</sup>See Marsilio Ficino, Commentary on Plato's Symposium, ed. Sears Reynolds Jane (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1944); see also a discussion of Ficino and his revival of the Neo-Platonic explication of the Narcissus myth in Louise Vinge's The Narcissus Myth in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century, trans. Robert Dewsnap in collab. Lisbeth Grönlund, Nigel Reeves, Ingrid Söderberg-Reeves (Lund: Gleerups, 1967), pp. 123-27.

<sup>6</sup>See Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI und XVIII Jahrhunderts (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerschre Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), p. 1627, for Alciati emblem and epigram; see also Louise Vinge, pp. 140-42, for a discussion of the epigram.

<sup>7</sup>Natalis Comitiss, Mythologiae: Explicationum Fabularum (1581; facsimile rpt. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), sig. .

<sup>8</sup>Cesare Ripa, Iconologie, ou Explication de plusiuers images... trans. I. Baudoin (Paris: M. Guillemot, 1644), sig. Niij<sup>v</sup>, Niij2<sup>r</sup>, Niij2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>9</sup>The Works of Francis Bacon, ed. James Spalding and others (Boston: Brown and Taggard, 1860), Vol. XIII, pp. 88-89.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 90

<sup>14</sup>See Arthur Kinney's introductory note to Henry Reynolds' Mythomystes, wherein a short survey is taken of nature and the value of true poesy, and the depth of the Ancients above our moderne poets. To which is annexed the Tale of Narcissus briefly mythologized (London, 1632; facsimile rpt. Yorkshire: The Scolar Press, 1972), n.p.

<sup>15</sup>Reynolds, sig. D2<sup>v</sup>-D3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., sig. C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., sig. F3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., sig. HV.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., sig. H<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., sig. H2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., sig. K4<sup>v</sup>-L<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., sig. M3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>23</sup>See Kinney's introductory note to Reynolds' Mythomystes and also Louise Vinge's discussion (p. 129) which dates Anguillera's versions from 1539 and 1561, respectively.

<sup>24</sup>Reynolds, sig. M4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>25</sup>George Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologized, and Represented in Figures, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 156.

<sup>26</sup>Reynolds, sig. M4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Plotinus, Fifth Tractate--Love in The Enneads, trans. Stephen Mackenna, third ed. rev. (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1956), p. 191.

<sup>29</sup>Reynolds, sig. M4<sup>v</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., sig. N<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., sig. N<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., sig. N2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>"Troth" is originally a phonetic variant of "truth," according to the OED.

<sup>35</sup>Reynolds, sig. N2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., sig. N2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., sig. N3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., sig. N4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., sig. N4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>43</sup>Plotinus, Fourth Tractate--Problems of the Soul in The Enneads, p. 326.

<sup>44</sup>Reynolds, sig. O<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., sig. O3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., sig. O4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., sig. P<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>50</sup>See Kinney's introductory note to Reynolds' Mytho-  
mystes.

<sup>51</sup>Reynolds, sig. P2<sup>r</sup>

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., sig. P2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., sig. P2<sup>v</sup>-P3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., sig. P3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>56</sup>Ficino, Exhortation to Love: Simple and Mutual Love in Commentary on Plato's Symposium, Ch. VIII, p. 144.

<sup>57</sup>Reynolds, sig. P3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>58</sup>Iamblichus, Exhortation to the Study of Philosophy: Fragments of Iamblichus, etc., trans. Thomas M. Johnson (Oseola, Missouri, 1907), pp. 8-9.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>60</sup>Reynolds, as Louise Vinge notes (pp. 146-151), was not alone in stressing this "divine" quality of Echo's. Lilius Gregorius Giraldus' De Deis gentium (1548) and Vincenzo Cartari's Imagini dei Dei degli Antichi (1556) both fail to explain Echo in terms of the Narcissus story, but do contribute to the idea of her descent and her divinity. Cartari, for example, attributes the Pythagorean dictum concerning Echo to Ausonius. He renders two poems in echo-rhymes to illustrate that Echo would be depicted by aid of language rather than pictorially (see Vinge, p. 147). Alexander Farra, in Settenario (1571) also exhibits a Neo-Platonic obsession with the mysteries in Pythagorean numbers and symbolic dicta. Louise Vinge notes this (pp. 148-50) and translates his version of the eighth dictum:

Pray to Echo while the winds are blowing. The wind is a symbol of God's spirit, whose name it shares in the sacred language. It moves the mind, and then the reason is set in motion, and when it has been moved, the image of form is reflected and returns by the same path to intellectual unity, enlightening, exciting, and raising to God all the parts of the soul, so that it makes them one spirit with him. This reflex is by the symbolic theologians called Echo and by the Cabbalists Bathcol, that is, the daughter of the voice, and since it sends out a divine and blessed splendour over the entire spiritual realm, it deserves to be worshipped and respected without any hardening of heart, so that it does not happen as it did for Narcissus who, in his ingratitude escaping from the enamoured Echo, fell in love with his own reflection of which he had caught sight in the clear water of the well, and who languished away by and through the immense and unbearable passion; and for that reason Echo, enamoured of Narcissus,

[signifies] this divine spirit which descends to enlighten our souls; Narcissus escaping signifies the vicious and impure person who does not obey the divine voice and who falls in love with his reflection which he has seen in the well; and therefore the soul which is sunk in the senses, follows corporeal shadows and shuns the light of intellectual beauty, and therefore, deprived of its own innate and celestial powers, it becomes entirely earthly, weak and sickly. Therefore Narcissus signifies nothing other than the stiffened, bloodless and emaciated.--So Pythagorus teaches us by this symbolic dictum to pray to Echo, that is, to pay heed to the spirit of divine mercy, which being reflected and returning directs us once more to the supreme unity....Iamblichus certifies that this symbol is a theorem on divine wisdom, teaching us to love the images of divine ideas and divine virtue and giving rise to deeds which contribute towards their message being honoured with the greatest zeal.

Farra's interpretation of the significance of Echo presents the same view as Reynolds' commentary on Narcissus, fated for eternal oblivion:

[Narcissus] stops his eares to the Divine voice, or shutts his harte from divine inspirations, through his being enamour'd of not himselfe, but his own shadow merely, and (buried in the ordures of the Sence) followes corporall shadowes, and flyes the light and purity of intellectual Beauty. (sig. P3<sup>V</sup>-P4<sup>R</sup>)

Vinge further observes that Echo has become a kind of Renaissance emblem, "a symbol-figure of the symbols, or of the symbolic qualities of things" (p. 151).

<sup>61</sup>Reynolds, sig. P4<sup>R</sup>.

<sup>62</sup>Iamblichus, Epistle on Truth in Exhortation..., pp. 124-25.

<sup>63</sup>Erwin Panofsky, "Blind Cupid: in Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance, (New York: Icon Editions/Harper & Row, 1972), p. 99.

<sup>64</sup>Panofsky, p. 103.

<sup>65</sup>Alexnader Ross, Mystagogus poeticus, or, The muses interpreter; explaining the historicalall mysteries, and mysticall histories of the ancient Greek and Latine poets... (London: J. Kirton, 1653, 3. ed., rev. and enl.), sig. X.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., sig. XV.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ernest Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England,  
trans. James P. Pettegrove (New York: Gordian Press, 1970),  
pp. 8-9.

## Chapter Two

### Narcissus and the Literary Imagination: From Ronsard to Laclos

Literary emanations of the Narcissus myth from Ovid through the eighteenth century are profuse, as has been previously noted. Whether a metaphor for the inaccessibility of love in the Medieval love lyric, an emblem of unacknowledged futility and vanity (and inadmissible "darker" extensions of the Spenserian heroic character, to be discussed later) in the literature of the Renaissance and seventeenth century, or the characterization of a social misfit, worthy of contempt and ridicule or dangerous to the common good, in the literature of the eighteenth century, the idea of Narcissus is insistently present. A few examples will be considered, specifically focusing on how this idea is enriched by the mythographic and iconographic developments already examined. These examples will show how the character of Narcissus inspires a negative double, a double which does not permit self-awareness. Since Narcissus is deceived by his own reflection, such a deception invites confusion and even death, because it obscures the nature of self-knowledge. To know oneself requires that the pursuit

of self-knowledge continue undistracted, and that the quest remain a perpetually vigilant one.

In a collection of poems called Le Bocage which first appeared in 1554, Ronsard takes up the myth of Narcissus, mainly drawing on Ovid although, as in Reynolds, freely imitating rather than directly translating. An elegy entitled "La mort de Narcisse" begins with a twenty-four line appreciation of spring, and in describing spring as it seasonally recurs, Ronsard points to a time when

...Jason, espoignoné de gloire,  
Esleut la Fleur de Grece, et de son aviron  
Baloya, le premier, de Tethys le giron:  
Et me remet encor la meurtierre fontaine  
Par qui le beau Narcis aima son ombre vaine,  
Coupable de sa mort, car pour trop se mirer  
Sur la bord estrange, lui convint expirer. (56)<sup>2</sup>

By peeling away the layers of time and the events such layers suggest, Ronsard "happens" on the subject of his poem, the story of Narcissus. His Narcissus is doomed from the beginning by the "meurtierre fontaine," the waters of which are cursed before the tale unfolds. Through Ronsard's description of the fountain, the idea of false appearances is introduced; the fountain looks inviting to the thirsty, but its banks have been the associative context for previous deception:

Et la fleur d'Adonis, jadis la douce peine  
De la belle Venus, qui chetif ne sçavoit  
Que le Destin si tost aux rives le devoit,  
Pour estre le butin des vierges curieuses  
A remplir leurs cofins des moissons amoureuses. (56)

Narcissus, who comes to slake his thirst after an exhausting hunt as he does in Ovid, merely trades his actual, literal thirst for a potentially fraudulent, metaphoric one:

...Narcisse aux beaux yeux, pantoisement lassé  
 Du chaud, et d'avoir trop aux montaignes chassé,  
 Vint là pour estancher la soif qui le tourmente.  
 Mais, las! en l'estanchant une autre luy augmente,  
 Car en beuvant à front, son semblant apperceut  
 Sus l'eau représenté, qui fraude le deceut. (57)

Ronsard, here, makes use of an Ovidian rhetorical paradox, where one idea or word serves a dual purpose, as well as his own, double-edged metaphoric irony. Narcissus can never slake his thirst, because such arbitrary physical excess only breeds a more complicated and tormenting kind of indulgence. He is therefore fated to die.

At this point, Ronsard blames Narcissus' condition on his predestined bad luck; he must die because of this paradoxical deception. . . "La destinee," Ronsard's most explicit reference to what appears in Ovid as Tiresias' prophecy, renders Narcissus helpless. Narcissus does not consciously choose his course of action; he is "simple d'esprit, croit/Que ce soit un vray corps, de son ombre qu'il voit." (57) He irrationally loves "une menteuse idole," (57) without apprehending his error:

Il se prise, il s'estime, et de luy-mesme aimé,  
 Allume en l'eau le feu dont il est consumé.  
 Il ne sçait ce qu'il voit, et de ce qu'il ignore  
 Le desir trop goulou tout le coeur lui devore,  
 Las! et le mesme abus, qui l'incite à ce voir,  
 Luy nourrist l'esperance, et le fait decevoir. (57)

Like the Ovidian Narcissus, Ronsard's Narcissus is nourished by his original misapprehension. Ronsard, carrying further his notion of the fountain which kills, again combines the use of an Ovidian-like paradox with his own metaphoric emphasis. Although water and fire cannot coexist, these waters are "ignited" by the "fire" of Narcissus' consuming passion. This fountain, then, represents the medium for, as well as the reflection of, Narcissus' misguided love: it encourages him to continue in his deception by constantly presenting both Narcissus' reflection, and what this reflection means, namely, Narcissus' vainly conceived love for himself. Again, following Ovid's example, Ronsard's Narcissus piles deception upon deception. Ronsard comments on the impermanent nature of a reflection:

Ce que tu quiers n'est point; si tu verses parmi  
L'onde un pleur seulement, tu perdas ton ami:  
Il n'a rien propre à soy, l'image présentée  
Que tu vois dedans l'eau, tu l'as seul apportée,  
Et la remporteras avecques toy aussi,  
Si tu peux sans mourir remporter d'ici. (57-58)

The irony, previously suggested in Ovid's version of the story, is that Narcissus, because irrevocably caught up in his initial deception, cannot budge from this spot, he is morally and mortally committed to his reflection, as Ronsard adduces by mentioning the possible resultant condition of death. This commitment roots Narcissus to his place at the side of the fountain, where "Ny faim, ny froid, ny chaud ny de dormir l'envie/Ne peurent retirer sa miserable

vie/Hors de l'eau mensongere." (58) The water, the deceptive agent, further provides Narcissus with a perfect medium for "souspirer sous les traits de la Mort." (58) His reflection, representing what he now is, thus becomes a reflection of his death, a foreshadowing of what Narcissus soon will be.

Still ignorant of his error, Ronsard's Narcissus turns to the forest to lament. Here, Ronsard seems to stress the potential fertility of Narcissus' surroundings, even more than Ovid does when his Narcissus makes a similar complaint:

"Ici la torte vigne, à l'orme s'assemblant,  
De tous costez espond un ombrage tremblant.  
Ici le verd lierre, at la tendrette mousse  
Font la rive sembler plus que le sommeil douce." (58)

Ronsard's innovation, to give Narcissus' own words an ominous, ironic undertone, reiterates the fate of his interpretation of the Narcissus character. The "vigne" (vine) is "torte" (winding, but perhaps with the implication of winding the wrong way); the "ombrage" (shade) trembles, thus suggesting an atmosphere of expectancy or nervous anticipation; the "lierre" (ivy) and the "mousse" (moss) seem to offer more than "le sommeil douce," perhaps inferring the "sweet" sleep of death. Thus, the potential fertility of the imagery (note especially Ronsard's mention of "lierre" -- ivy -- the Bacchic emblem) is resonant with narcissistic, sterile connotation. It appears here, as it does in Ovid, to indicate the possibility of fertility gone wrong, because

it condones the error in Narcissus' actions.

Following this, Ronsard's Narcissus is distracted by one of his own tears falling into the water:

"Où fuis-je? disoit-il; celui qui te supplie,  
 Ny sa jeune beauté, n'est digne qu'on le fuye.  
 Las! demeure; où fuis-tu? les Nymphes de ce bois  
 Ne m'ont point dedaigné, ny celle qui la vois  
 Fait retenir és monts d'une complainte lente,  
 Et si n'ont point jouy du fruit de leur attente,  
 Car alors de l'amour mon coeur n'estoit espoit,  
 Pour aimer maintenant ce qui m'aime point." (58-59)

It is interesting that "celle qui la vois/Fait retenir és monts d'une complainte lente" (she whose voice/retains only the peaks of a long complaint) is Ronsard's only reference to Echo in the poem. His concern is with Narcissus alone. Every aspect of the poem must confirm Narcissus' condition. All potential alternatives to this condition are either assigned other "darker" meanings, as with the forest imagery, or else they are casually mentioned in passing, as Echo is, whom Narcissus equates with the other wood nymphs. By concentrating on Narcissus' narrowed, inward-turning vision, Ronsard comments on his lack of imagination; because he cannot see beyond what is only an insubstantial image of himself, Narcissus becomes his own victim.

After going through the Ovidian paces of examining his reflection and noticing its emulative response, Ronsard's Narcissus finally discovers his mistake:

"Je cognois maintenant l'effet de mon erreur,  
 Je suis mesmes celuy qui me mets en fureur,  
 Je suis mesmes celuy, celuy mesmes que j'aime,  
 Rien je ne voy dans l'eau que l'ombre de moy-mesme.  
 Que feray-je, chetif? pri'ay-je, ou si je doy  
 Moy-mesme estre prié? je portes avec moy  
 Et l'amant et l'aimé, et ne scaurois tant faire,  
 Las! que de l'un des deux je me pousse defaire." (59)

Even here Ronsard emphasizes the tentative, restrictive nature of Narcissus' self-discovery; Narcissus only acknowledges "l'effet" (the result) of his error, not what has led him to be so deceived. Hence this acknowledgement, qualified by his limited perception, cannot free Narcissus from his mistake but only deceives him further. He now cannot separate himself from his reflection. Like Ovid's Narcissus, he proclaims himself both lover and beloved, doomed to this self-reductive state unless he can detach himself from the process of self-reduction. Like Ovid's Narcissus, Ronsard's Narcissus now welcomes the idea of dying. Hence, however, Narcissus explicitly finds in death a perverse pleasure:

"O bien-heureuse Mort, hast toy je te prie,  
 Et me tranche d'un coup et l'amour et la vie,  
 A fin qu'aveques moy je voye aussi perir,  
 Si c'est quelque plaisir, ce qui me fait mourir." (59)

This Narcissus, whose love for himself is self-annihilative because inextricably bound with the predetermined end of his life, calls on death to sever in one motion both his love and his life. At least then he can die along with what kills him, deriving the compensatory pleasure of a "double" death.

At the end of the poem, Ronsard places much more emphasis than Ovid does on Narcissus' former beauty; he once resembled, "le portrait d'une Adonine image" (the portrait of an Adonis-type) (59), who now melts away, a victim of self-consumation. In his place, a flower grows. Here, Ronsard carefully ensures that this flower expresses the condition of reduction, the flos of perishability. Narcissus, who failed to sustain life through his misdirected love, seems a mockery of potential substance and sustenance.

The flower, the embodiment of Narcissus' spirit

...n'oubliant sa naissance premiere,  
 Suit encore aujourd'hui le rive fontainere,  
 Et toujours, pres dex eaux, apparoist au Printemps,  
 Que le vent qui tout soufle, abat un peu le temps. (59)

Thus the flower repeats the pattern of Narcissus' life; it grows by the banks of a spring, appearing during the season of spring for a short time only:

Aux arbres la nature a permis longue vie:  
 Ceste fleur du matin ou du soir est ravie. (59-60)

Ronsard attributes this brevity to destiny, the arbiter of life:

Ainsi l'ordre le veut et la Necessité,  
 Qui des le premier jour de la nativité  
 Allonge ou raccourcist nos fuseaux, et nous donne  
 Non ce que nous voulons, mais celle qu'elle ordonne.  
 (60)

Life is controlled by elements outside of our power. Ronsard suggests that Narcissus has acted according to the dictates of these elements, adding to the somewhat less

fatalistic Ovidian view, where Narcissus paradoxically fulfills the ambiguous dictum of a prophet.

Ronsard continues to make use of Narcissus in his poetry as an expression of misery over the folly of love owing to its intensity and its often foolish and inaccessible object. This kind of allusion to the myth occurs as a poetic convention from the oldest material through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But in a sonnet among a collection entitled "Sur la mort de Marie," Ronsard also explores the connection between narcissistic deception and death:

Narcise fut heureux, mourant sur la fontaine,  
Abusé du mirouër de sa figure vaine.  
Au moins il regardoit je ne sçay quoy de beau.  
L'erreur le contentoit, vóyant sa face aimée:  
Et le beauté que j'aime, est terre consumée.  
It mourut pour une ombre, & moy pour un tombeau.<sup>2</sup>

Here, Ronsard plays with the double meaning of "ombre" just as Ovid has played with the double meaning of umbra. But the connotation of umbra in Ovid (interchangeably, shadow and reflection) is further elaborated on in this sonnet. Ronsard's "ombre" is the shadow of death, as the reflection of Narcissus which promises consumation only in death. Because Narcissus is content to love his reflection, he courts death. In contrast, the mourner-lover does not consider death to be a medium for reunion with his beloved. While death at last provides Narcissus with his

beloved, death separates the mourner-lover from his. To die because of a loved one is not the same as to die for the sake of love, in the manner of Narcissus. What sustains forever the possibility of Narcissus' love is the suspension of time in death; Ronsard's mourner-lover, because he cannot transform this suspension of time in death to an analogous suspension in life, dies unrequited, unconsummated. He cannot appreciate the deceptive power of a limited vision.

ii

While pastoral love poetry of the sixteenth century also uses the Ovidian setting for the story of Narcissus, Echo, not Narcissus, often becomes the central figure in these poems, perhaps connecting the widespread use of the echo-rhyme to a pastoral landscape, as evident in Cartari's Narcissus poem. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, particularly in Elizabethan mythological poetry, the pastoral setting emphasizes the erotic and sensual as well as the moral element of the Narcissus myth. Here, also, Echo is often given the central role. In James Shirley's Narcissus, or the Self-Lover (1618), for example, sensual elements predominate and are even newly stressed. The poem begins with an exhortation to Echo, who is already shown to be stricken with love for Narcissus. Here Echo is called "thou child of sound and air," explicitly associating her

with Ausonius' epigram, "Aeris et linguae sum filia."<sup>3</sup>

This quickly shifts to a potentially Spenserian situation, where Echo entices the already lost Narcissus further and further into the forest instead of helping him out of it. But the allegorical fabric of such action is secondary in Shirley's poem. Echo and Narcissus are creatures of the "fallen" world: they are given the physical context of pastoral not to redeem themselves or reenact the old vengeance theme, but to illustrate Shirley's investigation of the sensual possibilities in the Narcissus myth.

Except for this very different emphasis, the story basically follows Ovid. Narcissus, enticed by Echo's voice further into the forest, finally falls into an exhausted sleep. Echo steals forth (she has not yet been reduced to only a voice) and kisses the sleeping Narcissus so passionately that she draws blood. She does not relent until Narcissus begins to stir. When he awakens, she flees. Narcissus pursues, hoping to deceive Echo with false promises of love and so win his way out of the forest. Echo, convinced that Narcissus really does love her, attempts to kiss him now that he is awake. Narcissus pushes her away; here Shirley allows Echo to regain her lost power of speech in order to eloquently plead her love. Narcissus answers tenderly, but this is only a ruse. He still concerns himself only with obtaining enough information to escape from the forest.

Echo recognizes Narcissus' pretense and Narcissus flees in anger. Echo now calls upon Rhamnusia (Nemesis) for revenge. Narcissus, meanwhile, comes across a well. At this point, the landscape drastically changes; no longer is the forest a "paradise." Ravens sing dirges, clouds eclipse the sun and then reveal it in ghastly fury, the winds are checked as if suspended before a great calamity. In this context, Narcissus discovers his reflection, briefly mistaking it at first for a water-mymph. His actions, here, reiterate the traditional Ovidian Narcissus': he kisses his reflection, weeps over it so that his tears efface the image again and again, and, at last, he dies. Echo regrets her anger as she observes Narcissus' last sign. Narcissus' body disappears and a flower grows in its place. Echo promises to love the memory of Narcissus, personified by this flower, and she also promises to expiate her part in Narcissus' death by living henceforth isolated and mute. She, too, goes to the well and sees her reflection. But Echo recognizes that the image in the well is only her reflection. She therefore concludes that some form of witchcraft has killed Narcissus rather than her wish for revenge. She throws herself into the water in despair and there, Shirley exclaims, "we now leave her." Only Echo's voice remains to "echo" Shirley's farewell.<sup>4</sup>

Shirley's contribution to the interpretation of Narcissus, apart from his inclusion of the sensual element (most striking in Echo's vampire-like kisses), is one which is later taken up by the Romantics, notably, in Shelley's Alastor, to be considered later. Shirley's use of nature in his poem emphasizes Narcissus' mistake. Unlike Ronsard, Shirley clearly exploits the physical atmosphere of the Narcissus story by creating a dualistic paradise--at first full of possibility, in the end indicative of falseness. Narcissus, when he approaches the well that will reflect his image, is accompanied by a surrounding unnatural stillness which contrasts with the abundance of movement that has come before. It is as if all of nature anticipates the fatality of Narcissus' error. When his infatuation with his reflection immobilizes him, the winds no longer blow; nothing, in fact moves. Nature also helps to define Echo's role in the poem. The winds actively blow for and around her; she is their spiritual counterpart. While Narcissus' actions are foreshadowed and accompanied by stasis, Echo's fantasies of Narcissus' reciprocated love for her are full of movement, of winds and shepherds' games, cheerfully singing birds and the play of waves. Thus, although Shirley may not offer an obvious moral lesson in his story of Narcissus and Echo, he suggests that nature can reflect states of mind, adding a necessarily moral dimension to a conventional erotic genre of love poetry.

## iii

Milton uses the Narcissus myth in quite another way. Adam and Eve, in Paradise Lost, must awaken to self-consciousness in order to assume their proper roles as part of God's design. The Neo-Platonic/Christian reading of the Narcissus myth is important here. In Book IV, Eve relates to Adam her first impressions of being alive:

As I bent down to look just opposite,  
 A Shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd  
 Bending to look on me, I started back,  
 It started back, but pleas'd I soon return'd,  
 Pleas'd it return'd as soon with answering looks  
 Of sympathy and love; there I had fixt  
 Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,  
 Had not a voice thus warn'd me, what thou seest,  
 What there thou seest fair Creature is thyself,  
 With thee it came and goes: but follow me,  
 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays  
 Thy coming, and thy soft imbraces, hee  
 Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy  
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear  
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be call'd  
 Mother of human Race.<sup>5</sup>

Eve's first conscious experience of life is potentially analogous to Narcissus' situation. Milton presents her with a moral dilemma: either she submits to the deceptive tyranny of the "Shape" that entrances her, or she follows the "voice" to Adam and fulfillment.

Milton creates a possible Narcissus-like stasis when he tranfixes Eve by her own reflected image. The intervening "voice," however, prevents actual stasis from occurring. Eve's mistake or near mistake, in the context

of the poem, thus affirms her humanity. She is God's "fair Creature" who does not yet understand what this means. She must learn. The "Shape" that Eve first sees denotes some diversity of form unfamiliar to her. She has never had recourse to a mirror. Before this, she has only observed aspects of landscape; now, the "wat'ry gleam," the light diffused through the water, reflects a disturbingly new appearance. The "Shape" only responds when Eve reacts. Milton's choice of "sympathy" refers to this correspondence of conditions between Eve and her reflection. Eve's eyes might have remained "fixt," immovable; here, Milton expresses a momentary static possibility where all movement and conception of time are contained in this one exchange. Because of the limiting nature of this exchange, Eve would not seek to join herself with Adam or any "other." Milton, explicitly borrowing from the language of Ovid, emphasizes the danger by introducing the idea of reduction in the word "pin'd." This corresponds to Ovid's Narcissus, who pines away to nothingness as a result of his sterile, exclusive passion.

But Eve is warned by the intervening "voice"; at this point, the crisis of the passage is over. Milton, through the "voice," makes Eve aware of what she has beheld: not simply "what thou seest," but "What there thou seest," so that there can be no question of reference. Both past

and present tenses are used to release some of the tension that has accompanied the constraint of the previous lines. The "Shape" "came" with Eve; it arrived when she did. It "goes" when she goes, and there is an intimation of future activity instead of stasis in the shift from past to present. The "voice" will lead Eve "where no shadow stays/Thy coming." The "Shape" reflected in the "wat'ry gleam" is revealed to be a "shadow," a delusive image, a vain and insubstantial object of pursuit that is caused by physical chimera, the interception of light. A sense of delay is expressed in "stays," as well as a reiteration of the danger of immobility. Eve's "coming" refers back to the promise of activity in the juxtaposition of "came" and "goes." Milton now defines Eve in terms of Adam: the voice foretells Eve's future significance and assigns her to "hee/Whose image thou art." The "image," although it recalls the "Shape" and "shadow" in the previous lines suggests a much less ominous quality here. Just as God created man in His own image, Eve is created in Adam's image, to become part of the process of creation through her relation to Adam, "Hee for God only, shee for God in him." Eve's role will be to populate the earth, to be "Mother of human Race," a new species generated by Adam and herself. Thus, "image" acquires a Biblical implication; the "Shape" and "shadow" are established and checked by this final identity. Eve must now follow in the

direction of the "voice." The sense of "straight" that Milton employs not only contrasts with the belying rigidity of "bending"; it also takes on an immediacy of purpose. The deviation and delay which "stays" Eve's "coming" have been replaced by a new context for action. Eve must now proceed to Adam, "invisibly thus led."

The tone of Milton's passage, as has been already observed, reflects the tone of Ovid's Narcissus poem. Milton, however, provides more than the choice between two readings of the Narcissus allusion that Stanley Fish adduces.<sup>6</sup> In addition to pointing up Eve's intrinsic artlessness before the Fall, besides possibly foreshadowing her self-interested inclinations that lead her to temptation, Milton seems to indicate that the "voice" of this passage (which is to lead Eve away from the deception of shadows) plays the same role as Echo, according to Renaissance readings of the Narcissus myth. This "voice," like Echo's, represents the Divine, the voice of God who directs Eve to her role as propagator. Clearly, Eve is saved from Narcissus' fate because she is extricated from a life-denying internalization of pure sensuality. Milton makes Eve, as God's creation and dependent, redeemable through her sensuality because it is tempered by Adam's "manly grace/And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."<sup>7</sup>

Later on in the poem, in Book IX, Milton constructs Eve's temptation around the idea that evil follows when God's "voice" is ignored. Here, Eve declares to Satan that God forbids access to the Tree of Knowledge:

...Of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;  
 God so commanded, and left that Command  
 Sole Daughter of his voice.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, now primed to be led into the realm of shadows, Eve readily disregards this "voice." She turns, rather, to the possibility of attaining a kind of wisdom previously unimportant to her. At this point, she desires to know her-self, to understand independently what the shadows mean. Death intrigues her and attracts her, as the counterpart to her own reflection. She intends to explore the power it intimates by herself. After she eats of the fruit, Eve mistakes the knowledge of Evil for the knowledge she already innately has possessed of Good; in portraying her temptation in terms of her desire for autonomy, Milton stresses the progression from her initial near-misapprehension by the pool in Book IV. What was once neatly avoided by Eve's obedience to God and her inexperience in the world, now is sought after, for Eve no longer cares about her sources. She has exchanged what appears to her as a limited form of authenticity for a deceptive completeness: "true" knowledge, that which emanates from God alone, becomes less attractive than instantaneous information acquired by eating the fruit.

Like Narcissus, Eve acts outside the bounds of what she knows, plunging into a complex imaginative quest for which she is not prepared. In this way, Milton shows his awareness of both the Ovidian Narcissus and the Neo-Platonic/Christian tradition as portrayed in Bacon and Reynolds. Indeed, Milton certainly would have come across these interpretations and incorporated them into Paradise Lost so that the transcendent leap from Pagan to Christian to general philosophical problem, unlimited by tangential or formal dogma, could take place.

## iv

The eighteenth century provides a more surface-oriented treatment of the Narcissus myth. Misapprehension of the self is usually triggered by the use of disguise. In an early work of Rousseau's, a play entitled Narcisse, ou l'amant de lui-même, for example, the idea of self-love is exhibited as a conventional, if reprehensible, feature of adolescence. Valère, the young comic-hero, falls in love with a portrait of himself without realizing who the portrait represents, because in it he appears as a young lady. The picture has been strategically placed on his dressing-table by Lucinde, Valère's mischievous sister, who wants to teach her vain but good-hearted brother a lesson. Valère now seeks to delay his marriage to Angélique in order to

pursue his new "love," whom he still fails to recognize is himself. Lucinde, engaged to Angélique's brother Léandre, a young man whom she has never seen, also seeks to delay her marriage because she loves another, Cléonte, actually Léandre in disguise. Still in love with Valère despite his new infatuation, Angélique makes him choose between the picture of a strange "girl" and herself. At this point, Valère realizes that he truly loves Angélique more than "les sentiments qui naissent du caprice"<sup>9</sup> (feelings born from caprice). He chooses Angélique over the picture which Angélique then forces him to recognize is of himself. Léandre and Lucinde are also united when Léandre reveals that he and Cléonte are one and the same. The play ends when Valère exclaims to Angélique:

Vous m'avez gueri d'un ridicule qui faisoit la honte de ma jeunesse, et je vais désormais éprouver près de vous que quand on aime bien, on ne songe plus à soi-même.<sup>10</sup>

Cured of his vanity when he acknowledges his foolish behavior, Valère reveals his intrinsic good character when he prefers Angélique, before he understands that the picture is of himself. Rousseau presents Valère as potentially trite but nevertheless capable of acting properly and learning the value of proper action. The use of disguise, here, is to deceive and confuse, but also to illuminate and instruct. Valère unlike Narcissus, comes to love another above himself.

But the eighteenth century did not always allow self-awareness to triumph. The rise of the novel, of bourgeois reality conveyed by the everyday business of living, included, among other narrative innovations, the epistolary method. In such novels as Richardson's Clarissa and Laclos' Les Liaisons Dangereuses, for example, the use of letters, to deceive and disguise, impedes self-awareness. Here, the letters themselves act as deceivers; they express the inner workings of a mind, thoughts not necessarily meant for publicity. If the letter-writer's mind seeks a personal identity outside traditional bounds, then the letters express such contradictions by juxtaposing one concept of a situation or self with other, fast-growing interpretations or viewpoints. Thus, the epistolary method moves away from traditional ideas about external order and presents an essentially subjective, narcissistic treatment of life. Since letters portray ongoing action, the idea of a changing reality is quintessential to epistolary fiction. The implementation of this changing (and so equivocal) reality is easily promoted through disguises and deceptions of all kinds. Letter-writing, in fact, provides a most favorable context for reshaping through disguise, because the character can better deceive by assuming a disguise in a letter.

What seems to connect this use of disguise with the kind of deception present in the Narcissus myth is the

possibility, in epistolary fiction, that the characters may be caught up themselves in their own disguises, confusing, like Narcissus, the subject with the object. Lovelace, in *Clarissa*, contrives to create a "new" reality, one which will allow Clarissa to be at once his victim, his means for gaining revenge on women as a sex and on the wealthy yet socially inferior Harlowes, and also the spiritually invincible paragon of womanhood, whom Lovelace cannot help but admire. Lovelace the rake prevails, with the help of an incredible series of "stratagems," using Clarissa as a foil for his "rake" identity, the destructiveness he fears to confront in himself. In this way, Clarissa becomes Lovelace's narcissistic double, another person who resembles Lovelace in her willfulness to resist his views, although she admires him. When Clarissa and Lovelace pit their very different conceptions of the world against one another, they provide each other with an excuse to die. Lovelace, by raping Clarissa, confuses his performance with his true feelings, already well disguised even from himself. By disarming Clarissa who now courts death directly instead of through the medium of Lovelace, he has disarmed himself. In Richardson's novel, characters, like Narcissus, succumb to the limitations of their vision.

Laclos uses letters and their disguise potential towards a different purpose. Letters in *Les Liaisons*

Dangereuses are a vehicle for social rather than personal vision. They provide insights into an entire social atmosphere which depends on a kind of surface order to function, but which conceals beneath this surface potential chaos. No character here can be said to ignore the lure of suppressed chaos, some because they cannot make the distinction between their own destructive impulses and apparent adherence to order, and others because the deceptive social element concealed beneath the surface is gainfully employed, even elevated to the level of an art as in the art of seduction. Indeed, the society of Les Liaisons Dangereuses accepts seduction as a sport, and thus integrates the idea of conquest with that of a favorite pasttime. Yet, because seduction so viewed exhibits the veneer of structure and fair play, certain regulations, even if they are only tacitly implied, must be established. In these letters, the intentions of seduction are not always suppressed, but if the methods are disclosed, the "game" is no longer "fair." Valmont and his counterpart, the Marquise de Merteuil, violate both the form (when they reveal, in their letters to each other, their methods of seduction) and the content (when they betray each other) of seduction. By violating their own code of loyalty and self-interest, Valmont and the Marquise destroy themselves as well as others. Like Narcissus, they confuse their potential ability with their

actual being. Just as Narcissus misapprehends the nature of his reflection, Valmont and the Marquise misapprehend themselves and reveal one another to a society they know will condemn them. Because they have expressed the "true" nature of seduction in their correspondence, they serve as object lessons for those who favor artifice over humanity. Like Rousseau's use of the disguised portrait in Narcisse, Laclos uses letters to point up the evil in what has become a reprehensible social convention, the "art" of seduction; disguise as it is employed to seduce is the chief interest of these letters. After both Valmont and the Marquise are disposed of, Valmont in a duel with a young man he has deceived, the Marquise by smallpox (the loss of beauty, an eighteenth-century cliché representing punishment for sin and a lawsuit, the scene is set for the resumption of a more acceptable and constructive social morality. Society, here, has within itself a Narcissus flower, the perishability of the old as well as the promise of the new; Laclos shows himself as social critic.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>All quotations from Ronsard's "La Mort de Narcisse" refer to the following edition: "La Mort de Narcisse" in Oeuvres Complètes de Ronsard, II, ed. Gustave Cohen (Paris: Bibliothèque de la pléiade/Éditions Gallimard, 1950), pp. 56-60. There are no line numbers. Page numbers will appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>2</sup>Ronsard, Sonnet X of "Sur la mort de Marie" in Oeuvres Complètes, I, ed. Gustave Cohen (Paris: Bibliothèque de la pléiade/Éditions Gallimard, 1965), p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>See Louise Vinge, The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century, p. 27, where Ausonius' full epigram is cited, "In Echo pictam."

<sup>4</sup>James Shirley, Narcissus or the Self-Lover in Elizabethan Minor Epics, ed. Elizabeth S. Donno (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 325-51.

<sup>5</sup>John Milton, Paradise Lost in Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), IV, ll. 460-475.

<sup>6</sup>Fish (Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 216-19) seems puzzled by what he takes to be only an Ovidian allusion to Narcissus, and sees the use of it in this particular passage of Paradise Lost as evidence for Eve's potential for error even before her course of conduct leading to the fall. Certainly, on the most simplistic level, Fish is right. But to claim that Milton, in setting up an elaborate pattern of events for the reader's response, merely uses the Narcissus allusion to show up either Eve's artlessness or her very quick apprehension of the "true" significance of "yielding" to the warning voice, is to deprive Milton of his awareness of the multiple traditions and meanings behind such an allusion.

<sup>7</sup>PL, IV, 490-91.

<sup>8</sup>PL, IX, 651-53. Hughes notes that W. Hunter (MLQ, IX, 1948, 180) explains the Hebraism Daughter of his voice as a translation of Bath Kol, "a voice sent from heaven," but a revelation of God's will of less weight than an absolute command. It might be further adduced that Echo, according to Renaissance mythography, embodies this idea. The "voice"

has, of course, already occurred in Paradise Lost in order to reserve Eye for Adam and save her from herself.

<sup>9</sup>Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Narcisse, ou l'amant de lui-même in Oeuvres Complètes de Rousseau, II, ed. Charly Guyot (Paris: Bibliothèque de la pléiade/Éditions Gallimard, 1964), p. 1015.

<sup>10</sup>Rousseau, Narcisse, ou l'amant de lui-même, p. 1018.

## Chapter Three

### The Spenserian Double

The myth of Narcissus, so intricately a part of Renaissance and seventeenth-century tradition through mythographic interpolations of the Ovidian original, becomes in the nineteenth century, the inspiration for Romanticism. The Romantic quest, or the quest romance as Harold Bloom calls it,<sup>1</sup> is dedicated to reconciling the quester with acknowledging both the creative and the destructive aspects of the imagination. It therefore attempts to explore these aspects, to examine them and to consider them, whatever the outcome. The Renaissance idea of purely heroic action, inspired by the Christian ideal of goodness, is no longer sufficient because it neglects other possibilities. The shadow of another, darker condition haunts the Romantics, and so becomes a serious area for examination. It is not just that Narcissus' reflected image is evil because not real, but rather that this image if properly considered as an image, might tell something about the whole reality; the image, as an image, might be part of the mystery, too important to dismiss as a temptation or moral irrelevance. The nineteenth-century focus seems to shift from interpreting

Narcissus as a figure who rejects God's love (love directed towards the outside world) and who is therefore unworthy of it to a tragic figure whose moral dimensions now include the destruction of his creative potential by a failure of the imagination. It might be said that the moral appetite of the Romantics is prodigious; even perceptual errors, such as the danger of not seeing enough, become, for the Romantics, moral problems.

The earliest and perhaps most significant manifestations of the Romantic interpretation of Narcissus appear as part of the romance tradition. The most influential and clearest example of this is found in Spenser. Indeed, the "romance" of nineteenth-century fiction depends on what is expressed implicitly in Spenserian romance, namely, the contradictory state of good and evil in the human condition. Spenser was perhaps the first romancer to recognize the complexity of traditional fears about the nature of evil. Nowhere else in Renaissance literature does evil appear so elaborately disguised as good. The moral dimension of a quest to obliterate evil is greatly enhanced by this resemblance, for the quest becomes first a struggle to discern evil and then a pursuit of good which never promises lasting achievement. In Spenser, evil has so grown into the fabric of every moral tool used against it (into, for example, the common perception of Holiness, Temperance, Chastity,

Friendship, Justice and Courtesy) that the reader must be educated beyond the immediate and obvious surface (how things appear) only to lose heart, along with Spenser--for only the action, the plan is heroic. In Spenser's world, which is the Renaissance world, it has already become impossible to eliminate evil completely; it is attached to good in very much the same way as a nineteenth-century hero contains the imaginative potential for both good and evil. Archimago, False Florimell, Duessa and all other parodies of good in The Faerie Queene thus become extensions of the power of evil inherent in Redcross and Guyon, the "real" Florimell, Britomart, Una and other Spenserian heroes. Whatever these heroes cannot openly admit to, whatever Spenser perceives to be the dark or shadowy aspects of human nature unfit for the positive energy of heroic action, this is expressed by non-heroic emanations, parodic doubles which represent the destructive potential of the Christian heroic imagination. The parodic doubles, because they resemble so closely their heroic counterparts, reflect the danger of evil as a distraction, while at the same time emphasizing the continuing possibility of heroic action. These doubles are clearly bad, yet they outwardly appear good, only imitating goodness by using the idea of good as their parodic model.

There are many examples of parodic doubling in The Faerie Queene. Perhaps the danger of false appearances is most cogently portrayed in the creation of False Florimell, whose purpose, as Thomas Roche points out, is to deceive all men.<sup>2</sup> The "real" Florimell might seem designed to deceive all men as well. This Florimell first appears in the poem as a visionary flash of beauty, racing by Guyon, Arthur and Britomart so quickly that Spenser compares her to a shooting star, beautiful while at the same time the emblem of potential disaster:

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,  
 Upon a milkwhite Palfrey all alone,  
 A goodly Lady did foreby them rush,  
 Whose face did seeme as cleare as Christall stone,  
 And eke, through feare, as white as whales bones:  
 Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold,  
 And all her steed with tinsell trappings shone,  
 Which fledd so fast that nothing mote him hold,  
 And scarce them leisure gave her passing to behold.

Still as she fledd her eye she backward threw,  
 As fearing evill that poursewd her fast;  
 And her fair yellow locks behind her flew,  
 Loosely disperst with puff of every blast:  
 All as a blazing starre doth farre outcast  
 His hearie beames, and flaming lockes dispredd,  
 At sight whereof the people stand aghast;  
 But the sage wisard telles, as he has redd,  
 That it importunes death and dolefull dreyhedd.

(III. I. xv-xvi)<sup>3</sup>

Guyon, Arthur and Britomart do not at first know what to make of Florimell. Do they really see her, or is she a hallucination, a form of enchantment, a projection of their own identification with being objects of pursuit? Indeed, Florimell, as an emblem of beauty, eternally sought yet

eternally elusive and indefinable, assumes this role of object of pursuit. Spenser emphasizes this quality by comparing her to a comet, a celestial body which breaks from the regular pattern of appearance, assuming a totally eccentric course of its own. Her own pursuit of Marinell is overshadowed by her flight and all it entails. In order to establish Florimell's "reality" at this point, Spenser immediately portrays her as tracked by a forester, the embodiment of the very danger that she suggests.

Several escapes later, Florimell flees in fear from the son of a witch whom she leaves pining for her; the mother witch, desperate to revive her son, creates False Florimell to replace her:

She there deviz'd a wondrous worke to frame,  
 Whose like on earth was never framed yit;  
 That even Nature selfe envie the same,  
 And grudg'd to see the counterfet should shame  
 The thing it selfe: In hand she boldly tooke  
 To make another like the former Dame,  
 Another Florimell, in shape and looke  
 So lively and so like, that many it mistooke.

The substance, whereof she the body made,  
 Was purest snow in massy mould congeald,  
 Which she had gathered in a shady glade  
 Of Riphoean hils, to her reveald  
 By errant Sprights, but from all men conceald:  
 The same she tempred with fine mercury  
 And virgin wax that never yet was seald,  
 And mingled them with perfect vermily;  
 That like a lively sanguine it seemed to the eye.

Instead of eyes two burning lampes she set  
 In silver sockets, shyning like the skyes,  
 And a quicke moving Spirit did arret  
 To stirre and roll them like to womens eyes:

Instead of yellow lockes she did devyse  
 With golden wyre to weave her curled head;  
 Yet golden wyre was not so yellow thryse  
 As Florimells fayre heare: and, in the stead  
 Of life, she put a Spright to rule the carcass dead;

A wicket Spright, yfraught with fawning guyle  
 And fayre resemblance above all the rest,  
 Which with the Prince of Darkness fell somewhyle  
 From heavens blis and everlasting rest:  
 Him needed not instruct which way were best  
 Him selfe to fashion likest Florimell,  
 Ne how to speake, ne how to use his gest;  
 For he in counterfesaunce did excell,  
 And all the wyles of wemens wits knew passing well.

Him shaped thus she dekt in garments gay,  
 Which Florimell had left behind her late;  
 That who so then her saw would surely say  
 It was her selfe whom it did imitate,  
 Or fayrer then her selfe, if ought algate  
 Might fayrer be.

(III. VIII. v-ix)

This False Florimell, a parody of the real Florimell, deceives others into believing that she is Florimell until, in Book V, "she" is unmasked by contact with the "truth":

So forth the noble Lady was ybrought,  
 Adorn'd with honor and all comely grace:  
 Whereto her bashful shamefastnesse ywrought  
 A great increase in her faire blushing face,  
 As roses did with lilies interlace;  
 For of those words, the which that boaster threw,  
 She inly yet conceived great disgrace:  
 Whom when as all the people such did vew,  
 They shouted loud, and signes of gladnesse all did shew.

Then did he set her by that snowy one,  
 Like the true saint beside the image set,  
 Of both their beauties to make paragone  
 And triall, whether should the honor get.  
 Streight-way, so soone as both together met,  
 Th'enchanted Damzell vanisht into nought:  
 Her snowy substance melted as with heat,  
 Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought,  
 But th'emptie girdle which about her wast was wrought.

(V. III. xxiii-xxiv)

False Florimell, whose contrived beauty is so dazzling that even Marinell is confused, cannot stand up to the actual, "real" beauty of the true Florimell. She melts away before it, evaporating into space. Now the reason for the true Florimell's behavior is revealed. As the emblem of pure beauty, Florimell must constantly flee from the clutches of those who desire her without deserving her. False Florimell, however, has been created for those others, those who desire only. In this way, Spenser shows how pure beauty, the true kind, requires an enduring moral commitment, not simply an act of gratification. Spenser's heroes may not always behave heroically, but the point is that they alone are consistently capable, through each test that Spenser creates, of heroic action. This is what separates them from the Archimagos and the Braggadoccios, and what makes them finally more interesting.

Spenser appropriately chooses Book V for False Florimell's unmasking. Justice is defined when the two Florimells confront each other; since one is the true Florimell and the other's existence is contingent only upon this reality, they are not judged equally. False Florimell unmasked has no reality independent of the true Florimell's; she reflects the real Florimell's hidden, "dark" potential, potential to become the perpetrator of worldly desire rather than the inspiration of spiritual commitment. She is the

real Florimell's counterpart, but it can never be the other way around. As in almost all cases of Spenserian parodic doubling, the "dark" counterpart serves to determine and affirm the value of the original. The true Florimell never confuses False Florimell with herself, as Narcissus does when he fails to distinguish between his reflection and himself. Spenser rather uses these parodic doubles to inform his reader of the constant vigilance Christian heroic action requires; the threat of deception must exist concurrently with Christian potential, or this potential can never be realized.

Spenser makes Britomart aware of the constant threat to Christian heroic action also. She expresses appropriate reluctance in trusting appearances when she fears the outcome of her mysterious attachment to Artegall, whom she first sees reflected in her father's magic mirror:

"But wicked fortune mine, though minde be good,  
 Can have no ende nor hope of my desire,  
 But feed on shadowes whiles I die for food,  
 And like a shadowe wexe, whiles with entire  
 Affection I doe languish and expire.  
 I, fonder then Cephisus foolish chyld,  
 Who, having vewed in a fountaine shere  
 His face, was with the love thereof beguyld;  
 I, fonder, love a shade, the body far exyld."  
 (III. II. xliiv)

In comparing herself to Narcissus, Britomart expresses her helplessness and also her concern about the appropriateness of her feelings for a reflection. Her nurse assures her, in the next stanza, that such feelings are genuine because

Artegall really exists, thus the reflection becomes a prophecy of Britomart's future with Artégall. After conferring with Merlin, Britomart sets out to find Artégall and so confirm the mirror's promise. She must prove to herself that her destined marriage to Artégall does not derive from a false reflection--"bad" magic.

Parodic doubling in The Faerie Queene is also used to distinguish between true and erroneous states of being, as C.S. Lewis suggests when he compares the Bower of Bliss with the Garden of Adonis.<sup>4</sup> Spenser introduces the Bower of Bliss in the fifth canto of Book Two, when Atin finds Cymochles asleep there. Acrasia, Cymochles' mistress, is the enchantress of the Bower, resembling False Florimell in her ability to please and delight. But clearly, Acrasia, like False Florimell, is a Circean Venus, presiding over "vaine delights" and "ydle pleasures," transforming men into "ughly sightes" by charming them with "lavish joyes." (II. V. xxvii) The Bower itself pretends to offer the spontaneity and richness of nature, however here "art, stryving to compayre/ With nature" colors the trees, while "wanton Yvie," that Bacchanalian emblem suggesting overripeness, is laced with "prickling armes, entayled with roses red." (II. V. xxix) What at first appears beautiful and life-renewing reveals, when carefully examined, its falseness, and so potential danger and pain. For Spenser, the hero must never abandon

himself. Therefore, the scene is set for Cymochles who does represent himself, "all carelessly displaid/In secrete shadow from the sunny ray./On a sweet bed of lillies softly laid." (II. V. xxii) By placing Cymochles in a bed of lillies, Spenser suggests that he is aware of the Renaissance conflation of lillies and Narcissus flowers used interchangeably to connote a druglike stupour resembling death. While Cymochles sleeps, he is "deceivd in his deceit,/Made dronke with drugs of deare voluptuous receipt." (II. V. xxxii) Spenser further represents the artificiality of the bower in the twelfth canto:

A place pickt out by choyce of best alyve,  
That natures worke by art can imitate:  
In which whatever in this worldly state  
Is sweete and pleasing unto living sense,  
Or that may dayntest fantasy aggrate,  
Was poured forth with plentifull dispence,  
And made there to abound with lavish affluence.  
(II. XII. xlii)

The true Spenserian hero, in this case Guyon, is not enticed by this deception. Not even the imitation ivy, which adorns Acrasia's bathing pool "of purest gold.../A trayle of yvie in his native hew:/For the rich metall was so coloured," (II. XII. LXi) itself a parodic double of Bacchanalian fertility, distracts Guyon. Assisted by the Palmer, Guyon destroys the Bower and releases the men from their enchantment.

Spenser describes the Garden of Adonis in the sixth canto of Book Three of The Faerie Queene, where Amoret is

brought up by Venus as "So Faire a place as Nature can devize," (III. VI. xxix) a place where the presence of nature makes art superfluous. Here, divine inspiration enjoins the plants to grow: no gardiner, no visible supervisor, is necessary. Not even watering is required, for the substance of this Garden

...is eterne, and bideth so;  
 Ne when the life decayes and forme does fade,  
 Doth it consume and into nothing goe,  
 But chaunged is, and often altred to and froe.  
 (III. VI. xxxvii)

Transformation in the Garden of Adonis relies on the fecundity of nature rather than the static suppression of life implicit in the Bower. Lewis points to the similarity of the real to the pretended, and of the archetype to the imitation<sup>5</sup>; the Bower and the Garden appear similar, yet one seeks to nullify nature through artifice while the other encourages spontaneous creativity. The Garden's expression of change is what Lewis later calls "the mode in which Permanence expresses itself,"<sup>6</sup> Spenser's call to the unifying forces of nature and the human spirit. The Garden, because it represents the true creative potential of nature rather than the illusion of this creative potential, can only be recognized after its parodic double has been acknowledged and dismissed. The Spenserian hero, unlike Narcissus, can acknowledge as false the apparent similarity of the Bower to the Garden because he can discriminate between them, winning the right to go on to further tests.

Spenser also employs a kind of doubling which can be called complementary, where characters who resemble each other combine their identities to stress the importance of establishing a heroic hierarchy of feeling. This is evinced in the ninth canto of Book Four, in the story of Amyas and Placidus, two squires who look so much alike that even

...the Prince, when as he them avized,  
 Their like resemblaunce much admired there,  
 And mazed how nature had so well disguised  
 Her worke, and counterfet her selfe so nere,  
 As if that by one patterne, seene somewhere,  
 She had them made a paragone to be,  
 Or whether it through skill or errour were.

(IV. IX. xi)

Amyas, beloved of AEmylia, is captured by a giant's son while hasting to elope with her. He is brought to the giant's castle and thrown into the dungeon where Poana, the giant's beautiful daughter, spots him and desires him for her lover. Amyas coldly accepts her affection in order to seek his liberty and return to AEmylia. Placidus, hearing of his friend's plight, resolves to help him; he goes to the castle where he is mistakenly brought before Poana as Amyas. Placidus and Amyas later meet in the dungeon and Placidus agrees to continue this impersonation. Through his unrestrained affection for Poana, Placidus gains greater freedom around the castle. One day, Placidus kidnaps Poana's dwarf and in his flight meets AEmylia who recognizes him and asks after Amyas. Placidus tell of their enthrallment and AEmylia decides to ask Prince Arthur for help. Arthur

deceives Poena by distracting her with Placidus while he invades the castle. Forced to free her prisoners, Poena discovers the deception perpetrated by Amyas and Placidus:

But when awhile they had together beene,  
 And diversly conferred of their case,  
 She, though full oft she bothe of them had seene  
 Asunder, yet not ever in one place,  
 Began to doubt, when she them saw embrace,  
 Which was the captive Squire she lov'd so deare,  
 Deceived through great likenesse of their face:  
 For they so like in person did appeare,  
 That she uneth discerned whether whether weare.

(IV. IX. x)

Poena, unlike Aemylia, cannot distinguish between Amyas and Placidus because she has led a life of intemperance, a life governed by the falseness of desire without love. Just as Narcissus mistakes his image for the reality of another person, Poena is distracted by the surface of love only--by its physical manifestation alone. After Arthur brings about this discovery, Poena pines, like Narcissus does, until she is convinced by Arthur to accept Placidus as her lord.

Through this parable, Spenser shows how appearances can deceive and also how continued faith in true love which transcends appearances (the love, for example, between Amyas and Aemylia and between Placidus and Amyas) can inspire important behavioral consequences. Poena learns to discern the difference between propriety and wantonness; she loves Placidus because, in the end, Placidus loves her.

Placidus, emphasizing the significance of friendship, willingly subverts his life when he assumes the identity of Amyas with Poena in order to further his friend's interests. But Spenser is careful to illustrate that Placidus can only imitate feigned affection (Amyas' for Poena); in the same way that AEmylia never confuses Placidus and Amyas, Placidus never mistakes the order of his own, or Amyas', affections. He loves Poena as Placidus, because he is free to love her, and this is what Poena comes to appreciate through this allegory of identification.

Yet there is one form of doubling in The Faerie Queene, less parodic or complementary than obsessive, which proves as potentially dangerous as Narcissus' reflection, and which most consummately shows Spenser's connection with Romanticism and nineteenth-century fiction. This is the figure of the Blatant Beast, whose ominous presence weaves in and out of the poem until, in the Sixth Book, Calidore temporarily subdues "him." But Spenser shows that this double cannot ever be permanently accounted for. He is the "vile tongue" (VI. XII. xxxviii) that every man, Christian or heathen, hears. He is Spenser's phantom, his avenging spirit, his inadmissible, "dark" self which cannot repress his doubt about the world. It is appropriate that Sir Calidore, the most exemplary Spenserian hero, manages to capture the Beast for a while. But the Beast

finally escapes from his captivity just as surely as he invades "all estates" (VI. XII. xxiii). Nothing can be hidden or saved from ravishment, for this is the expression of Spenser's reluctantly flourishing destructive imagination. In his portrayal of the Blatant Beast, Spenser recognizes the threat posed to the creative imagination. It is not just that Calidore cannot conquer for good and all that unheroic, un-Christian part of himself to which he cannot admit; Spenser, in creating the Blatant Beast, says that there is not a man who can. The Blatant Beast is alive in us all, always ready to dominate, enchant, deceive, destroy. There are no chains strong or enduring enough to finally hold him. The possibility of evil continues to exist along with the reality, for Spenser, of goodness. Like the falseness of Narcissus' reflection, evil can so resemble the true, good original, that Spenser creates these confrontations between the original and the copy in order to show that some forms of falseness (those represented by parodic and complementary doubles) cannot bear comparison with their true counterparts. Spenser's concern is to reveal as much as he knows about the nature of evil, much more difficult to impart than the nature of good since it draws upon all that is hidden and not meant to be known. The Spenserian hero is brought through each manifestation of evil; the reader of Spenser is taught step by step to recognize evil

in its every subtle permutation. Still, the Blatant Beast remains, and this is Spenser's legacy for Romanticism and what follows, his awareness of the shadow which persists beyond the poet's imaginative power.

## ii

Spenser, Renaissance geographer of moral possibility, uses the double to suggest available moral alternatives, secondary personalities, or aspects of the original which denote inadmissible characteristics of Spenserian romance. What The Faerie Queene contributes most significantly to Romantic literature is the concept, expressed through the double, that the destructive power of the imagination has its place with its creative counterpart in defining the self; the unconscious, contradictory, even impossible combination of good and evil so important to the Romantic thesis is thus illuminated by Spenser's treatment of simultaneous distinction and identity. In Spenserian romance, an intrusion from the unconscious world of the imagination immediately becomes part of an already well-established moral tradition through the transforming agency of allegory. In this way, Spenser discovers additional moral vistas without necessarily exploring what these vistas portend. Spenserian doubles are so numerous that they seem woven into the fabric of the Spenserian quest. Hence, they have

often been dismissed as emblems of evil alone, necessary obstacles in the path of ultimate appropriate action. They are, indeed, necessary obstacles, serving as foils for heroes, giving them something to overcome and know. But in addition, these doubles are the foils of the poet's imagination. They are moral expeditions, required by Spenser and intricately examined by the Romantics.

While Spenser enlarges the terrain of the imagination through his use of the double. Nineteenth-century fiction by concentrating on the history of the imagination, pursues a quest for self-illumination, combining the "real" and the "imaginary," conscious and unconscious aspects of the self to achieve this goal. Instances of such acute preoccupation with the self are found in nearly all of German Romantic literature, most notably in the romances of E.T.A. Hoffmann. Here, hostile forces in nature seem to be projections of the diseased self, forcing characters into making untenable decisions about themselves. Hoffman creates this atmosphere by merging the horrible, grotesque, mysterious world of the nightmare with the prosaic everyday. In Hoffmann's world, there is no strong necessity to distinguish between "real" and "imaginary" because both are understood to draw freely on each other. Using the double, Hoffmann shows that the world of the supernatural and fantastic is not far removed from the familiar world.<sup>7</sup>

In "The Lost Reflection," for example, Hoffmann suggests that the narrator and the internal narrator, Erasmus Spikher, resemble each other. There is an implication that the narrator is or is about to experience devastating treatment at the hands of an enchanting courtesan, Julie, whom he meets at a party. Spikher, whose narrative takes up most of the romance, alludes to his connection with an Italian courtesan, Giulietta. The first narrator, after leaving the party where Julie has dazzled him, encounters Spikher at an inn. Later, this narrator finds Spikher mysteriously appropriating his hotel room. Spikher insists on sharing the narrator's bed for the night, promising to tell his story to the narrator on the following day. The next morning, after dreams of relinquishing his reflection to Julie, the narrator discovers that Spikher has fled, leaving behind a letter which describes the circumstances of his life. This letter now forms the rest of the tale, leaving the reader to guess at the outcome of the first narrator's destiny.

Spikher's letter tells how he, a once respectable husband and father, while alone on a sojourn in Florence, falls in love with the irresistible Giulietta. This passion inspires him to murder a rival. When forced to flee, Spikher leaves behind his reflection at Giulietta's request. Without his reflection, Spikher feels estranged from the

world; he feels that he has lost his individuality, his essence, part of his soul. He cannot forget Giulietta, although he tries, because she now "possesses" part of him. Hoffmann shows how Spikher, haunted by his lost love, ironically focuses on the loss of his reflection rather than on Giulietta herself.

Like Narcissus, Spikher confuses subject with object; he falsely attributes to his reflection a reality which leads him to mistake the image for a living thing. Spikher also resembles Narcissus in that he can now no longer love either his wife or Giulietta, perhaps herself a reflection of Spikher's destructive imagination. In the character of Dr. Dapertutto, Giulietta's protector, Hoffmann suggests all of Spikher's potential for error; whenever Spikher contemplates malice, Dapertutto becomes, in addition to Giulietta, a part of Spikher's impulse to destroy by encouraging him. Spikher's own reflection must be sacrificed to the stronger, more exacting allure of Dapertutto and Giulietta, who might be read as emblems of Spikher's unconscious desire to be estranged from his former, happy life. Yet in the final temptation scene, when Spikher is asked by Dapertutto to sign over the fate of his family so that he may become Giulietta's lover for eternity, he yields to the interceding vision of his mother who implores him in the name of Christ to resist. Spikher's duty as a Christian

finally overcomes his Faustian attraction to the false promise of immortality. The vision reminds him that true immortality can only be achieved through Christian heroic action, a lesson that every Spenserian hero also must learn. Spikher chooses to return to his family, but Hoffmann shows that his conversion is not complete. He still worries over the loss of his reflection, and because of this obsession, his wife sends him back to Italy, to search for it until it is found.

In this Romance, Hoffmann shows that Spikher, by giving away his reflection, gives away his ability to be himself. Consequently, he is condemned to wander the earth, eternally searching for what he has lost, relating his tale to those who, like the first narrator, seem about to follow in the same pattern of error. Hoffmann treats this error not merely as a sin, but actually as a denial of Christianity. Although Spikher may still recognize appropriate Christian sentiment, he cannot ultimately act accordingly. For Hoffmann, man's evil nature, like Spenser's Blatant Beast, can never be restrained for long. Hoffmann's world, like Spenser's, is a fallen one. Following in the Spenserian tradition of romance, Hoffmann contends that beneath acceptable, conscious desires lie inadmissible, pernicious ones which can assume control over the imagination. Hoffmann's use of the double as a quality of obsession further

resembles Spenser's obsessive double the Blatant Beast, because, in Hoffmann's tales, evil, in its ability to resemble good, becomes an additional part of the condition of life. Thus, the first narrator and Spikher seek this additional, mysterious aspect of themselves, their destructive potential, which, once found, they cannot resist. Dreams, shadows, reflections, all emanations of this impulse to experience the dark side of life, offer what these characters mistake as self-fulfillment. Therefore, like Narcissus' misapprehension of the nature of his reflection, this "possibility," shaped in deception, leads to disaster. It can lead nowhere else. Hoffmann's world is filled with disembodied spirits, all seeking some life-sustaining definition, all preferring the appearance of this to the thing itself.

Another instance of acute preoccupation with the self is found in the fairy tale, where writers whose imaginations remain blocked toward an adult audience can openly express their haunting self-doubt in stories meant for children--stories not bound by the condemning restrictions of the adult imagination. In Hans Christian Andersen's "The Shadow," for example, a shadow grows dangerously more authentic than the man who fosters it. Here, a young scholar from the North travels south where he must adjust to a new, exhausting climate by staying inside during the heat of the day. His shadow shrinks from the intense noontime sun,

figuratively expressing the scholar's discomfort. Evenings are spent recuperating from the days; the scholar and his shadow go through a process of stretching, the scholar by walking out on his balcony from which he observes the active street life, the shadow by extending itself up a wall and along the ceiling of the scholar's apartment. This is a land where the life begins at twilight, where daily activity must, perforce, take place at night. Andersen thus creates a mirror world, where the tropical weather necessitates a reverse in the natural order of activity; in this way, unusual, "nocturnal" experiences can occur along with familiar, everyday experiences, creating an atmosphere of chronic expectancy.

During these crucial evenings, the scholar becomes more aware than ever before of the marvelous quality of the life he perceives, perhaps because of his daily deprivation. This feeling is augmented by his discovery of the only quiet house on the street, directly across from his own. There, flowers on the balcony thrive and so are evidently watered, yet the scholar never sees anyone in or around the house at all. Also, the house exudes wonderful music, which the scholar takes pains to describe to himself:

"It's just as if somebody sits there practicing a piece that's somehow beyond him--always the self-same piece. 'Ill play it right yet,' he probably says, but he doesn't, no matter how long he tries."<sup>8</sup>

The remoteness of this music and the mystery of the inhabitants of the silent house intrigue him, and the scholar persists in scrutinizing the house night after night for some sign of visible life. One night his vigilance is rewarded; he sees a beautiful maiden amid the flowers on the balcony. The vision is so penetrating and radiant that it actually forces the scholar to close his eyes. By the time he recovers, the maiden is gone, leaving only the music playing more softly and hauntingly than ever. Now the scholar becomes insatiably curious about the house. On a following evening, when he observes that his shadow is cast on its wall while he takes his usual stroll out onto his own balcony, the scholar jokingly muses that his shadow ought to make itself useful to him by stepping inside. The shadow does just that. By giving the shadow an independent role, the scholar loses it. It is interesting to note that this has happened before. Narcissus overvalued his reflection, elevating it to the status of a loved one; the scholar similarly overvalues his shadow although, less radically, he wills it to become his "second," a servant to accomplish what he has been unable to accomplish, to explore what has eluded him. In "The Lost Reflection," Spikher undervalued his shadow, thinking he could give it away with impunity; then, by compensation, he obsessively undervalued it to make it the center of his life. All three eventually lose their reality to their reflections.

The next morning, when the scholar notices his loss, he is at first annoyed that the "story" is not original. At this point, Andersen pays tribute to Hoffmann's earlier tale and probably to still earlier German Romantic literature about doubles.<sup>9</sup> But the reference is more than a clever way of citing sources; by making the scholar bemoan his situation in terms of its unoriginality, Andersen comments on the prevalence of a "shadowless" condition. The scholar, among others, loses his shadow ; like Spikher, he decides to keep silent about this, recognizing that something once taken for granted has become ominously significant through its loss. His attempts to lure his shadow back prove futile. But the climate soon provides him with a replacement. He therefore returns to his homeland with a new shadow, because "in the hot countries everything grows most rapidly."<sup>10</sup>

After some years, the scholar's original shadow seeks him out, ostensibly to settle all accounts between them. During their interview, the scholar dismisses any remaining debt but insists that he be told about his shadow's good fortune. Andersen's description of the shadow's success as a man emphasizes its complete mastery of human appearances and behavior:

It was really remarkable how much of a man he had become, dressed all in black, with the finest cloth, patent-leather shoes, and an opera hat that could be pressed perfectly flat till it was only brim and top, not to mention...those seals, that gold chain, and the diamond rings. The shadow

was well dressed indeed, and it was just this that made him appear human.

"Now I'll tell you," said the shadow, grinding his patent-leather shoes on the arm of the scholar's new shadow, which lay at his feet like a poodle dog. This was arrogance, perhaps, or possibly he was trying to make the new shadow stick to his own feet. The shadow on the floor lay quiet and still, and listened its best, so that it might learn how to get free and work its way up to be its own master.<sup>11</sup>

Andersen also now allows the master shadow to assume the masculine gender; it becomes a "he," again emphasizing "his" total success. The shadow's opulence contrasts with the scholar's simple, austere life; his experiences, as he begins to relate them, seem awesome and inspiring. He tells how upon entering the mysterious house, he discovered its occupant to be Poetry. There the shadow remained for three weeks, absorbing all of the knowledge of the universe, reading all that had been written, observing everything:

"I was there, I tell you, so you must understand that I saw all that there was to be seen. Had you come over, it would not have made a man of you, as it did of me. Also, I learned to understand my inner self, what is born in me, and the relationship between me and Poetry. Yes, when I was with you I did not think of such things, but you must remember how wonderfully I expanded at sunrise and sunset. And in the moonlight I almost seemed more real than you. Then I did not understand myself, but in that ante-room I came to know my true nature. I was a man!"<sup>12</sup>

Andersen shows that the shadow has cultivated a finer sensibility than the scholar's through his exposure to the underlying spirit of life, Poetry. But after departing from the House of Poetry, he encounters a wicked world, where he must adopt a compatible spiritual course, exclaiming, "I

would not care to be a man if it were not the fashionable thing to be."<sup>13</sup> The shadow understands that his future success is contingent upon his knowledge of the world's wickedness.

Another series of years pass before the shadow calls on the scholar again. This time, the scholar's life has depreciated considerably: "I still write about the true, the good, and the beautiful, but nobody cares to read about such things. I feel quite despondent, for I take it deeply to heart."<sup>14</sup> The shadow, educated by the wickedness that he has observed firsthand, does not care about the state of the world. He has succeeded in the process of dehumanization which has, ironically, made him more human than his former master. He can now offer his old retainer the opportunity of becoming his shadow. The scholar at first refuses, but after a serious illness during which he comes to resemble physically his former shadow, he finally agrees to this final exchange of roles. At this point, the metamorphosis is complete: "The shadow was careful to take the place of the master, and the scholar didn't much care, for he had an innocent heart, besides being most affable and friendly."<sup>15</sup> Although the scholar shows his affability by allowing himself to be called by his first name, the shadow insists on preserving formal address, claiming that this is a point of pride with him. Such audacity reaches its

culmination in the shadow's love affair with a princess whom he meets at a fashionable spa. Andersen again applies his ironic vision of the human condition; he makes the princess' malady that of seeing too clearly. Although she acutely observes that the shadow himself casts no shadow, she is deceived by his explanation:

"Don't you see that figure who always accompanies me? Other people have a common shadow, but I do not care for what is common to all. Just as we often allow our servants better fabrics for their liveries than we wear ourselves, so I have my shadow decked out as a man. Why, you see I have even outfitted him with a shadow of his own."<sup>16</sup>

The shadow further enhances this explanation when he tells the princess that his "shadow" can answer any difficult, scholarly questions she cares to pose it.

Only when the shadow informs the scholar of his imminent marriage to the princess does the scholar decide to object. He tries to explain their "real" relationship to the princess, but it is too late. With a final stroke of irony, Andersen shows the princess to be wholly taken in by her fiancé; she concludes that the scholar is mad and has him executed on the eve of her marriage--to the shadow. Here Andersen abruptly ends the tale, suggesting in its dénouement Kafka's world of total devastation, where nightmare has paradoxically become the natural order, the only authentic state. In Andersen's fairy tale, the shadow destroys its original master by reducing him to a shadow.

This is accomplished when the shadow actually takes on "human" characteristics which Spikher, in "The Lost Reflection," only imagines his shadow to have. While Spikher's shadow haunts him with its memory, the memory of possessing it, the scholar's shadow becomes an independent entity, deliberately and maliciously pursuing his former master until the distinctions between them are no longer meaningful. This is the nightmare that Spenser could only suggest in his depiction of the Blatant Beast: here, human flesh unconsciously wills itself to death, just as Narcissus makes himself his own captive.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>See Harold Bloom, "The Internalization of Quest Romance," in The Ringers in the Tower (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 13-35.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas P. Roche, The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's Faerie Queene (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 205.

<sup>3</sup>All quotations from The Faerie Queene are from the Everyman's Library edition, 2 vols., (New York: Dutton, 1964).

<sup>4</sup>C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 325-26.

<sup>5</sup>Lewis, p. 326.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis, p. 356.

<sup>7</sup>Freud refers to Hoffmann's use of what he calls the "uncanny" in his essay of the same name. Here, Freud shows how Grimm's definition of "heimlich" (the familiar) develops towards an ambivalence until the meaning finally coincides with its opposite, "unheimlich" (the unfamiliar, the uncanny). Later on in the essay, remarkable in its effort to rationalize inexplicable fears, Freud explains why the ambivalent meaning of "heimlich" develops: "This uncanny is nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression." Hoffmann's use of the double as a device for bridging the gap between the real and the imagined would seem to inspire this deduction. Still later in the essay, Freud attributes the "unheimlich" with "effacing the distinction between imagination and reality...when a symbol takes over the full functions of significance of the thing it symbolizes." Hoffmann's doubles usually attempt to usurp the place of their originals and they usually succeed, at least, in focusing the attention upon themselves. They become the main characters of the romances. See Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," trans. Alex Strachey in Studies in Parapsychology, ed. Philip Reiff (New York: Collier Books, 1966), pp. 30, 42, 50.

<sup>8</sup>Hans Christian Andersen, "The Shadow," in The Complete Andersen: All of the 168 Stories, trans. Jean Hersholt (New York: The Heritage Press, 1952), p. 51.

<sup>9</sup>Perhaps the most widely read of the German Romantic tales about doubles at this time was the story of Peter Schlemihl (Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte), by Adalbert von Chamisso. In this tale, Schlemihl sells his shadow to the devil, a transaction he so intensely regrets that he considers buying it back in exchange for his immortal soul. Hoffmann pays tribute to Chamisso's Schlemihl when he includes Schlemihl among the characters in "The Lost Reflection"; Schlemihl dramatically enters the inn where the narrator later meets Spikher, first making sure that all of the mirrors are covered, so that his loss will not be noticeable. But, like Spikher, Schlemihl is so obsessed with his loss that he cannot refrain from confessing it to everybody. Andersen undoubtedly had this story in mind when he has his scholar complain about his "unoriginal" situation, the loss of his shadow. For a discussion of Chamisso's work, see Ralph Tymms, German Romantic Literature (London: Methuen & co. Ltd., 1955), pp. 340-43.

<sup>10</sup>Andersen, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup>Andersen, p. 55.

<sup>12</sup>Andersen, p. 56.

<sup>13</sup>Andersen, p. 56.

<sup>14</sup>Andersen, p. 57.

<sup>15</sup>Andersen, p. 58.

<sup>16</sup>Andersen, pp. 58-59.

## Chapter Four

### The Romantic Double

In addition to Spenser, an essential influence on the development of nineteenth-century romance came from Milton, particularly from the Romantic interpretation of Paradise Lost. According to this interpretation, Satan attempts to liberate himself from traditional superstitions attributing omnipotence solely to God. For the Romantics, the imaginative intensity of striking out on one's own, as Satan does, resembles very closely a creative process, the imagination's desire to establish a new condition of integrity, attainable through individual endeavor rather than through the despotic notion of Grace. Yet Milton's eccentricities, if viewed within the context of Milton's lifetime, never permit him to desert finally the idea of a comprehensive universe, a universe inspired by the Christian ideal of goodness. For Milton, there can never be an impenetrable contradiction between God the Creator and the poet as creator, a contradiction felt acutely by the Romantics. The poet's work, in Milton's view, is to illuminate God's role; thus the poet becomes Milton's priest, and his creative inspiration becomes the human emanation of God's Grace.

Accordingly, Satan, despite his abundant energy, represents Milton's awareness of opposition, suitable to highlight the mirror-like resemblance between good and evil that interests the Romantics. But Milton's Satan actually expresses the intellectual sophistry intended to confuse the distinction between good and evil, a distinction that Milton always finds it necessary to make. Milton recognizes Satan's attractiveness, but he never condones the condition of evil which Satan chooses as his own. In Milton's world, it is always possible to be good.

The Romantic interpretation of Paradise Lost raises the important issue of Miltonic versus Spenserian echoes in Romanticism, or whether there is some kind of uneasy balance between the two. While Milton acknowledges the existence of evil, its attractive yet deluding possibilities only present the backdrop for a revelation of the nature of goodness. In Paradise Lost, evil occurs when there is a falling away from good, a deviation always possible to correct through the transforming quality of God's Grace, manifested, for example, in reclaiming Adam and Eve after the Fall. Nowhere does Milton allow the mysteriously powerful potential of evil (Satan's imagination) to mitigate against the positive forces of the imagination, inspired and anticipated by God. Man may be distracted to do wrong through temptation, but there can be no temptation without

its serving God's omniscient plan. Unlike Spenser, Milton does not consider evil to be a possible alternate state, subtly persisting beyond the poet's imaginative power; rather, as Satan proves, evil, for Milton, is a very complex myth, wholly distinguishable from and dependent on the larger "truth" of goodness. Spenser cannot ultimately believe that evil can be overcome, that it is always possible to be good. While Spenserian heroes learn to tell the difference between what masquerades as goodness and what goodness actually means, it seems that the final image of the Blatant Beast again at large precludes belief in the Miltonic conception of goodness. In The Faerie Queene, evil becomes the familiar companion piece, an ever-present extension of the potentially creative, heroic imagination, but one which is seldom acknowledged. In Spenser's world, evil is man's inability to admit to himself that he is not wholly good.

By extracting their own interpretation, as in the myth of the failed poet, of Milton's Satan representing the creative imagination mysteriously gone wrong, the Romantics misread Milton's intention that confusion be transformed into illumination through God's Grace. For this reason, Romantic interest in the phenomenon of evil more closely resembles Spenserian obsession with evil as a constant threat to the desired harmony of nature with the human condition. Like Spenser, the Romantics (with the exception of

Blake) cannot resist the idea that evil might be an alternative to good, even a reversal of good, and this points up the inevitable cost of freedom for the imagination: the impassioned, dialectical struggle between creative and destructive impulses. Two works which clearly deal with this struggle, particularly using Narcissus-like doubles, are Shelley's Alastor and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.

In Alastor, an early poem which foreshadows much of his later work, Shelley explores the imagination's ongoing attempt to reconcile contradictory perceptions of nature, perceptions which encourage an examination of the self, yet at the same time reveal a certain mode of introspection to be false and self-deluding. Here, as in The Faerie Queene, nature, if perceived through narcissistic parodic delusion, can be reduced to only the appearance of nature, not nature itself. In this poem, the double occurs in the form of the Alastor poet's anti-self, identified as a personification of solitude, the poet's own detachment from his creative potential. This double, instead of contributing to the poet's vision, compels him further, on an isolating quest inward, away from the vitality of the creative process. Thus the poet and his anti-self characterize the dangerous problem of simultaneous distinction and identity. The poet's quest for some impossible combination of fantasy and reality, whether objectified in his vision of the "veiled maid," or

reified in the spirit of solitude, distracts and finally impedes him from real self-awareness. The spirit who haunts him also alienates him from the world, making the poet a prisoner of his own imagination. Like Narcissus, he suffers from self-absorption unmodified by self-awareness, which the avenging spirit, his anti-self, an intruder conceived by his imagination, obscures to the point of extinction. Implicit in the poem is Shelley's own awareness that there should be a balance between what it is actually possible to know and the goal toward which the imagination constantly struggles to push knowledge, a goal beyond the limits of possibility. In effect, as a result of this impulse to push knowledge beyond its limits, the imagination then turns upon itself.

The poem begins with what seems to be a traditional invocation to nature, whose literal positive qualities Shelley calls upon to become his muse, to inspire and inform his poem with

...dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,  
 With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,  
 And solemn midnight's tingling silentness. (ll. 5-8)<sup>1</sup>

For a brief moment, Shelley pays homage to the usefulness of nature in the same way that Wordsworth does in "Tintern Abbey":

Therefore am I still  
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
 And mountains; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
 Of eye and ear,--both what they half create,

And what perceive; well pleased to recognise  
 In nature and the language of the sense,  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
 Of all my moral being.<sup>2</sup>

But Shelley's homage to nature, unlike Wordsworth's, cannot refrain from stressing his own frenetic impulse relentlessly to examine nature's darker side, the "deep mysteries":

I have made my bed  
 In charnels and on coffins, where black death  
 Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,  
 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
 Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost  
 Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
 Of what we are. (45-49)

Shelley considers this "lone ghost," nature's "messenger," a daimonic agent who seeks to interpret nature's otherwise unfathomable mysteries.

What begins, therefore, as an invocation to nature, where an acceptance of a balance between the literal and deeper allegorical aspects of nature would seem to be appropriate, quickly progresses to Shelley's pointing out the distinction between nature perceived literally and nature perceived allegorically. Nature's literal aspect, the "varying roof of heaven / And the green earth" (96-97), should, for Shelley, lead the way to nature's underlying meaning, the "inmost sanctuary... / And twilight phantasms, and deep thought" (38-40). Shelley further insists that a connection between these different aspects can be made possible through an agency of nature's mystery, in this case the "lone ghost,"

the real muse of Alastor. Thus he suggests how nature perceived literally can be translated into its allegorical aspect by the imagination:

I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain  
 May modulate with murmurs of the air,  
 And motions of the forests and the sea,  
 And voice of living beings, and woven hymns  
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of man. (45-49)

The "Breath" that Shelley awaits is the "lone ghost," the reflection or emanation of nature's mystery, the echo of some higher, more complete truth that he should now be able to discern.

But while Shelley may use his imagination to invent a connection with what he cannot know, the similarly innovative poet of Alastor shows how such inventiveness can be put to bad use. It is as if Shelley, aware of the dangers of his own creativity, must now remind himself, through mythopoetic illustration, that the creative process, although not intrinsically destructive, can be easily transformed into a tragic hallucination.<sup>3</sup> The solitude of the Alastor poet emphasizes his total detachment from the world, his commitment to the destructive power of the imagination. There is nothing arbitrary about this solitude; it is willful, alienating, self-insulating, decadent. The sheer waste of the poet's false quest is devastating because the poet, like Narcissus, has been endowed with beauty and nurtured "By solemn vision, and bright silver dream" (67). Despite

his gifts, however, the poet forsakes the perspective necessary to align himself with nature. Instead of sharing himself with the world, he withdraws from it, becoming a perpetual observer, a form which may outgrace nature yet can never become part of nature itself.

The poet's insatiable wanderlust prevents him from the very familiarity with nature that he seeks. He can do no better than to "linger long / In lonesome vales" (98-99); he cannot control the destructive impulse which enchants him and makes him move onward. Rather than examine the authenticity of the act of moving on, his "wandering step" is merely "obedient to high thoughts" (106-07), thoughts which are high only in the sense of their remoteness. His travels to "the awful ruins of the days of old" (108) do not yield self-knowledge, even when they encounter "memorials / Of the world's youth" (121-22), former cryptic and futile explorations. Whatever "meaning" culled from poring over these ancient riddles only resembles "strong inspiration"; Shelley now unleashes an undercutting irony that continues throughout the poem. The poet, although he apparently sees "the thrilling secrets of the birth of time" (128), does not understand that they reflect a current and perpetual mystery. He sees, but he does not understand. His vision is confined to perceiving these secrets as secrets only. Shelley describes the poet's mind as "vacant," that is,

devoid of life, empty, unoccupied by the true ability to participate in, and so in the only meaningful sense to understand, the "secrets" themselves. This is the destructive direction of the poet's imagination; the enchantment represented by his quest for meaning beneath the literal deflects him from rather than directs him to the possibility of discerning such meaning. The poet does not recognize that life is mysterious, subject neither to explanation nor to fruitful investigation through self-conscious pursuit. But the hallucinatory force of his enchantment draws him further and further away from any retaliatory imaginative thrust which would make his life more valuable than his quest, ironically, a literal quest for death.

Once the poet has begun his quest, once the delusion has taken hold, his every action, his every perception, is precluded by his commitment to deceptive enchantment. His imagination can now only deceive him and lead him into further permutations of deception. At this point, Shelley begins to stress an allegorical reading of nature. When the poet stops to rest in a bower in the vale of cashmire, the bower "where odorous plants entwine... / Beside a sparkling rivulet" (148-49) becomes a false paradise, a parody of paradise and the possibility of paradise, Shelley's version of the Bower of Bliss. Whatever the poet hallucinates here must necessarily reflect this duplicity. Thus, the poet's

dream of the "veilèd maid" whose voice "was like the voice of his own soul / Heard in the calm of thought" (151-54), while literally a dream about the poet's desire and his desire to examine what desire means, ironically requires another, much more ominous reading. The maid resembles the poet both in spirit and in pursuit:

Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,  
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,  
Herself a poet. (158-61)

Desire for the poet, then, is union with a female projection of himself. The maid embodies all that the poet finds admirable, all that the poet is or wishes himself to be. She, too, seems to chase a particular hallucinatory vision; she, also, succumbs to the compelling shape of this vision without evaluating it:

...wild numbers then  
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs  
Subdued by its own pathos. (163-64)

It is no wonder that the poet's desire for the maid reduces him; he is irresistibly drawn to the vacuum of her self-consciousness which mirrors his own. Her self-consciousness, because it does resemble his own, becomes another medium for falseness:

His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess  
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled  
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet  
Her panting bosom:... (181-84)

Shelley intends the poet's "excess / Of love" to stress his preoccupation with love as self-gratification. The sensations

described are pleasurable only in terms of the poet's passion for destruction; the maid's "dissolving arms" (197) feed upon him because they project his own destructive impulse. This desire for self-consummation can only be acknowledged in a vision, a creation of the poet's unconscious. When the vision departs, the poet's brain is again "vacant," absent of life, of the activity of life. It is a mind tuned now only to absence, to the withdrawal of life-affirming imaginative power. It is preparation for the most profound solitude of all.

When the poet awakens from his "trance," the literal aspect of nature has fused itself with the allegorical, its darker, underlying meaning. The bower of potential paradise, because it does not continue to offer the vision in the "cold white light of morning" (193), fails to comfort the poet even with the memory of its previous wonder. The woods are now "vacant" (195), just as the poet, when bereft of his vision, is left without energy, spiritually and physically emptied. As the poet mourns the passing of his visionary moment, Shelley makes clear how deceptive and sterile this vision now is:

His wan eyes  
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly  
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.  
The spirit of sweet human love has sent  
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues  
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;  
He overleaps the bounds. (200-07)

The poet's eyes are as sightless as those of a mirror image; he has so wasted himself in destructive energy that he is diminished almost to self-mockery. Shelley's irony, here, is very sharp. Just as the ocean's moon, only a reflection of the moon in heaven, cannot really look on the moon in heaven (it can merely send back the look of heaven's moon--hence, a blank stare), the poet, irrevocably caught up in the empty self-delusion he has invited, can only parody the emptiness he feels. Because he has chosen to be absent, even his solitude is a mockery. He is not only alone, he begins to resemble more and more the state of solitude itself.

The real spirit of love, because the poet has rejected this simpler, more obvious joy in order to pursue the mystery which is not meant for him, seeks revenge. Here the parallel between what happens in Alastor and what happens in the Narcissus myth is striking. In Ovid's version of the myth, Nemesis is invoked by a lovelorn youth to pay Narcissus back finally for his many rejections of the love of others. Narcissus, at the end of a long and exhausting hunt, finds himself in a bower where he mistakenly falls in love with his own reflection, seen in a fountain as he bends down to drink. The poet of Alastor, like Narcissus, also rejects the love offered to him by others--he has rejected the Arab maiden, and "virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined / And

wasted for fond love of his wild eyes" (62-63)--in favor of the vision of his own projected desire. The vision, Shelley relates, has been invoked by the "spirit of sweet human love," whose "choicest gifts" the poet has "spurned" (203-05). The poet, languishing in the self-deception of his vision, cannot distinguish between the sheer attractiveness of such a delusion and the inherent, inevitable danger of a destructive view of the world. He mistakenly imbues what has come to him in a dream with more substance than what he sees in the light of day. At this point, only the freedom of a dream, where the imagination can express its hidden workings and contradictions, conveys such a vision. Yet the vision, as Shelley carefully shows, is a "fleeting shade" (206), an impermanent trace which obscures rather than illuminates the world of every day. The poet, mindless of the contemptability of his error, "overleaps the bounds" (207). Here, Shelley's irony echoes Milton's, when Satan, thinking he has successfully found a way to enter Paradise and so destroy God's plan by leading Adam and Eve into sin, "At one slight bound high overleap'd all bound" (PL IV, 181).<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the Alastor poet, by rejecting the love of others as Narcissus does, and by protracting a vision in a dream into the theme of his waking quest, goes too far. His imagination cannot leave well enough alone.

The dream's mystery, elusive because unclear and perhaps even unworthy of clarity, becomes the poet's way of misreading the world. He burns with the desire to discover the source of his desire, to rediscover the "veiled maid," his other half; again and again, instead of looking at nature itself, he can only gaze on the appearance of nature in a reflection:

...the bright arch of rainbow clouds,  
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake. (213-14)

The poet's desire to see has been inextricably connected with his despair over ever seeing the shadow that he constantly pursues. When he asks whether the pleasant shadows that he sees can only lead to "where every shade which the foul grave exhales / ...Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms" (217-19), whether pleasure and pain, like his interpretation of sleep and death, are merely slightly different versions of each other, contrasting yet complementary parts of the same process, Shelley shows the poet given over to an "insatiate hope which...stung / His brain even like despair" (212-22). In this way, the poet of Alastor, like Shelley, conveys the ongoing attempt by the human psyche to reconcile the polarities of hope and despair. But Shelley recognizes that while one can draw upon the other, some distinction must be made between them. The Alastor poet, immersed in the destructive flow of his imagination, neglects the significance of this distinction. His only

impulse is to relinquish himself to his hallucination, his self-enchancement, his pursuit of the false reflection of his desire.

The second night, the night after his dream, makes the poet's entire commitment to the "fierce fiend of a dis-tempered dream" (225), the imitative self-consciousness of his desire led astray. Now the "bright shadow of that lovely dream" (233) drives him on, and the frantic movement itself reflects the tenor of the poet's imagination. Pursuit becomes a form of flight; the poet flees from all that can enforce life and toward what is unmistakably at this point, his death. The dawn contrasts with his "cheek of death" (239), mocking with its vitality the hopelessness of his quest. Nothing but "brooding care" (246) of his obsession, his pursuit and courtship of his own destructive impulse embodied in the "veilèd maid," nourishes him. Because he has given up his total being to this process of disintegration, the poet's body, like Narcissus', when he pines for his false, unrequitable love, mirrors the self-reductive sterility of his perception:

And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair  
 Sered by the autumn of strange suffering  
 Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand  
 Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;  
 Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone  
 As in a furnace burning secretly  
 From his dark eyes alone. (248-54)

The poet's desire for death, for union with that part of himself which denies mystery by attempting to define it, isolates him and prevents him from participating in the natural process, the life process he was gifted to resemble. He becomes an object of wonder and terror, a spectral figure from whom infants turn away in fear. Yet, always, nature's positive, life-affirming forces, the "youthful maidens" (266) who try to distract him back to the living, are present. The poet, however, is utterly committed to his path of departure, leading him away from what he has mistaken for limited imagination, but which is actually the imagination's positive, creative impulse.

At this point, the poet becomes locked into the process of retreat; he no longer considers participating in nature or seeking companionship within the world around him, as a viable choice for himself. When he pauses on the seashore to watch the flight of a swan as it returns home, he can only appreciate the apparent implication of that return:

-- 'Thou hast a home,  
 Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,  
 Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck  
 With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes  
 Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy. (280-84)

Such a vision, because it partakes of accessible joys, because it resembles pleasures which the poet has already given up, does not attract him any more than the "youthful maidens" do. The swans are creatures of nature, responding to each

other and so to their existence within nature. The poet considers this insufficient for himself; it is all right for swans, but he demands more from nature than nature can provide:

And what am I that I should linger here,  
 With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,  
 Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
 To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
 In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven  
 That echoes not my thought? (285-90)

Again, Shelley's irony is the guiding principle of this passage. The poet's potential powers of perception and feeling are "surpassing powers." Yet, because he uses them solipsistically to turn off rather than to turn on the creative, life-enforcing power of his imagination, his own notes, not the swan's, will be the ones to die. It is not nature, "the deaf air," "the blind earth" or "heaven / That echoes not my thoughts" that is blind to the poet's higher sensibility; it is the poet who rejects nature's most refined and subtle gift, the gift of sympathetic communion with others. Instead, his aspiration is checked by his self-consciousness. The "veiled maid" belongs to the world outside of nature, the world of the poet's imagination. His quest, therefore, leads him inward. Sleep and death are again brought together as the nefarious context for his self-orientated vision, "a shadowy lure, / With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms" (294-95).

Nature, in Alastor, provides Shelley with a world of unanswerable questions. The Alastor poet seeks answers to these questions, but his imagination withdraws from the outside world into itself, becoming only a destructive desire to re-create, in its own image, a duplicate (but not a reciprocal) imagination, a second imagination which merely reflects itself. Because of this, the poet mortally limits herself. His imagination moves from what he attributes to nature, to what he mistakes for nature's underlying mystery, its hidden core of truth. In moving from the accessible to the inaccessible, however, Shelley shows the poet to be a victim of his own thwarted potential. He cannot recognize the value of others, so he creates another emanation of himself, not part of the natural world, to value mistakenly above nature. This duplicate imagination, the "fair fiend" (297) to which he singlemindedly devotes himself, must, inevitably be equated with death, for only in death can the poet himself be reduced from substance to shadow, from the world of nature to the world beyond nature, the "populous deep" (307) which echoes "his own deep mind" (298). Appropriately, at this point, the poet's imaginative quest is transformed into an actual voyage. Shelley's description of the shallop noticed by the poet is also a description of the poet's state of mind:

It had long been abandoned, for its sides  
 Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints  
 Swayed with the undulations of the tide. (301-03)

The shallop, like the poet, can only go so far. It, too, is limited by its vulnerability, its starkness, its uncanny, fatal energy to "speed o'er the tranquil sea / Like a torn cloud before the hurricane" (314-15).

The voyage itself is accompanied by Shakespearean echoes of nature portending imminent personal disaster. Again, Shelley stresses the underlying, allegorical texture of nature. The poet, a "frail and wasted human form" (350), nevertheless, as if he were "an elemental god" (351), sails on, weathering every attempt to blow him off course. Waves resemble "serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp" (325); the whirlpool's flood, although "dark and obliterating" (329), cannot impede his progress. The day ends; evening arrives, the storm rages on, "as if to mock / The calm and spangled sky" (344-45). The storm, like the poet's quest, contrasts with the steady progress of time, time quietly yet inimically contributing to his demise. At midnight, the poet's boat becomes his ship of death:

-- 'Vision and Love!'  
 The Poet cried aloud, 'I have beheld  
 The path of thy departure. Sleep and death  
 Shall not divide us long!' (366-69)

Here, Shelley shows how the poet comes to complete the range of his enchantment. "Vision and Love" and "Sleep and death," are now integrally acknowledged as equations which

interchangeably read as vision and sleep and love and death, previously disparate parts of the poet's self-destructive imagination. Now his journey is understood by him to be a journey to the grave, where the four components of his enchantment can exist simultaneously. As the new day dawns, the poet's voyage continues through nature which reflects the turmoil of his devastating quest. All natural reflections have now become "treacherous"; they distort "every cloud" with "tremendous calm" (286-87). Yet, the poet remains afloat, sailing at last into

A little space of green expanse, the cove  
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers  
For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,  
Reflected in the crystal calm....

The poet longed  
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,  
But on his heart its solitude returned,  
And he forbore. (405-15)

Again Shelley invokes the Narcissus association. The "yellow flowers," flowers said in the myth to grow on the spot where Narcissus' corpse wasted away, mirror the hopelessness of a faithful yet false love. They "for ever gaze on their own drooping eyes," heedless of the world around them, just as the poet, now too self-absorbed to decorate himself with them, cannot do more than admire their useless beauty. His solitude, his only durably emblematic feeling, the poet's spirit objectified and turned in upon itself, makes him avoid even this peripheral contact with the world. His quest has yet to be fulfilled:

Not the strong impulse hid  
 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame  
 Had yet performed its ministry: it hung  
 Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud  
 Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods  
 Of night close over it. (415-19)

The poet's destructive imagination, self-perpetuating and covetous of his attention, compels him to move on. Nature, even when it presages his goal, here represents only landscape in passing, sights seen on the way to where the poet will end his quest.

It is interesting to note that Shelley turns increasingly to his allegorical reading of nature, and that this reading becomes, increasingly, the Alastor poet's perception of nature, nature mythologized according to his particular hallucinatory vision. When the poet comes to a forest of "meeting boughs and implicated leaves" (426), their integrated beauty seems to be an extension of his own wasted self-consciousness. Shelley emphasizes the claustrophobic unity of this forest by describing it in tableau-like detail: even the ivy serves reductively to connect tree with tree<sup>5</sup>:

Like restless serpents, clothed  
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around  
 The grey trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,  
 With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,  
 Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,  
 These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs  
 Uniting their close union. (438-45)

Here, nature only resembles infants' "most innocent wiles"; "parasites," although beautiful, also live at the expense of others. The poet, too, because he has given himself over to his destructive imagination, and because he refuses to recognize the notion of otherness, lives at the expense of others. Again, Shelley's idea of the solitary gone wrong is that of the Alastor poet who abandons true independence for an artificial and self-imagined autonomy, an autonomy which is only imitative of spontaneous action. The poet, like the "soul-dissolving" (453), beautiful yet sterile landscape described in the previous passage, can never resemble another separate and distinct (and so life-affirming) entity. His life is inextricably bound to his false vision, an emanation of himself, just as "each depending leaf" (460) of this landscape reflects the emptiness of a suspended moment of time:

...painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,  
 Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,  
 Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings  
 Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon. (465-68)

It is to the artificial calm of this scene that the poet, as Shelley's Narcissus, brings all the deceptive potential of his imagination. What he sees in the reflection of himself in the fountain is the absolute end of his quest, "as the human heart, / Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave, / Sees its own treacherous likeness there" (472-74).

But it is Shelley who perceives the implication of the poet's quest, that is, his desire to die. The poet, enchanted by the narcotic quality of his reflection beyond the grave, hallucinates one final, self-annihilating time:

A Spirit seemed  
 To Stand beside him--clothed in no bright robes  
 Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,  
 Borrowed from aught the visible world affords  
 Of grace, or majesty, or mystery; --  
 But, undulating woods, and silent well,  
 And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom  
 Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,  
 Held commune with him, as if he and it  
 Were all that was--only...When his regard  
 Was raised by intense pensiveness,...two eyes,  
 Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,  
 And seemed with their serene and azure smiles  
 To beckon him. (479-92)

The "Spirit" beckoning to the poet is the state of solitude which the poet has chosen to resemble. This solitude, for Shelley, excludes all other communication with the world, because it denies the existence of all but itself. The serenity described here is not beneficent, but the serenity of complete and most profound delusion.<sup>6</sup> The poet's obsessive quest now possesses him entirely. He moves on like a drowning man, with every chronological event reduced to sameness, "like childhood laughing as it went" (499). He follows the course of the rivulet which, he feels, reflects the course of his life:

Thy darksome stillness,  
 Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,  
 Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course  
 Have each their type in me. (505-08)

But although he seems to identify with nature, the poet is no longer interested in aligning himself with nature. The momentum of his quest has gathered force. It is the quest itself, already recognized by the poet as a quest for death, which propels him forward.

At this point, the landscape becomes literally stark and ominous:

A gradual change was here,  
 Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,  
 The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin  
 And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes  
 Had shone, gleam stony orbs:--so from his steps  
 Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade  
 Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds  
 And musical notions. (532-39)

Shelley has previously represented a nature considered allegorically, a nature potentially deceptive in its complexity and potentially reductive in its abundance of reiterative imaging; the representation now sheds its potential for the actual. It is as if the poet, because he is hurling himself toward death, no longer needs subterfuge. His ostensible spiritual progress is reflected by the landscape. Here, again, there is "one silent nook" (572), like the "darkest glen" (451) of the previous landscape. But this "nook," although "a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile / Even in the lap of horror" (477-78), does not provide even the appearance of calmness; the tranquility described here is that of autumnal decay, of death itself:

The dim and horned moon hung low, and poured  
 A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge  
 That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist  
 Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank  
 Wan moonlight even to fulness: not a star  
 Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,  
 Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice  
 Slept, clasped in his embrace. (602-09)

It is to this spot that nature's living things come to die. The poet, led on by his anti-self, his Alastor, the spirit of solitude which has taken him over, is the first human form to be sacrificed here. In this way, then, the poet finally does align himself with nature. Ironically, this part of the natural process reduces him to "damp leaves and blue cavern mould" (602), the death he has so long sought.

Just as the Alastor poet oscillates between "the torturers," hope and despair, between hoping that his quest will be rewarding and despairing that the only reward will be its end and his death, Shelley also oscillates between contempt for the wasted energy of self-sacrifice resulting from self-enchancement, and admiration for the attempt to uncover, at whatever cost, some more vital connection with the mystery of life than life taken literally provides. The poet's soul, however deluded and victimized by his destructive imagination, is still "high and holy" (628). He is a "rare and regal prey" (619) who offers, unlike other men, the "unheeded tribute of a broken heart" (624). Yet, as the poet sinks closer to death, his last vision is of the moon, "with whose dun beams inwoven darkness

seemed to mingle" (648). Even at the end, the poet's perception belies the uniform sterility of his quest; the moon, emblematic of chastity and sterility, ironically confirms the duality of the poet's energy. His blood, Shelley explains, has "ever beat in mystic sympathy / With nature's ebb and flow" (652-53). Despite his ever-acute potential for responding to nature, the poet can never do more than sympathize with what he has finally failed to consider himself a part of. His desire is to unite himself with nature through some projection of himself which would also be nature's emanation; in it (or in its field of energy) the poet has created a romance that cannot be sustained. The "two lessening points of light" (654), much dimmer than the two "starry eyes" which have brought him thus far, now ebb and flow alongside his "faint respiration" (656). Slowly, like Narcissus, he dissolves:

Even as a vapour fed with golden beams  
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame---  
No sense, no motion, no divinity--  
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
The breath of heaven did wander--a dream  
Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever  
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now. (663-71)

His tragedy is that of misdirected potential; all that he seeks, "sense," "motion," and "divinity" (666), is reduced to "a dream of youth... / Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now." Like Narcissus, the Alastor poet, now a failed poet, is memorable only as an object lesson in how not to be.

Shelley's recognition of the contradictory nature of the imagination, where affirmative and destructive impulses continually battle for preeminence, does not allow him to condemn the Alastor poet's misapprehension entirely. The poet is now one with his spirit of solitude, who

Vessel of a deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
 No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
 He bears, over the world wanders for ever,  
 Lone as incarnate death! (678-81)

In his struggle to align himself with the ineffable, that part of himself which he mistakenly attributes with the mystery of life, the Alastor poet has bound himself to the inevitability of his own death. Solitude, for Shelley, must be equated with what lies beyond life, as he says in Prometheus Unbound, "Underneath the grave, where do inhabit / The shadows of all forms that think and live / Till death unite them and they part no more."<sup>7</sup> The poet, by pursuing what it is forbidden for him to know in life, courts death. No "wondrous alchemy" (672) or "dark magician in his visioned cave" (682) can undo the deception of his self-enchantment. Shelley, aware of the tragedy of thwarted potential, of "The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful, / The child of grace and genius" (689-90), gone to waste, can only point to the undercutting irony of it all:

Art and eloquence,  
 And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain  
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.  
 It is a woe too 'deep for tears,' when all

Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves  
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,  
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;  
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. (710-20)

The poet's death, the death of "some surpassing Spirit," does not leave the world unchanged; although he has chosen to die, to be absent, to vacate life in order to pursue the mystery of his spirit beyond life, the Alastor poet has contributed his life's energy toward the completion of his quest. To Shelley, this is energy misspent but energy that is potentially "pure and tender-hearted"<sup>8</sup>--energy which because of its intensity and passion directed inward, wears itself out and so erodes along with it, "Nature's vast frame."

Shelley sees in this process the most devastating of contradictions. The poet's death, inexplicable and reductive as it is, adds to the mystery of death as much as it detracts from the richness of life. He is not one of the "morally dead" mentioned in the preface to Alastor, who

deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief.<sup>9</sup>

Rather, the poet of Alastor is deluded, duped and condemned to be aloof because of his destructive imagination, through his impulse to unite in a single image, his own emanation, what Shelley calls "intellectual faculties, the imagination,

the functions of sense" which should "have their respective requisitions on the sympathies of corresponding powers in other human beings."<sup>10</sup> It is the poet's attempt to confine his gifts to himself that brings him, like Narcissus, to an untimely death.

ii

Shelley's Alastor can be read as a poem about the relation of a poet to his act of creation. The relation of an artist to his work becomes especially significant in considering the evolution of a particular form of doubling, the automaton. Gershom Scholem discusses the complexity of this relationship in his commentary on the golem, an automaton out of Jewish folklore.<sup>11</sup> The golem is a kind of robot made of clay and given a restricted "life" by being infused with the concentrated power of the rabbi's mind--which is but a reflection of God's own creative power. Scholem indicates that the golem is thus a creature very much like Adam, only created and controlled by human intelligence instead of by God. Another more sinister attribute of the golem links it to Adam: it may outgrow this control and develop destructive tendencies of its own. To further illustrate the similarity between the creation of a golem and the creation of Adam, Scholem notes that, in fact, Adam was called a golem during the seven days of creation, before the all-important spark

of God's creative power was breathed into him, turning him into Man, the image of God. Scholem goes on to mention other golem stories in early Kabbalist texts that parallel God's relation to man.<sup>12</sup>

How does man develop the power to create a golem, his own "Adam," and why can the golem develop its threatening destructive independence? Scholem partly accounts for this when he distinguishes between "pure and sacred knowledge which belongs to man as God's image," and a "faculty first manifested in the fall of Adam and originating in the corruption of man, in his bond with the earth from which he came."<sup>13</sup> Adam's fall can be viewed as a pursuit, inspired by what Scholem calls "demonized magic,"<sup>14</sup> a solitary one, combining the danger of isolation with ambitious intellect, a danger which resembles Narcissus' self-enchancement. In this way, the idea of the golem, an image with potentially independent destructive tendencies, made by God and later by man, suggests the idea represented by Narcissus' reflection, the idea of an image imbued by Narcissus with enough life to kill him. In this way, also, the idea of the automaton as a possibly dangerous entity, as a creation which transcends its maker's imagination by fulfilling its maker's unconscious desires (such as Archimago's False Una, False Florimell, the Witch of Atlas, and the monster in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein), reflects a crucial anxiety about the nature and derivation of idolatry.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein greatly resembles Shelley's Alastor and owes much to it. Both works acknowledge the attractive yet destructive duality of man's imagination. Both Shelley and Mary Shelley respond to this duality by attempting to blend, if unsuccessfully, the possibilities offered by nature and by man's imagination. While Alastor and Frankenstein are alert to the creative potentiality of man's imagination, they also consider how the creative imagination can destructively turn inward when confronted with nature, a context larger than itself. This inward turning is represented by the Alastor poet's quest for a perfect union with nature, and by Victor Frankenstein's quest for control over the mystery of life; these are both impossible goals. Harold Bloom, in his essay on Frankenstein, refers to the dilemma caused by the doctor's quest as the anthesis between scientist and creation, the idea that Frankenstein can imbue his "monster" with life, but then cannot restrain his repulsion from what he has created. Bloom further claims that there is a kind of poetic justice in the fact that "Frankenstein" is often taken for the name of the monster rather than for the monster's creator; here, the shaper's repulsion represents his imaginative failure,<sup>15</sup> a failure similar to the Alastor poet's when he tries to compete with nature instead of examining his relationship with it. The monster becomes Frankenstein's

Alastor, his avenging spirit who reminds him that the uncharted areas of his imagination may be destructive. By deserting his creation, Frankenstein tragically condemns it, in fact, exchanges roles with it, becoming steadily less human as the "monster" becomes steadily more so. It is not the monster who exudes evil, but his creator, when he rejects it and thus fails to accept that perception of himself which the monster, as his creation, embodies.

But what of that perception? If Victor Frankenstein and his monster are, as others have suggested,<sup>16</sup> antithetical halves of a single being, how does the monster commit Frankenstein to evil? Mary Shelley associates the monster with Milton's Adam in the epigraph to her novel:

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mould me Man, did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me? (PL III, 743-45)

In Paradise Lost, Milton shows how God creates Adam "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (PL III, 98). By this statement, Milton accepts the ambivalence implicit in the freedom offered to Adam; because Satan deceives him, Adam is forgiven while Satan and his cohorts are not. They "...by thir own suggestion fell, / Self-tempted, self-deprav'd" (PL III, 129-30). The Romantics, especially Shelley, discovered a resemblance between the fates of Adam and Satan; according to their reading of Paradise Lost, both Adam and Satan exercise Promethean courage when they oppose

God's omnipotence. Mary Shelley compares Adam to Satan in the monster's compassionate complaint to his maker:

"Oh Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good: misery made me a friend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous. (pp. 95-96)<sup>17</sup>

The monster finds himself punished, like Milton's Satan as viewed by the Romantics, for "no misdeed." Frankenstein is cast in the role of a Maker who lacks the humanity he has hoped to see reflected in his creation. Herein lies the Romantic misreading of Paradise Lost. For Milton, Satan's misdeed is serious, the more so, perhaps, because it is deceptively attractive; Satan, as interpreted by Milton, should have used his imagination toward the positive goal of furthering God's imagination. In fact, Milton shows how this comes about anyway, through God's triumph of mercy; the sin is not a happy one for Adam and Eve, but it is for God, who transforms Satan's evil into Grace, a triumph of God's larger imagination over Satan's.

According to the Romantic reading of Paradise Lost, Satan's opposition to God's unchallenged authority is admirable, even heroic. In Frankenstein, both Victor Frankenstein and the monster explain their views of each other's actions, which results in their rejection of each other, an expression

of rage against their mutual separateness yet unavoidable mutual identity. The doctor cannot admit responsibility for, or connection with, this monstrous image of himself whose existence isolates him from the world; he withdraws from his creation. Left alone by his maker in a world which, because of his appearance, will be hostile to him, the monster seeks revenge; by seeking this revenge, he fulfills Frankenstein's unconsciously destructive motive for creating another "self." In the same way that Spenser's Blatant Beast threatens the well-being of his heroes, the monster continually disturbs his maker's creative imagination. It is as if Victor Frankenstein conceives of a reflection of himself which then becomes his destructive conscience, just as Narcissus' reflection becomes his persecutor. The monster, Frankenstein's potentially creative imagination gone wrong, turns against him and pursues him until both are satisfied--in death.

Like Narcissus, Frankenstein and the Alastor poet begin their quest for "forbidden" knowledge without clearly understanding why any knowledge should be labeled "forbidden." Just as the Alastor poet withdraws from the outside world instead of sharing himself with it, Frankenstein neglects his friends and family in order to pursue his goal, the creation of a new species. The doctor, also, confronts the mysteries of time, as the Alastor poet has; he, too, feels

the challenge is worthy of his necessarily solitary efforts and total commitment:

My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet I still clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. (53)

This pursuit becomes Frankenstein's obsession; he must discover the source of life and thus triumph over the elusiveness of death, the remoteness of the unknown. All other occupation must cease, all energy must be channeled in this direction. Like Narcissus, this innovator shuns the demands made on him by others, investing everything in creating a link between life and death, between knowledge and mystery. Narcissus fails to make his reflection come alive as if it were another being, deserving of attention. Because of this, the false enchantment of his own imagination leads him to wilfully choose death. In contrast, Frankenstein succeeds in bestowing life upon his "reflection"; yet when confronted with the toils of his ardent and all-consuming devotion, he is filled with "breathless horror and disgust" (56).

By rejecting his creation, the doctor's esthetic sensibility overcomes his sense of moral responsibility;

he cannot accept the physical hideousness of his monster:

His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets, in which they were set, his shriveled complexion, and straight black lips. (56)

Driven to despair by the tumult of this revelation, Frankenstein falls into an exhausted sleep where he dreams; what he sees resembles the Alastor poet's vision of the "veiled maid" in its mockery of true imaginative energy:

I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. (57)

Frankenstein's psychological confusion between himself and his monster first becomes apparent here. In precipitating the death of his beloved cousin by his embrace, Frankenstein attributes to himself what he fears of his creation. Furthermore, he associates Elizabeth's death with that of his mother, as if he has condemned to death those whom he loves best and who are therefore the most defenseless against him.

When he awakens, the doctor again confronts the nightmare he has created, the grotesque reality which surpasses his wildest dream:

I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became

convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch--the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. (57)

The confusion which focuses on the duality of Frankenstein's character begins to develop here; at this point, the creator behaves like a monster himself; his behavior reflects the fear of becoming a monster and pays court to this obsession. Not only is he repulsed by his monster, but in order to ward off his connection with the monster, Frankenstein expresses inadvertently such close identification with him that he becomes indistinguishable from him. Like the Alastor poet trapped by the vision of his own solitude, Frankenstein cannot extend his imagination to acknowledge the higher mystery of nature, a mystery he has tried to penetrate. His creation becomes his monster because the doctor himself undergoes this transformation, allowing a destructive image of himself to dominate his vision.

As the narrative progresses, the psychological confusion between the maker and his monster also appears as a linguistic confusion. The first indication of this confusion occurs when Frankenstein receives the news that his youngest brother, William, has been strangely murdered.

Frankenstein rushes home to Geneva but is delayed by a storm. During a walk through the storm, he discovers his monster, revealed by a flash of lightning, and he immediately concludes that the monster is his brother's murderer. Frankenstein then suffers the anguish of the damned, for he now considers his monster "in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave and forced to destroy all that was dear to me" (74). This interpolation explains the doctor's dream and also his immoderate repulsion from his creation. The monster expresses Frankenstein's hidden desires, inadmissible because they are a part of the mysterious, destructive tissue of his maker's imagination. Just as the Blatant Beast becomes Spenser's emblem of the unconscious, Frankenstein's creation represents, from the moment that he is rejected, a monster, both in word and in concept; this monster emanates from a distortion of his shaper's imagination, not only Frankenstein's failure to love but also his failure to accept responsibility for his work.

At first, Frankenstein mistakenly accuses the monster of acting destructively on his own. Later, the doctor must acknowledge that these destructive impulses are his own. When Justine, a trusted servant in the Frankenstein household, is executed for William's murder, Frankenstein stands by, silently assuming the guilt himself, although it is the monster who has committed the crime:

I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom, which allowed of no hope or consolation...I beheld those I loved spend vain sorrow upon the graves of William and Justine, the first hapless victims to my unhallowed acts. (85)

Frankenstein now discovers that "the fiend...lurked in my heart" (89), but this discovery ironically only points to his death. Once he realizes that he and the monster are manifested within the same consciousness, his own destructive imagination, the doctor gives himself completely over to seeking his monster so that he can destroy him; the maker cannot perceive that in this quest lie the seeds of his own destruction as well.

Frankenstein arrives at an understanding of his relationship to his monster (if it can be called an understanding) through the power of his intellect, just as he has previously relied on that intellect to inspire his experiments. But the monster instinctively feels the confusion and pain of his situation; the monster's limited perception, untempered by his creator's self-deluding imagination, experiences the full force of his shaper's unconscious oppression. He has been created and then abandoned:

I felt cold..and half frightened, as it were, instinctively, finding myself so desolate...I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept. (98-99)

The monster finds that he is a solitary being, cut off from the resources of companionship because Frankenstein

has abandoned him. His despair is augmented further when he discovers his physical deformity. The monster, like Narcissus, first notices how he looks in a reflection:

At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondance and mortification. (108)

Since his appearance strikes others with terror, the monster, in contrast to Eve in Paradise Lost, must now content himself with the role of observer, rather than participant, in life. He hides away, learning by observation the ways of the men he so desperately longs to join.

As if to brand this particular fate on his consciousness, the monster soon learns the language of men and so, learns to read. He finds, on one of his excursions into the forest, a portmanteau containing Paradise Lost, Plutarch's Lives, and the Sorrows of Werter, enough literary assurance of the nobility yet excruciating regularity of pain in human life to inform the monster that man everywhere suffers from a dual identity, that of creator and created. Frankenstein, like Adam, resembles God, but desires to break out of this patriarchal relationship by making another "being" on his own. His monster is the result of this tremendously enervating intellectual endeavor, and the doctor "falls" as Adam does. Left on his own, the monster craves the impossible--he requires, because he acknowledges the need

for, his shaper's patronage and love. At this point, Mary Shelley, influenced by the Romantic interpretation of Milton, makes the monster identify most strongly with the character of Satan in Paradise Lost, an impression later confirmed by papers which the monster has kept, taken from his maker's laboratory, telling of his creation. The study of these papers, Frankenstein's journal of the four months that preceded his creation, forces the monster into consummate despair. Now the monster feels his solitude as a form of revenge imposed on him by his creator:

Everything is related in [the papers] which bears reference to my accursed origin; the whole development of the series of disgusting circumstances which produced it is set in view; the minutest description of my odious and loathsome person is given, in language which painted your own horrors and rendered mine indelible. I sickened as I read. 'Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid from the very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred.' (124-25)

It is not simply that the monster's form is a sick parody of man's, but that the monster himself is a sick parody of Frankenstein; he has the potential to be "human," the desire even, but not the possibility. By making him a monster, Frankenstein has taken this possibility away. The Alastor poet's imagination creates his destruction specifically, in the shape of the solitude which separates him

from the life-affirming process represented by nature. Frankenstein's desire to destroy chaperones his imagination, but the monster, his creation, has not chosen their mutual despondency and ultimate course of mutual destruction:

I cherished hope, it is true, but it vanished when I beheld my person reflected in water or my shadow in the moonshine, even as that frail image and that inconstant shade. (125)

Committed to this most profound despair by his maker's abandonment, the monster now torments Frankenstein with the murder of his brother, a murder for which Frankenstein already assumes responsibility.

Mary Shelley appropriately sets up the first confrontation between Frankenstein and his monster after William's murder, in the mountains, not far from Frankenstein's home. Here, among the desolate, icy wastes, the monster insists that his shaper hear the miserable tale of his existence, and here Frankenstein again rejects his monster's needs:

"I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. This being you must create." (137)

The monster, like Adam, asks his maker for a mate, for, like Adam, he is lonely. Frankenstein, appalled by the monster's request, only considers the possibility of a "joint wickedness" which might "desolate the world" (138).

In this hour, he does not examine his own complicity in the monster's destructive compulsion. At this moment, he cannot acknowledge that the monster is a reflection of his own perversity, his own denial of life as a creative rather than a destructive process. Bloom accuses Frankenstein of failing to have the moral imagination to understand his creation,<sup>18</sup> and this certainly seems evident when the monster attempts to make a moral claim for the humanity of his request:

"You are in the wrong," replied the fiend; "and instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you. I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You, my creator, would tear me to pieces and triumph; remember that, and tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me? You would not call it murder if you could precipitate me into one of those ice-rifts and destroy my frame, the work of your own hands. Shall I respect man when he contemns me? Let him live with me in the interchange of kindness, and instead of injury I would bestow every benefit upon him with tears of gratitude at his acceptance. But that cannot be; the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union. Yet mine shall not be the submission of abject slavery. I will revenge my injuries; if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you, my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth." (139)

Overcome with the passion of his misery, the monster reasons and then threatens, revealing his potential for both. This combination of possibilities reflects the feelings of his creator also, for Frankenstein now admits that the monster is "a creature of fine sensations" (139), yet his repulsion

persists: "...when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred" (140).

That Frankenstein finally concedes and agrees to create a female companion for his monster only reinforces the doctor's hatred toward him. No other occupation in his life sustains him, yet the more the maker considers his work, the more certain he becomes that he cannot complete it. Perhaps another creature, a companion, would interfere with and make worse the bond between the monster and himself, a bond which has been so far indivisible. The monster embodies Frankenstein's destructive imagination just as Frankenstein represents the monster's untenable desire to inspire love. When he looks out of his laboratory window and finds that his fiend has followed him to observe his progress and claim its fulfillment, Frankenstein is struck again by the repulsiveness of his creation; he cannot go on. In the same way as Narcissus' reflection lures him to the last extremity of desire and hope, the monster, thwarted by his shaper once more, determines to revenge himself:

"Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension, Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master." (160)

In his final refusal to grant the monster's wish, Frankenstein ensures his own misery and ultimate death. Soon his friend, Clerval, is murdered; next, on his wedding night, his bride, his cousin Elizabeth, is killed, Frankenstein's father now succumbs to the despair that Elizabeth's death brings. The doctor swears to revenge these murders, but when he tells his story to a magistrate, he is met with polite disbelief. At this point, Frankenstein realizes that the revenge must be his alone, the end of a quest as solitary as that of his monster's, as lonely as his own when he first pursued his act of creation.

Mutual desire for revenge inspires both the creator and his creation to pursue each other relentlessly across the world and finally into the north, to the icy expanse which is the wasteland for their destructive energy. Like the Alastor poet embarked on his fatal journey, no obstacle can now deter the vengeance bringing Frankenstein's death and so the death of his monster. After telling his story to Walton, an explorer who rescues him from the icy seas, Frankenstein, exhausted and close to death, recalls with bitterness what might have been:

"All my speculations and hopes are as nothing, and like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell. My imagination was vivid, yet my powers of analysis and application were intense; by the union of these qualities I conceived the idea and executed the creation of a man. Even now I cannot recollect without passion my reveries while the

work was incomplete. I trod heaven in my thoughts, now exulting in my powers, now burning with the idea of their effects. From my infancy I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but how am I sunk! Oh! My friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognize me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise." (201)

At this point, Frankenstein, like his monster, compares himself to Satan; he describes himself as acting full of promise, and yet these very actions have conspired against him. Perhaps this confession is meant to warn Walton an "explorer" in the way that Frankenstein has been, a man willing to risk all for the sake of his discoveries, a "maker" who abandons the memory of his own work, in fact, a kind of complementary double.

Walton mourns his friend's death as a waste, but there is another mourner who comes to say his farewell. The monster, now that his shaper is dead, has fulfilled his destiny; he has but to die as well:

"I seek not a fellow feeling in my misery. No sympathy may I ever find. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter loathing and despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? I am content to suffer alone while my sufferings shall endure; when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory. Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable

of unfolding. I was nourished with high thoughts of honour and devotion. But now crime has degraded me beneath the meanest animal. No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I run over the frightful catalogue of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone." (209-10)

Like his creator, the monster again chooses to evince Satan in his summation of thwarted hopes as a reminder of his own solitude. Assuring Walton that he harbors no thought of a future, the monster tells how he will consummate his connection with his maker:

"I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched. He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish." (211)

The monster's death, made necessary by Frankenstein's, ends the tale; his making and perpetuation have been a failure because Frankenstein could not imagine beyond his desire to create on a scale as large as his own life, a desire which admits of failure. Mary Shelley, like Shelley at the end of Alastor, shows how both the creative and destructive aspects of the imagination present a fictional model of the mind in its ability to discover but its limited capacity to understand.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>All quotations from Alastor refer to the following edition: Shelley, Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude in Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchison (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 14-31.

<sup>2</sup>Wordsworth, "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey..." in The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchison (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 164-65, ll. 102-11.

<sup>3</sup>Despite the many interpretations to the contrary, I would suggest that the Alastor poet is a solitary in the Shelleyan sense, that is, a life-negating sense, from the outset of the poem.

<sup>4</sup>Both the bad pun and Satan's cheapness are set off in this line in order to express Milton's contempt for Satan and his contemptible act.

<sup>5</sup>Shelley's use of ivy, a Bacchic emblem of fertility, recalls Ovid's peculiar placement of the Narcissus myth between myths about Bacchus, implying that Narcissus' sterility is a negation or reversal of Bacchic fertility. Perhaps Shelley, too, means to stress the Alastor poet's vision of nature, a sterile one, where the potential fertility of nature is rendered sterile to the poet by his destructive imagination. The trees, although they seem profuse with vegetation, promise more than they can give in the eye of the Alastor poet at this point.

<sup>6</sup>Here, Shelley's "Two starry eyes," describing the Alastor poet's annihilating anti-self, his state of solitude, again recalls Ovid's description of Narcissus' reflection: "...sua Lumina, sidus."

<sup>7</sup>Shelley, Prometheus Unbound in Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchison (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 212, I, ll. 197-99.

<sup>8</sup>Preface to Alastor, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup>Preface to Alastor, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup>Preface to Alastor, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>See particularly the essay entitled "The Golem of Prague and The Golem of Rehovot" in Gerschom Scholem's The Messianic Idea of Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), pp. 335-40, for a discussion of the golem's resemblance to Adam.

<sup>12</sup>One story which significantly describes this parallel is an early text quoted by Scholem in The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays, pp. 337-38:

According to one of the first texts we have on the Golem, the prophet Jeremiah was busying himself alone with the Sefer Yetzirah ("The Book of Creation") when a heavenly voice went forth and said: "Take a companion." Jeremiah, obeying, chose his son Sira, and they studied the book together for three years. Afterward, they set about combining the alphabets in accordance with the Kabbalistic principles of combination, grouping, and word formation, and a man was created to them, on whose forehead stood the letters, YHWH Elohim Emet, meaning: God the Lord is Truth. But this newly created man had a knife in his hand, with which he erased the letter alef from the word emet ("truth"); there remained the word met ("dead"). Then Jeremiah rent his garments (because of the blasphemy, God is dead, now implied in the inscription) and said: Why have you erased the alef from the emet? He replied: "I will tell you a parable. An architect built many houses, cities and squares, but no one could copy his art and compete with him in knowledge and skill until two men persuaded him to teach them the secret of the art. When they had learned how to do everything in the right way, they began to anger him with words. Finally, they broke with him and became architects on their own, except that what he charged a guinea for, they did for ten shillings. When people noticed this, they ceased honoring the artist and instead gave their commissions to his renegade pupils. So God has made you in His image and in His shape and form. But now that you have created a man like Him, people will say: There is no God in the world beside these two!" Then Jeremiah said: "What solution is there?" He said: "Write the alphabets backward with intense concentration on the earth. Only do not meditate in the sense of building up, as you did before, but the other way around." So they did, and the man became dust and ashes before their eyes.

Scholem comments further on the importance of this story in his essay entitled "The Idea of the Golem" in On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism (New York: Schocken Books, 1972),

pp. 180-81: "[Here] two contradictory motifs meet. Here the story is reinterpreted as a moralistic legend and the warning becomes more profound. The creation of a golem confirmed man in his likeness to God; here, thanks to the daring amplification of the inscription on the golem's forehead, it becomes a warning; the real and not merely symbolic creation of a golem would bring with it the 'death of God'! The hybris of its creator would turn against God." Hence the golem, like Narcissus' image, represents both creative and destructive elements of the imagination.

<sup>13</sup>Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, pp. 174-75.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>15</sup>Harold Bloom, "Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus" in The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 119-131.

<sup>16</sup>Bloom claims that Richard Church and Muriel Spark have noted this, See "Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus," pp. 119-20.

<sup>17</sup>All quotations from Frankenstein refer to the following edition: Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus (New York: Signet-New American Library, 1965). Page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>18</sup>Bloom, p. 125.

## Chapter Five

### From Romance to Novel

The Narcissus myth, as we have seen, is a myth about the sterility of the imagination as much as the sterility of the body. Narcissus, according to Ovid, could not "see" beyond his image and thus was condemned to a momentary, fragile, earth-bound existence. Later, Renaissance, mythographers took up the idea of Narcissus' fragility by stressing his spiritually fatal error: distracted by his reflection, he mistakes it for another person, worthy of love. By the time he discovers that his reflection is merely that, Narcissus cannot redirect his misplaced ardor. He has lost the right, as well as the ability, to know God. Milton warns of this danger when he shows how Eve very nearly falls into narcissistic self-enchancement, saved for the other Fall by the "voice" who enjoins her to look beyond her reflected image to Adam. Spenser, too, constantly requires his heroes to be vigilant against false representation. His varied use of doubling in The Faerie Queene, so frequent and complex that it becomes enigmatic, is part of the ongoing allegory of the poet's potentially destructive imagination. Finally, Spenser's Blatant Beast--the obsessive double which,

like Narcissus' reflection, embodies this destructive potential inherent in the creative imagination--emerges in Alastor and Frankenstein as a new danger. This the Romantics attributed to the turning inward of the artist; as a result, the artist fails to commit his creativity to the world, choosing instead to restrict himself to a quest for death. The idea suggested by Narcissus and further developed in Spenser is that works of fiction contain within themselves the danger of calling forth the destructive imagination. The danger is of traveling inside a self-created, false paradise and can be expressed through both character and theme in a given work.

The interpretation of Narcissus' fate as a myth of self-inflicted waste is taken up by Hawthorne in nearly all of his work. Hawthorne, like Spenser, describes conflicting elements, heroic and shameful, within a single imagination, in order to adduce how subtly they may be confused. Spenser externalizes this danger by creating the Blatant Beast, and by thus allowing his heroes to succeed as far as they can on their own. But many of Hawthorne's characters show within themselves both the ability to succeed and the evidences of the fallen state of the world which prevents this success. In this way, Hawthorne's characters seem more thwarted by the life they lead, a life where the Blatant Beast is always on the loose. Spenser's heroes must learn

how to distinguish between the false promise of comfort and self-esteem and the true state of unceasing doubt these certainties. They must, in essence, learn to consider previously regarded certainties only as possibilities. But Hawthorne's characters, the ones who are touched by the decay of faith in human potential, who are spiritually aged and so nominally timeless, only learn how to experience despair. They begin in a world where magic is no longer respected as an intellectual structure, but feared as a daemonic agent.

Hawthorne's interest in the double, like Spenser's, is characterological and thematic. In "Ethan Brand,"<sup>1</sup> for example, he uses the double as a character (Ethan's double is the wandering German Jew with the diorama) to develop Ethan's relation to the Unpardonable Sin, and also as a further statement about the overall theme, the nature of sin. Hugo McPherson, an avowedly mythographic reader of Hawthorne, aptly casts Ethan as a scientist-type, whose "mastery of the empirical world can bring infinite benefit to mankind, but [whose] exclusive pursuit of knowledge can cut him off entirely."<sup>2</sup> Like Victor Frankenstein, Ethan cuts himself off from mankind, committing the unpardonable sin of self-absorption, of impersonally analyzing the value of human love and favoring intellectual endeavor. Frankenstein creates his own double, a double in more ways than

one since the monster reflects the worst (in his physical deformity) and the best (in his remarkably humane nature) of his maker. Ethan, by pursuing the inclinations of his intellect, ignores the intimations of his heart; he creates the ethos of his desperate search for the Unpardonable Sin. Just as Narcissus makes his image into a life-denying force, Ethan "brands" himself with his own inability to feel.

The story begins on a hillside at nightfall, as Ethan's "roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of a forest" (375), breaks the silence between Bartram, a lime-burner, and his small son Joe, who sit watching their kiln. Ethan's quest is already part of the background of the tale; Bartram now tends Ethan's old lime-kiln, the solitary watch that Ethan kept during the time when the idea of the Unpardonable Sin first occurred to him. After all these years, the kiln still stands where it used to, as it would in Ethan's memory; it waits for the return of its former master, its aspect continuing to resemble "the private entrance to the infernal regions" (376), a reflection of Ethan's own imagination. When Hawthorne has Bartram throw open the iron door of the kiln in order to see Ethan more distinctly, an endurable connection is forged between the fire of the lime-kiln, a fire which transforms marble into lime, a harder substance,

and the burning quality of the former lime-burner's quest, a quest which ends in Ethan's transformation into stone.

Ethan returns to confront his legend, the legend of a strange man whom Bartram, at first, fails to recognize. But Joe, with the uncanny perspicacity of most children in Hawthorne's work, finds "something in the man's face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from" (378). His father is impressed by the stranger's knowledge of the lime-burning profession, when Ethan, expressing his own purpose as well as Bartram's, comments on the kiln's progress:

"Your task draws to an end, I see," said he.  
 "This marble has already been burning three days.  
 A few more hours will convert the stone to lime." (378)

Like the marble burning in his old kiln, Ethan has returned so that he, too, can undertake his final conversion. At this point, Bartram asks Ethan to identify himself; the lime-burner reveals who he is and the reason for his return: "He has found what he sought and therefore he comes back again" (378). Significantly, Ethan describes himself and his actions in the third person. By so doing, Hawthorne suggests Ethan's ongoing detachment from himself and the world around him, the essence of his Unpardonable Sin, and establishes this as a characteristic of the story. The suggestion is further developed when Bartram asks Ethan where he found the Unpardonable Sin:

"Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?"

"Even so!" said the stranger, calmly.

"If the question is a fair one," proceeded Bartram, "where might it be?"

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart. "Here!" replied he. (379)

Ethan has already reached the end of his quest; in an exchange familiar to any reader of Hawthorne, the lime-burner expresses how dearly he has brought this introspection. Because he lacked the deeper feelings that live in the heart, Ethan finds himself without a heart. Like Narcissus, he has sacrificed himself for a false idea. He has given up the possibility of obtaining a heart in his search for one. Hawthorne's irony shows this when Bartram, after sending his son down to the village to tell of Ethan's return, tries to have a "heart to heart" (p. 379) conversation with Ethan and hears his miserable confession to "the only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy" (379-80).

Now Ethan expounds on the meaning of the Unpardonable Sin:

"What is the Unpardonable Sin?" asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered!

"It is a sin that grew within my own breast," replied Ethan Brand, standing erect with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. "A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!" (381)

These words link Ethan with the Romantic anti-hero examined in a previous chapter: like the Alastor poet, Ethan's intellect excludes him from human sympathy and places him at odds with the world created by God or Nature; like Frankenstein, Ethan's quest promises the only reward it can, death. All of the former lime-burner's old acquaintances, emblems themselves of sins more venial than his own, gather to observe Ethan's preparation for his end. Their gathering resembles a wake, as if their friend's death, when it comes, will in some way stand for the death of them all.<sup>3</sup>

Into this gathering, Hawthorne sends Ethan's character double, an old German Jew traveling with a diorama on his back. The Jew entertains the crowd with an exhibit of worn-out, brown-edged pictures of "cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe...Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights" (385), a compendium of a lifetime spend wandering. Yet, in the middle of each picture, "a gigantic, brown, hairy hand--which might have been mistaken for the hand of destiny, though, in truth, it was only the showman's" (385) mediates the vision of each viewer and transforms the show into a kind of guilty self-questioning. What secret does each viewer harbor which distorts his perception and so his experience of the world? After the exhibit, little Joe puts his head into the box and sees "the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth

grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke," (385). The child recognizes his own reflection as a distorted image of himself. Ethan cannot recognize this when he gazes into the box; he recoils from what he sees instantly, identifying the Jew as his pursuer, that part of himself which desires his own destruction:

"I remember you now," muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

"Ah, Captain," whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, "I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box--this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain." (385)

The Unpardonable Sin which Ethan sees in the show-box, then, is his own reductive reflection, the image he cannot perceive as a distortion. Like Narcissus, the lime-burner becomes a victim of his limited imagination; he cannot see beyond this image because he does not understand that it is an image. As if to emphasize the futility behind such a delusion, Hawthorne introduces another sideshow to provide a more humorous analogue for Ethan's misapprehension:

...a great elderly dog--which seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him--saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going around from one to another, and by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped, of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the

proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it could have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping-- as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. (386)

When the dog has exhausted himself, he ceases his chase as abruptly as he began it. But Ethan, who resembles this dog in his earnestness and misspent energy, never ceases his pursuit of obfuscation (resolving an eternal conflict) inspired by a moment of mistaken fervor.

With the entertainment ended, Ethan's old acquaintances take their leave. The lime-burner promises to watch Bartram's kiln fire for the night. Now he recollects in every detail the search to which he has dedicated himself. Ethan remembers, as Frankenstein does at the close of his struggle, all the passion and sincerity that went into the present evil occupation of his life:

Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and his heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered--had contracted--had hardened--had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by

the key of holy sympathy, which gave him the right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. (388)

Here Hawthorne makes explicit all that Mary Shelley implies in her depiction of Victor Frankenstein. Ethan, full of intellectual acumen and enthusiasm, becomes caught up in his own wiles; he creates monstrous puppets out of others, but he himself is made the fiend.

Yet the lime-burner, again resembling his Romantic counterparts, does not regret his fatal obsession: "My task is done, and well done!" (388) Like all narcissistic innovators, he does not withdraw from the destructive process of his imagination. At the end of the tale, he throws himself into the kiln fire, the fire he has already compared to eternal damnation. Nature, relieved of the presence of such a disturbing force, breaks out into a supremely radiant sunrise: "Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at" (390).<sup>4</sup> The nightmare of Ethan's life gives way to the day-dream reflected by his death. Little Joe discovers that the lime-burner is gone and that "the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!" (390) Only Ethan's skeleton remains, "in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose." (390)

Within the ribs of this skeleton can be seen the shape of a human heart, for Ethan has sacrificed its reality to this forlorn image, now converted to lime, enriching Bartram's kiln. This is Ethan's mark, the brand which kills him.

ii

Doubling in Ethan Brand enlarges character possibilities at the same time as it underscores Hawthorne's theme. Here, a close resemblance to the kind of doubling in The Faerie Queene can be adduced, for just as false images and false paradises point out the conflict in Spenser's poem, the old Jew in Hawthorne's story reminds Ethan of his irreconcilable source of conflict and the loss it brings. In addition, just as Spenser's representation of the vitality of evil, the Blatant Beast, thematically links the constant threat of renewed conflict from canto to canto (and extends, finally, from the poem--the expression of the poet's imagination--to life itself), Ethan's Unpardonable Sin, the destructive embodiment of his imagination, compels him to seek out conflict, to seek, in effect, his death. This sin, Ethan's emblem, the myth he creates which dominates his life, becomes the theme of the story.

In The Faerie Queene, the possibility of evil remaining in the world is tragic; but Spenser seems greatly troubled by such a vision. In Hawthorne's work, and

particularly in the most Spenserian of his later romances, The Marble Faun,<sup>5</sup> this possibility, although persistently tragic, becomes a thread in the fabric of a whole moral world, and so one feels that far from being reluctant to acknowledge it, Hawthorne can hardly do without it. This dependence on the presence of evil as a source of conflict in Hawthorne's work is eminently Spenserian, and differs widely from, say, the Miltonic vision. Milton warns, through Satan in Paradise Lost, that evil can be attractive, that the vitality of evil can imitate the vitality of good. Great care is therefore necessary in order to make the proper distinction between the two--but this choice is always distinguishable, and the right choice always possible. Spenser, in The Faerie Queene, also tells of evil's attractiveness; yet here, as has been noted in a previous chapter, he cannot finally perceive a world without evil, a world where the poet's creative imagination will ultimately triumph. Spenser's point, and it is also Hawthorne's, is that evil is unconquerable, that the destructive imagination can determine a moral atmosphere which undercuts the poet's vision. In The Marble Faun, Hawthorne expresses this idea through his creation of a dialectical struggle between the American and the European imagination.

By accounting for his choice of Rome over a local American setting for The Marble Faun, Hawthorne presents the terms of this dialectic in the Preface:

No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a Romance about a country where there is no shadow, no ambiguity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a common-place prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes either in the annals of our stalwart Republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, like ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need Ruin to make them grow. (3)

While Hawthorne's earlier work may have dealt with individual shadows, like Ethan Brand pursued by an emanation of his destructive imagination, The Marble Faun examines the quality of life where this shadow has settled, where the Blatant Beast has become one of the features of the land. For this reason, the setting of the romance is Rome. Here the Americans, Hilda and Kenyon, can observe the mystery of evil as it manifests itself away from their homeland. They are able to observe how it has permeated even the sanctity of the Church;<sup>6</sup> they observe, but they must restrain themselves. They "save" themselves for each other, for the American hearth, but they will recall the unfamiliar complexity of a Roman education.

Hawthorne, however, plunges into the notion of "Ruin" to assimilate characterological and thematic elements in his romance. As in The Faerie Queene, The Marble Faun adduces tableau after tableau of moral possibility, of choices which involve subtle distinctions, between the

forces, often masquerading, of good and evil. Like Spenser, Hawthorne promises more than a metaphoric resolution to this ongoing conflict, yet he relies on the metaphor of conflict to suggest no resolution at all. It is as if Hawthorne, like Spenser, finds some questions unanswerable; this romance, like its Spenserian predecessor, finally arrives at these questions and stops right there. Hawthorne applies the visionary quality of myth to his purpose--the mystery inherent in the antiquity of Rome, the line of faun-like Monte Benis, the archetypal enigma of Miriam's identity--and brings to his myth evolved from the notion of Ruin, the American sensibility, embodied in Hilda and Kenyon.<sup>7</sup> Predictably, at the end of The Marble Faun, Hilda and Kenyon return to America--home:

So, Kenyon won the gentle Hilda's shy affection, and her consent to be his bride. Another hand must henceforth trim the lamp before the Virgin's shrine; for Hilda was coming down from her old tower, to be herself enshrined and worshipped as a household Saint, in the light of her husband's fireside. And, now that life had so much human promise in it, they resolved to go back to their own land; because the years, after all, have a kind of emptiness, when we spend too many of them on a foreign shore. We defer the reality of life, in such cases, until a future moment, when we shall again breathe our native air; but, by-and-by, there are no further moments; or, if we do return, we find that the native air has lost its invigorating quality, and that life has shifted its reality to the spot where we have deemed ourselves only temporary residents. Thus, between two countries, we have none at all, or only that little space of either, in which we finally lay down our discontented bones. It is wise, therefore, to come back betimes--or never. (461)

The idea of the return is very important to Hawthorne; even Ethan Brand seeks out his old kiln in which to lay down his discontented bones. But Miriam and Donatello, part of the myth of Ruin, are homeless; they remain on the other side of the ocean, and, in a postscript to the romance, Hawthorne leaves them unhappily apart. Only the still-unanswered question concerning the true state of Donatello's ears reanimates the emblematic fabric of the story by emphasizing its reliance on myth. It also raises a further question about the value of asking questions; this last perhaps best describes an important feature of the Spenserian romance form--its underlying, ineluctable mystery.

As in Ethan Brand, there are two kinds of doubling at work in The Marble Faun, characterological and thematic, and both nourish the dialectic between American and European sensibilities. For example, Hawthorne introduces Miriam within an aura of foreign intrigue; no one knows exactly who she is or why she seems haunted by something in her past. Her American friends, with an exaggerated American resistance to mystery, do not oppress her with their curiosity. Nor does Donatello, whose remarkable resemblance to the Marble Faun of Praxiteles causes the others to regard him as an image, an artistic creation representing the mythic character of the Faun, rather than a real person. The failure to make a distinction between a distortion of

reality--the "lack of moral severity, of any high and heroic ingredient" (9) found in the statue of the Faun--and the emergence of Donatello as an actual person after he commits a murder for Miriam's sake, become the focus of the romance. Donatello begins as a fundamental misprision on the part of the other characters; they impose on him an idealistic life, and what they get is a daemonic one. As in the idea of Frankenstein's monster and its informing analogue, the golem, the creation of the Donatello myth reflects the danger of the artist who takes life as his medium. Not until Miriam's need for him as a man conducts him into part of her morally ambiguous life, does Donatello face the conflict set up for him by the original misapprehension of his friends, a narcissistic conflict of distinguishing between false imaging and real commitment.

In the opening pages of the romance, Donatello delights his company with his faun-like resemblance. Miriam interrupts this reverie to note that their faun also evinces "a trait of savageness" (18); but Kenyon attributes this to Miriam's influence on Donatello, her "faculty of bewitching people" (18), for it is another of her followers that has provoked Donatello's wrath:

...partly concealed by one of the pillars of the portico, stood a figure such as may often be encountered in the streets and piazzas of Rome, and nowhere else. He looked as if he might just have stepped out of a picture, and, in truth, was likely

enough to find his way into a dozen pictures, being no other than one of those living models, dark, bushy bearded, wild of aspect and attire, whom artists convert into Saints or assassins, according as their pictorial purposes demand. (19)

Hawthorne captures, in his portrayal of the model, an ominous figure whose picturesque element singularly belongs to Rome; by linking the model to Miriam's mysterious past, Hawthorne emphasizes his ghostly quality and the foreign nature of her secret. He is, in fact, an emanation of Miriam's secret, a life-denying filament which, like the old Jew in Ethan Brand, reclaims her to her past again and again. Donatello instinctively recoils from this sinister figure who threatens the object of his devotion, and therefore also himself.

At this point in the romance, Hawthorne travels back to a time when Miriam has first acquired her spectral follower. While she and her companions are exploring the catacombs, Miriam suddenly disappears from their midst. Alarmed, they search for her briefly, and she reappears among them with the model whom she has encountered on her solitary walk. His strange appearance and dramatic mode of dress inspire the party's guide to suggest that he is the "old pagan Phantom" who sought to betray the "blessed Saints" (31) and then remained behind to wander, lost in the subterranean darkness. The "Phantom" discourages such supposition and warns against all questions about his identity:

"Inquire not what I am, nor wherefore I abide in the darkness," said he, in a hoarse, harsh voice, as if a great deal of damp were clustering in his throat. "Henceforth, I am nothing but a shadow behind her footsteps. She came to me when I sought her not. She has called me forth, and must abide the consequences of my re-appearance in the world." (31)

Miriam has released her shadow from his subterranean prison by seeking him out, by courting a fatal impulse to remember some past event that has blighted her life. The phantom, freed from his lonely pursuit, now involves her in a mutual bondage. Like Miriam, this spectral apparition has a mysterious past, and it is entangled with hers. From this moment, the phantom becomes her shadow, the destructive embodiment of her memory, in order to remind her that the past can never be dead and buried. Now they both are prisoners, made prisoners by each other, and their lives are doomed by this relationship.

The model and Miriam and the mystery they intimate create another focal point of conflict in Hawthorne's romance. Hilda and Kenyon, in contrast, resemble Spenserian heroes at the beginning of their quest. They are untraveled in the arts of deception and of how to locate within themselves their attraction to falseness; they must learn what it means to suffer, to stand trial, and to perceive evil. But this last they must learn by observing it only--in the manner of their Spenserian precursors, they cannot participate in the destructive windfall of Miriam's imagination,

in the critical transformation of Donatello from Arcadian to Adam, in the life of the Old World. They can only endure these changes and record them in their art and in their developing consciousness of each other.

Donatello, because he is part of the Italian landscape, does participate in the dealings of the Old World. He plays into the dangerous mystery of Miriam's life through his sincere love for her: "You are yourself, and I am Donatello. Therefore I love you! There needs no other reason." (79) But Miriam provides him with another reason when she involves him in crime, thus educating his faith. From the moment that Donatello declares his love for her and she accepts him as her lover, his apprenticeship begins; Miriam enriches her imagination, previously taken up entirely by the model, with Donatello. The faun becomes, for her, a companion in her struggle against the overwhelming secret of her past.

Because Donatello assumes part of Miriam's identity at this point, he is able to help her break her bond with her other follower, the model whose link with Miriam threatens her life with Donatello. But this phantom, a more established part of her identity, warns Miriam that not even death can separate them:

"We have a destiny, which we must needs fulfil together. I too, have struggled to escape it. I was as anxious as yourself to break the tie

between us--to bury the past in a fathomless grave--to make it impossible that we should ever meet, until you confront me at the bar of Judgment! You can little imagine what steps I took to render all this secure. And what was the result? Our strange interview, in the bowels of the earth, convinced me of the futility of my design." (94)

Miriam, too, feels the hopelessness of this terrible fate: "I am your evil genius, as you are mine" (95), she proclaims, acknowledging their mutual thralldom and prophesying the guilt-ridden love she will share with Donatello. No ritual, Christian or pagan--bathing her hands in a Roman fountain and kneeling in supplication to her "dark follower" (108), or repeating this gesture and adding an old form of exorcism, flinging water in her persecutor's face (147)--can rid her of this link with him.

In a key scene, Hawthorne reveals Miriam's disastrous relation to Donatello and to her phantom. During a moonlight ramble, Miriam and her party stop at the Fountain of Trevi. As she leans over the stone brim of the basin, Miriam sees her shadow reflected by the moonlight, in the company of two other shadows on either side of her:

"Three shadows!" exclaimed Miriam. "Three separate shadows, all so black and heavy that they sink in the water! There they lie on the bottom, as if all three were drowned together. This shadow on my right is Donatello; I know him by his curls, and by the turn of his head. My left-hand companion puzzles me; a shapeless mass, as indistinct as the premonition of calamity! Which of you can it be? Ah!" (147)

It is, of course, Miriam's model. Like Narcissus, Miriam perceives her own reflection ominously joined with Donatello's and threatened by another shadow whom she fails to recognize in that form (she has to turn around and view the model in person). She does not understand that the Phantom's reflection is an emanation of herself, a diffusion of her will to destroy, now shared with Donatello.

While Miriam at least admits that her sinister follower recalls the memory of some past horror, she cannot face this horror without Donatello. His love for her has already become a source of acute suffering to him: "This burning pain...you are in the midst of it." (149) From the moment of this confession until the total abandonment to their love, when they murder Miriam's tormentor, Donatello and Miriam speak to each in a kind of ritualistic chant, as if to reassure the intensity of their terrible understanding. When they stand together on the edge of one of the sides of the Tarpeian Rock, Donatello questions Miriam about the historic associations of the scene, and their conversation becomes hypnotically reiterative:

"Who were they," said he, looking earnestly in her face, "who have been flung over here, in days gone by?"

"Men that cumbered the world," she replied. "Men whose lives were the bane of their fellow-creatures. Men who poisoned the air, which is the common breath of all, for their own selfish purposes. There was short work with such men, in old Roman times. Just in the moment of their

triumph, a hand as of an avenging giant clutched them, and dashed the wretches down this precipice!"

"Was it well done?" asked the young man.

"It was well done," answered Miriam. (170)

Miriam has given Donatello the terms of his further connection with her during this exchange. Similarly, after Donatello has fulfilled these terms by committing the murder, he professes:

"I did what ought to be done to a traitor! I did what your eyes bade me do, when I asked them with mine, as I held the wretch over the precipice!" (172)

Miriam repeats Donatello's phrase in a frenzied ecstasy, "And my eyes bade you do it!" (173) They have both participated in this crime as if it were some pagan ritual; they sacrifice the model in order to be free, but, instead, they create a new order of imprisonment, a new context for their now mutual life-negating quest. The crime ironically links them together in the same strangling relation which formerly held Miriam and her phantom. Donatello, because he and Miriam unite their desires for self-enchancement, assumes a role where doubleness leads to extinction. When he exclaims that their new relation to one another draws them even closer together--"We draw one breath; we live one life!" (175)--he does not yet realize the full significance of his words.

Now that Miriam's sinister spectre is dead, Hawthorne shifts the focus of his romance to the new realm of

persecution attendant on Miriam and Donatello following the crime. Donatello, whose first acquaintance with suffering has been at Miriam's hand, feels the impact of his deed slowly. It is as if, with the painful awakening of someone who finds that his nightmare cannot compare to the horror of his daily life, Donatello notes with astonishment the sorrow of living with the conscious knowledge of deep despair. Yet, when he and Miriam visit the Church of the Capuchins with Hilda and Kenyon, Miriam shows that this despair has always been second nature to her in her revealing comments on Guido's portrayal of "the triumph of Goodness over the Evil Principle":

"But, is it thus that Virtue looks, the moment after its death-struggle with Evil? No, No! I could have told Guido better. A full third of the Archangel's feathers should have been torn from his wings; the rest all ruffled, till they looked like Satan's own! His sword should be streaming with blood, and perhaps broken half-way to the hilt; his armour crushed, his robes rent, his breast gory; a bleeding gash on his brow, cutting right across the stern scowl of battle! He should press his foot down hard upon the old Serpent, as if his very soul depended on it, feeling him squirm mightily, and doubting whether the fight were half-over yet, and how the victory might turn! And, with all this fierceness, this grimness, this unutterable horror, there should still be something high, tender, and holy in Michael's eyes, and around his mouth." (184)

The battle depicted here is Miriam's own; Hawthorne sets it up so that the participants resemble each other. Neither Michael nor the serpent escape unscathed. As she describes it, an image of Sir Calidore engaging the Blatant Beast is

evoked; for this is the Spenserian notion of the "triumph" of good over evil, a triumph never assured, never eternal.

But Miriam's crime does bring her a new experience of previously unfelt remorse. After Donatello recognizes the features of her model in the dead Capuchin monk lying in state, and after he recalls an old superstition suggested by a stream of blood newly emanating from the corpse's nostrils (that the dead monk was murdered and the murderer had entered the Church), Miriam returns alone to the bier to confirm the identity of her former persecutor. At this point, she learns of the burial tradition of the Capuchins, where each buried monk will rest only until his niche is required for another vault occupant; Miriam realizes that her tormentor, like her despair, can never be buried permanently. Just as he has risen from out of the catacombs, he will not long rest among the dead Capuchins. Hawthorne tells why the memory of him must continue:

It was a symbol, perhaps, of the deadly iteration with which she was doomed to behold the image of her crime reflected back upon her, in a thousand ways, and converting the great calm face of Nature, in the whole, and its innumerable details, into a manifold reminiscence of that one dead visage. (191)

With her model's death, Miriam must suffer the memory of their past alone; only Donatello can share with her the present burden of guilt. Her crime becomes more encompassing than ever.

Hawthorne devotes the rest of The Marble Faun to Donatello's painful transformation into selfhood--his repulsion of Miriam, his growing consciousness that he and Miriam are one, their reunion--and to the moral awakening of Hilda and Kenyon--their response to Miriam and Donatello after the murder, the growing consciousness of their need for one another, Hilda's suffering over the crime she has witnessed and her subsequent flirtation with Catholicism, her mysterious disappearance and final reunion with Kenyon, who has ministered to Donatello and Miriam during their meditation apart. Donatello's transformation takes place in two stages. When he commits the murder that Miriam's eyes beg him to, he enters into manhood; but he still retains a faunlike innocence which cannot admit of his participation in the deed, or even any longer of his love for Miriam. This is the aspect of his selfhood that he must resolve without Miriam's immediate presence.

While Donatello's transformation undergoes this self-evaluative process, as he discovers the meaning of his commitment to Miriam, Hilda and Kenyon also undergo a transformation, although as Hugo McPherson claims, on a somewhat less somber note.<sup>8</sup> Hilda experiences the trial of observing evil alive and at work in the world when she accidentally witnesses the model's murder; this is the closest she has ever come to confronting a situation beyond her capacity to

judge. Her resulting attraction to Catholicism curiously combines an endemic admiration for the idea of the Virgin (as a representation, perhaps, of motherhood) and her distress over her first direct confrontation with the reality of evil. She seeks relief from her pain and confusion; Hawthorne must teach her that the world offers more than the realm of light she knows, and that she may know the darker side "and yet abstain." Her visit to the confessional enhances this understanding, for here Hawthorne has chosen the one Catholic sacrament which solicits self-reflection. It is here that Hilda admits her sympathy and her horror, and by so doing, becomes capable of trusting herself. Out of the darkness of her own shame and nameless guilt, she emerges, ready to grapple with her conflict, willing to identify her need for Kenyon and to carry out her duty of friendship to Miriam, no longer the copyist through whom the clear light of the Masters would glow without a glimmer of humanity.

Kenyon, also, must atone for his original moral self-righteousness. Because he has disclaimed Miriam's friendship at a time when she required it, he tries to repair the breach between Miriam and Donatello caused by the workings of Donatello's metamorphosis. He travels to the Monte Beni estate, studies Donatello's heritage, and observes how the faun suffers emerging manhood. Kenyon's old desire to

capture Donatello's faunlike essence in marble he now abandons; Donatello's process of transformation has rendered him less like marble and more like clay, the medium the sculptor finally chooses for his reconsidered work. When he discovers that Miriam has kept vigil over Donatello, that she secretly follows his every footstep and subtly makes her presence known to him, Kenyon realizes that he must help his friend toward her. In this way he can bring them, as well as Hilda and himself, together at last. While traveling with Donatello towards a prearranged meeting with Miriam, the sculptor feels that he has fulfilled his bond of friendship with them both; after their reunion, Kenyon returns to Rome and to Hilda.

Shortly after Kenyon discovers her emerging from the confessional, Hilda strangely disappears. Unlike Kenyon, she has not yet fully repudiated her pious convictions; she still suffers from the shock of witnessing Miriam and Donatello at the Tarpeian Rock. When the sculptor judges the pair, that there may be a mixture of good in things evil, that Miriam and Donatello may be "worthy of Death, but not unworthy of Love" (384), Hilda, "through the clear, crystal medium of her own integrity" (384), cannot accept his view. For her, any combination of good and evil remains a tainted mixture, "more shocking than pure evil" (384). Yet her shame over turning Miriam away continues to bother her, and just as remorse has worked its atonement in Kenyon, it has

its way with her. She decides to deliver the packet long ago entrusted to her by her friend. It is a quest from which she does not return until her transformation is completed. McPherson compares her mysterious and abrupt disappearance to Prosperina's,<sup>9</sup> for it is as if Hilda descends to the underworld, and when she resurfaces, she indicates that she accepts the sculptor as her lover and future husband. Though she strikes Kenyon's lips with a rosebud, Hilda is still full of the painful associations of Miriam and Donatello. But now a certain compromise has been reached, for Hilda is also aware of the difference between herself and this other very foreign mode of experience.

At the very end of the romance, as they stand within the Pantheon just before embarking on their life together in America, Hilda and Kenyon notice a kneeling figure who, as she rises, looks toward the pair and extends her hands in a gesture of benediction. Hawthorne is careful to make them aware that this figure is Miriam, "for those extended hands, even while they blessed, seemed to repel, as if Miriam stood on the other side of a fathomless abyss, and warned them from its verge." (461) What is this fathomless abyss that Miriam seems to require for herself, while at the same time recognizing that it is not for Hilda and Kenyon? The abyss is more than the gulf between the two sets of characters, and here Hawthorne makes it resound with the private

difficulty he has reached by the end of the romance: that Miriam and Donatello would rather participate in their annihilation than escape only acknowledging its imminence, as Hilda and Kenyon do. Miriam and Donatello represent the Guido that Miriam has espoused; they have paid homage to the abyss for what it is, that gulf between life's survivors and those who willfully choose to destroy themselves. They know that they would select this final, creative treachery over the possibility of missing out altogether. In Hilda and Kenyon, Hawthorne combines the fear of dying with the awareness of how little life means. This is the anxiety expressed by those who shun the mystery of death in favor of the sterility of its opposite, a restive and impoverished living. But in portraying Miriam and Donatello in the way that he has--in love with death--Hawthorne exhibits the heroic element with all of its destructive potentiality. All characters in The Marble Faun are obliged to die. Yet Hawthorne, in Miriam and Donatello, creates an esthetic of death, as if paying tribute to a Spenserian projection in himself, that the only true hero is he who chooses to resemble finally his darkest enemy.

This last vision of the fathomless abyss between the world of Miriam and Donatello, and the new world of the sculptor and his betrothed, stresses Hawthorne's struggle to deliver himself from the thralldom of Old World

self-consciousness; he must now strike out on his own and create in the still-spangled American world another consciousness that can claim him. The Marble Faun expresses this desire and all the conflict it evinces, for the Blatant Beast of this romance, the obsessive double who obliterates any final resolution by provoking anxieties beyond the scope of the artist's imagination, is the unconquerable, "fallen" experience of the Old World. It is as if Hawthorne has engaged America and Europe in an Oedipal struggle and realizes, in the midst of the battle, that the new cannot survive without the old. Miriam's past shapes her future and does not allow her to forget the burden of this debt: Hawthorne cannot shake off the myth he has so aptly perpetrated. Hilda and Kenyon return home, but the mystery of the romance remains with Miriam and Donatello.

iii

"In Bleak House,<sup>10</sup> I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things." (xxxii) Although responding specifically to a criticism leveled against the doubtful reality of spontaneous combustion, Dickens expresses his whole conception of the novelistic mode in this statement from the 1853 Preface to Bleak House. Bleak House is indeed a novel which explores the romantic side of familiar things, and thus reveals to what extent the novel

depends on an underlying sense of mystery so central to the romance. Robert A. Donovan has written what we all know, that the structure of the plot of Bleak House is basically that of a detective story, with its typically progressive presentation of events rendered meaningful by accounting for each of them.<sup>11</sup> This process of discovery and evaluation is contingent on the existence of something to discover, some mystery which unites thematically the vast scheme and incredibly varied texture of the novel. As Bleak House begins, dominated by the murkiness and obscurity of something hidden either fortuitously or gratuitously by the fog, slime, and endless muddle of Chancery, the mystery unfolds, cloaking every detail; like the continuing sense of the Blatant Beast beyond Spenser's poem, accounting for events that comprise the mystery of Bleak House does not, finally, account for the remaining mystery, the ongoing mystery of futility and waste. In this way, Dickens' novel stays faithful to the core of romance which inspires and informs it, for here Dickens shows that there is an unknowable secret inherent in the nature of familiar things.

The doubling in Bleak House is again characterological and thematic, but Dickens, unlike Hawthorne, assigns a very different use to each of these. Also present in the novel is a kind of contrast doubling such as Spenser employs; but while apparently similar but distinctly different bowers,

and gardens, labyrinths and temples, compile emblematic support for heroic resistance to, or participation in, the appropriate moral atmosphere in The Faerie Queene, Chesney Wold and Tom-all-Alone's point to a world where such contrasts are no longer significant. The possibility that both might reveal some terrible, ravaging devastation of spirit belies their seemingly dialectic surface: Lady Dedlock might as well disguise herself as a poor bricklayer's wife when she takes flight to her death, since that is the moral level on which she perceives herself, thus reflecting the deep spiritual dissolution felt on all levels in Bleak House. The manifold sense of devastation which does appear here sometimes takes the form of subtly infused distortions of character and place, where previous assumptions about either no longer hold their ground; this is what makes the doubling in this novel so important. Like Our Mutual Friend, a later work it greatly informs, Bleak House is about the problem of misrepresentation in a world no longer certain of its own meaning, a world caught up in the uncertainty of complete moral decay.

The impulse to locate oneself in this world is strong, stronger, perhaps, for the tension created by the difficulty of its accomplishment. This impulse is the governing principle behind every character, the quest at the back of every action. As an expression of the intensity of this feeling,

there appears an uncanny sense of anxiety even in the storytelling, an anxiety which speaks of the need to tell what happens, yet which refrains from plunging headlong into the suffocating Bleak House fog. The anxiety is focused in Esther, both as a narrator and as a character. In the abstaining manner of the Spenserian hero, Esther approaches each of the novel's events with almost sublime diffidence, a narrative quality which does not endear her to many critics.<sup>12</sup> As a character, also, Esther seems so self-contained that she nearly becomes a parody of herself in her function as a narrator with her self-sacrificing dedication to others. But by showing her to be self-sacrificing, Dickens reveals how she largely escapes the oppressive closeness of the novel--she concentrates on others so that she can forget about herself.

Despite a desire to find a place in the world, Esther seems curiously timid, even afraid, to learn about herself. Delving into her parentage is a quest she shrinks from, one that she instinctively abhors. Her guardian, Mr. Jarndyce, offers a chance to question him about her mysterious identity early on in the novel:

"Esther, my dear, do you wish to ask me anything?"

He looked so attentively at me, that I looked attentively at him, and felt sure that I understood him.

"About myself, sir?" said I.

"Yes."

"Guardian," said I, venturing to put my hand, which was suddenly colder than I could have wished, in his, "nothing! I am quite sure that if there were anything I ought to know, or had any need to know, I should not have to ask you to tell it to me. If my whole reliance and confidence were not placed in you, I must have a hard heart indeed. I have nothing to ask you; nothing in the world.

He drew my hand through his arm, and we went away to look for Ada. From that hour I felt quite easy with him, quite unreserved, quite content to know no more, quite happy. (75-76)

Esther rejects this chance, as she will countless others; she prefers the anonymity of the many household nicknames she acquires: "...Old Woman, and Little Old Woman, and Cobweb, and Mrs. Shipton, and Mother Hubbard, and Dame Durden, and so many names of that sort, that my own name soon became quite lost among them." (74) There is a sense of relief expressed in these last words, for Esther avoids confronting what she does not know about herself as if she already suspected what it might be--as if she, alone in the novel, discovers in time that survival is attendant upon looking ahead, not behind.

Still ringing in her memory are the words of her aunt who has impressed her with the shame of her birth:

"Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers...Submission, self-denial, diligent work, are the preparations for a life begun with such shadows on it. You are different from other children, Esther, because you were not born, like them, in common sinfulness and wrath. You are set apart." (13)

Since Esther is "set apart," since her existence contributes to an equation of disgrace, her fear of the past, in addition to her anxiety about survival, certainly explain her often sententious desire to belong to what seems not worth belonging to. She desires not only to belong, but to blend in so unobtusively that no question concerning her identity could seem important enough to pose. For this reason, Esther must efface herself--not as a condition of the way others perceive her, but for her own, necessarily reductive perception of herself. All ideas about her past, thoughts about her parentage, even the hope of an independent future, she relegates to the category of idle dreams. Her aim, in effect, is to make herself disappear. But Dickens does not allow her to get away; as a narrator, Esther offers in her persistent and occasionally unreflective enthusiasm for life enough resistance to the bleakness of the novel effectively to bring out the nightmare which the wilfully cheerful quality of her vision ironically reveals. It is not, finally, Esther the narrator with her studied, self-conscious, annoying transparency who is memorable, but rather Esther the character, for whom Dickens has reserved a darker purpose.

Only in examining Esther's relation to her mother, Lady Dedlock, do we see how Dickens draws together the threads of his story. Here, Dickens conjoins both the sense

of mystery endemic to romance and the paraphernalia of realism necessary to the novel. Here, also, he places characterological doubling within its larger, thematic setting, for between Esther and her mother there exist obvious as well as subtle bonds of kinship. Esther becomes strangely aware of this when during a visit to Chesney Wold she sees Lady Dedlock for the first time at church:

Shall I ever forget the rapid beating at my heart, occasioned by the look I met, as I stood up! Shall I ever forget the manner in which those handsome proud eyes seemed to spring out of their languor, and to hold mine! It was only a moment before I cast mine down--released again, if I may say so--on my book; but, I knew the beautiful face well, in that short space of time.

And, very strangely, there was something quickened within me, associated with the lonely days at my godmother's; yes, away even to the days when I stood on tiptoe to dress myself at my little glass, after dressing my doll. And this, although I had never seen this lady's face before in all my life--I was quite sure of it--absolutely certain.

It was easy to know that the ceremonious, gouty grey-haired gentleman, the only other occupant of the great pew, was Sir Leicester Dedlock; and that the lady was Lady Dedlock. But why her face should be, in a confused way, like a broken glass to me, in which I saw scraps of old remembrances; and why I should be so fluttered and troubled (for I was still), by having casually met her eyes; I could not think.

I felt it to be an unmeaning weakness in me, and tried to overcome it by attending to the words I heard. Then, very strangely, I seemed to hear them, not in the reader's voice, but in the well-remembered voice of my godmother. This made me think, did Lady Dedlock's face accidentally resemble my godmother's? It might be that it did, a little; but, the expression was so different, and the stern decision which had worn into my godmother's face, like weather into rocks, was so completely wanting in the face before me, that it could not be that resemblance which had struck

me. Neither did I know the loftiness and haughtiness of Lady Dedlock's face, at all, in any one. And yet, I--I, little Esther Summerson, the child who lived a life apart, and on whose birthday there was no rejoicing--seemed to arise before my own eyes, evoked out of the past by some power in this fashionable lady, whom I had not only entertained no fancy that I had ever seen, but whom I perfectly well knew I had never seen until that hour. (191-92)

Others, of course, notice the physical resemblance between Esther and her mother before Esther learns from Lady Dedlock's lips that they are indeed mother and daughter; Mr. Guppy, Mlle. Hortense, even the street-urchin Jo, are struck by it. Yet, as evinced in the passage, Esther, who continues to insist ("I--I, little Esther Summerson...") that she dare not consider herself important enough to merit identification, sharply discovers the secret of her own mystery. The impression that this insight leaves causes Esther to reach a turning point in her development as a character; it renders active her formerly suppressed identity quest--it encourages further remembering, now no longer restrained.

Later on in the novel, when she charitably pursues the sick, tormented Jo in an attempt to minister to him, Esther records another attack of her remarkable perspicacity about herself:

I had no thought, that night--none, I am quite sure--of what was soon to happen to me. But I have always remembered since, that we stopped at the garden-gate to look up at the sky, and when we went on our way, I had for a moment an undefinable impression of myself as being something different from what I then was. I know it was then, and there,

that I had it. I have ever since connected the feeling with that spot and time, and with everything associated with that spot and time, to the distant voices in the town, the barking of a dog, and the sound of wheels coming down the miry hill. (326)

This association reinforces Esther's acknowledgement that she has had a past and that it is important to her now; still later, when she recovers from smallpox (but after her physical resemblance to Lady Dedlock has been successfully obliterated), and when Lady Dedlock confesses their relation, she expresses relief that their former mutual likeness can no longer tie them. But Esther expresses no surprise at her mother's revelation, for she has already guessed their connection. This scene rather serves as Lady Dedlock's painful reckoning of the past to her daughter, another emanation of herself.

The significance of Esther's association with Lady Dedlock contributes greatly to the development of Bleak House: mother and daughter represent a form of doubling that might be called compensatory. Both try to avoid the past, their shared yet separable past, but for different reasons. Lady Dedlock has sacrificed her lover and her child, a chance to satisfy her inner life, in order to marry Sir Leicester, a chance to satisfy her social aspirations. She cannot, however, forget what she has given up, and the memory of the lover she has abandoned and the child she has assumed dead is reflected in a kind of recurrent malaise. She is,

as her name implies, locked into the deadly monotony of her life. Dickens emphasizes this in one of the opening chapters of the novel, when Lady Dedlock observes a simple family scene from her boudoir window:

My Lady Dedlock (who is childless), looking out in the early twilight from her boudoir at a keeper's lodge, and seeing the light of a fire upon the latticed panes, and smoke rising from the chimney, and a child, chased by a woman, running out into the rain to meet the shining figure of a wrapped-up man coming through the gate, has been put quite out of temper. My Lady Dedlock says she has been "bored to death." (6-7)

The sight of a man returning home from work, greeted by his wife and child, unaccountably upsets the haughty noblewoman because it reminds her that she cannot blend her continuing desire for a valued love with her present, unanimated life. She has relinquished her "good" impulse to love to her "darker" impulse, that aspect which now expresses boredom but which intimates a deeper suffering.<sup>13</sup> Like Victor Frankenstein, who creates a fiend out of his uncontrollable urge to destroy himself, Esther's mother shapes an image of herself, devoid of humanity, as Lady Dedlock. Since she abandons her past, she must subsist on this present image, that of a cold, impenetrable woman, as long as she can.

In Bleak House, the past, as Hillis Miller has indicated, is the focus upon which all the characters permanently fix their conscious attention, "in a kind of

retrospective fascination." He goes on to write that Lady Dedlock is the chief proponent of this idea.<sup>14</sup> But Esther, too, attempts to avoid confronting her past, until she gives in to her irresistible attraction to it. While Esther tries to snuff out her desire for personal happiness--an independent life--in order to erase the persistent sense of guilt originally impressed on her by her aunt, Esther's mother, Lady Dedlock, tries to inflate the importance of social ambition, hoping to crush the possibility that because of her ambition, she has cut herself off from a meaningful life. Esther's selflessness hides a passionate desire to demand love for herself, an ambition she would like to suppress. Such preoccupation with herself, because she attempts to deny it, indicates just how much Esther looks out for herself. She cannot, for example, conceal to what extent she suffers at the loss of her beauty (that physical link with the glamorous Lady Dedlock) after her bout with smallpox. Dickens emphasizes this lingering regret by recalling it in the last paragraph of the novel. Settled with the man she loves, the children she has longed for--a life devoted to others and at the same time satisfying to herself--Esther continues to search, even though she has attained the terms of her quest:

"What have you been thinking about, my dear?"  
said Allan then.

"How curious you are!" said I. "I am almost ashamed to tell you, but I will. I have been thinking about my old looks--such as they were."

"And what have you been thinking about them, my busy bee?" said Allan.

I have been thinking, that I thought it was impossible that you could have loved me any better, even if I had retained them."

"--Such as they were?" said Allan, laughing.

"Such as they were, of course."

"My dear Dame Durden," said Allan, drawing my arm through his, "do you ever look in the glass?"

"You know I do; you see me do it."

"And don't you know that you are prettier than you ever were?"

I did not know that; I am not certain that I know it now. But I know that my dearest pets are very pretty, and that my darling is very beautiful, and that my husband is very handsome, and that my guardian has the brightest and most benevolent face that ever was seen; and that they can very well do without much beauty in me--even supposing---" (665)

Esther's continuing discontent does not leave her permanently damaged, but it does point to the self-concern she has tried to suppress all along. Lady Dedlock's sacrifice, however, one that has already metaphorically killed her by the novel's start, literally succeeds in causing her death at the end of Bleak House. In order that Esther's future be secure from the shadow of her past, the shadow cast on her life by her shameful birth, Lady Dedlock must redeem her; this is to enable Esther to create an image of herself distinct from her mother's. Honoria Dedlock must reclaim Honoria Hawdon, and so die; she joins, at his grave, her lover, a character Dickens aptly calls "Nemo."<sup>15</sup>

Esther and Lady Dedlock represent the primary element of doubling seen on both a characterological and a thematic

level in Bleak House. Each embodies the other's ideal: Esther, from Lady Dedlock's viewpoint, exhibits none of the dangers of ambition, not even a reasonable curiosity about herself; Lady Dedlock, from Esther's perspective, belongs to a glittering world where she is greatly admired and esteemed, and where her every whim is considered a command. Yet Esther really desires to assert herself, despite her effort at self-denial. Similarly, Lady Dedlock is not what she seems; despite a social image of regal beauty and pride, she secretly leads a life of self-loathing, only made worse by the opulent emptiness which surrounds her. When her mother dies, Esther's hidden desire need no longer remain under cover; she has unwittingly made Lady Dedlock, her characterological double, her victim. Before this occurs, Esther and her mother are somewhat relieved by their confrontation, where each expresses feelings only meant for one another, feelings each has had to suppress in the eyes of the world. Now Lady Dedlock has but to make the final gesture of breaking with her persecutor, the overwhelming engagement of the past (Esther's birth) in her present life. Thus, as Hillis Miller concludes, the sense of the past triumphs over the sense of the present in the novel, blotting out the hope of a future for Lady Dedlock and others by leading them toward their disintegration.<sup>16</sup> Esther, because she is transformed into selfhood by her mother's death, survives. But it is clearly a survivor's ending.

Perhaps the most consciously lifeless character ever created by Dickens is Tulkinghorn, the Dedlock lawyer who engages Lady Dedlock in a fatal struggle, as if the mystery of her identity were in some way his own. In one significant way, it is. Like the old Jew who pursues Ethan Brand with his Unpardonable Sin, Tulkinghorn does not exist as a character in his own right, but rather as an embodiment of the idea suggested by another character--the idea that there abides always a driving force to discover, and that this force can become a kind of parodic version of the "good" conscience. Tulkinghorn dedicates himself to the downfall of Esther's mother, but not through any direct feeling of malice either toward her or toward the family to which she now belongs. Instead, Tulkinghorn seems to derive his livelihood from attaching himself to what is the governing principle of Bleak House, a certain notion of the past. He is further evidence that the past, as Dickens' obsessive double, endures, despite all efforts to escape it. In essence, Tulkinghorn represents the culmination of the imagination's impulse to punish itself. He does not really "kill" Lady Dedlock, any more than the Jew causes Ethan's suicide; he only contributes to her open acknowledgment of the terror of pretence, and to the kindling of her Dickensian price for remorse. In Tulkinghorn, Dickens creates the kind of motiveless malignity at work behind the novel's deep despair,

a despair admitting of no light save that dim, perservering gleam of the survivor.

Other characters in Bleak House drift into the struggle of self-discovery most clearly portrayed by Esther and Lady Dedlock. Dickens uses straight character doubling as a dramatic device to emphasize the claustrophobic atmosphere of the world he creates in all its agonizingly unhealthy coincidences and nearly incestuous relationships. There are, for example, hints of Hortense, Lady Dedlock's violently jealous maid, in Lady Dedlock herself, as when Lady Dedlock first responds to the threat of losing Rosa, her favorite servant, whose fresh, untarnished beauty reminds her of another face. Inspector Bucket can be viewed as a "good" version of Tulkinghorn; his cheerful, bourgeois drive contrasts with the lawyer's shabby aristocratic decadence. In addition, there are obvious representational similarities between Krook's establishment and person, and that of the court of Chancery and the Lord Chancellor. Dickens employs these and still other dramatic doubles to enrich the allegorical texture of the novel.

Yet, remaining at the center of Bleak House is its mystery, the mystery of Narcissus, where all reflections of the self become appalling spectres, internal ones. No one in the novel can escape the turning inward of the mind and the emotions. Like Frankenstein, the characters of

Bleak House deny their own existence, blast themselves from personal achievement that is meaningful to them by refusing to mitigate between the mistaken image they have of themselves or they harbor of others, and the real claims of others on them. Like Narcissus, these characters waste away; their internal correspondences and resemblances are lethal, self-destroying shadows or reflections of the chaotic, if recognizable, external, social world of the novel. Esther Summerson, although she manages to "identify" herself and "save" herself socially, pays the price of foregoing other, more imaginative, private possibilities (as Frankenstein does, when he creates his monster). With her looks predictably marred by illness, her mother and father dead through suicide, Esther is left to feebly enact the typical Victorian deus ex machina ending. It does not convince us that all is right with the world. The problem of simultaneous realities, the reality of good coexisting with the reality of evil, remains. This is the heritage of Narcissus.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>All quotations from "Ethan Brand" refer to the following edition: Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Ethan Brand" in Short Stories, ed. Newton Arvin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959). Page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>2</sup>Hugo McPherson, Hawthorne as Myth-Maker: A Study in Imagination (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 221.

<sup>3</sup>This gathering is evidence for Hawthorne's abiding interest in the masque (and its later analogue, the masqued ball) or procession of grotesques, which he uses as a harbinger of a turning point, some crucial revelation--here, the revelation that Ethan's return represents the apotheosis of his quest for death. Poe also employs this kind of gross caricature and disguise to encourage an atmosphere where anything is possible, and where the perverse is typical.

<sup>4</sup>It is interesting that Hawthorne mentions Echo in his description of the New England countryside here:

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while Echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay little claim to share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness. (390)

Instead of mourning the passing of some surpassing spirit, Nature seems to rejoice in Ethan's death. Perhaps Echo represents the ongoing creative forces, those Wordsworthian restorative aspects, which Ethan has ignored in his single-minded quest for death. Perhaps these have been laying in wait for Ethan to die, for the experience of him to pass, so that they can again bring peace to the world. Perhaps, also, Echo, the promise of the imagination's enrichment, "echoes" by reflecting the waste of Ethan's reductive quest.

<sup>5</sup>All quotations from The Marble Faun refer to the following edition: Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni, IV Centenary Edition, ed. William Charvat and others (Columbus: The University of Ohio Press, 1968). Page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>6</sup>Here, it might be noted that Hawthorne, like Spenser, comments on the inherent danger of Catholicism. The Church reflects the possibility of perpetuating evil in its most subtle disguise--the idea of penance and absolution for sins which neither Hawthorne nor Spenser themselves can forgive.

<sup>7</sup>The presence of Hilda and Kenyon in this romance may be Hawthorne's attempt to demythologize, and so demystify, the notion embodied in Spenser's *Blatant Beast*--the presence of evil as a permanent fixture of the imagination. This, of course, does not mean that Hawthorne intends to eliminate the notion altogether. The reality of evil remains with him and with the reader at the end of the romance.

<sup>8</sup>McPherson, p. 169.

<sup>9</sup>McPherson, p. 166.

<sup>10</sup>All quotations from *Bleak House* refer to the following edition: Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company/The Riverside Press, 1956). Page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

<sup>11</sup>Robert A. Donovan, "Structure and Idea in *Bleak House*," *ELH*, XXIX, No. 2 (1962), 186-201.

<sup>12</sup>Much has been made of Esther's function as a narrator in *Bleak House*. She is usually criticized for what might be called her unreliability--her disarming determination to undercut her own significance to herself and to the course of the novel's events, and instead play up those of nearly anyone else. But, as my analysis of *Bleak House* will show, this quality is essential for both narrative purposes and for Esther's development as a character. In fact, such is always the case when a novel provides more than one narrator. To label one narrator "reliable" and another "unreliable" is to deflect from a work's potential richness of focus, and to intimate unreliability, rather, on the part of the reader.

<sup>13</sup>It might be interpreted that it is Lady Dedlock's conscience which bothers her and dominates her present life more and more, in the form of something that has never occurred--what her life might have been like if she had remained with her lover and looked after her child. In this sense, her conscience can be considered a kind of rhetorical double, an internalization of Honoria Hawdon. A case of doubling where the main character's conscience actually manifests itself in another character is found in

Poe's William Wilson. Wilson, tortured by his physical resemblance to his double, lives a life of increasing degeneracy, along the lines of Dorian Gray. The double, serving as Wilson's good conscience, drops in on him from time to time, usually just as Wilson is about to descend to an even lower level of moral profligacy. Finally, when his conscience has destroyed completely his reputation, Wilson plunges a sword into its bosom--and so murders himself. Poe's tale reflects Lady Dedlock's situation without suggesting, as Poe never does, the possibility of an alternative to a lifetime of despair.

<sup>14</sup>J. Hillis Miller, "Bleak House" in Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 190-205.

<sup>15</sup>"Nemo," Captain Hawdon's law-copying pseudonym, ironically underscores the negative quality of the past in Bleak House. Once a proud and heroic professional naval officer of no private pecuniary means, Hawdon is cut down in his prime by the claims of his failed love, which he cannot abandon, for the now Lady Dedlock. But Dickens strangely underplays the possibilities of this characterization; the reader is only presented with Nemo, formerly a man who heroically saves George Rouncewell's life on one occasion, but who currently exists in a sordid hovel, a parody of the Chancery Court, employing himself as a copier. His present occupation leaves him no relish for anything but opium. Although he shows an old glimmer of humanity in his kindly behavior toward Jo, an otherwise nameless creature like himself, even this last remnant of kindness admits of an impoverished life, one no longer worth valuing. The characterization, as far as it goes, helps to enrich the mystery at the center of the novel. Yet we never learn exactly how Captain Hawdon becomes Nemo, and rather than describe in detail such a fall, Dickens chooses to leave this secret intact, as Hawthorne does with Miriam's past in The Marble Faun. Thus, the reader is left with Nemo, truly no one as his name implies, except that he has been the lover of Lady Dedlock and the father of a child by her, Esther Summerson, and so is part of the debris of the past. It is as if Dickens sensed the terror beyond what he was able to portray in this novel, but, like Spenser, this awareness speaks against further forays into the unknown elements of his imagination. One might argue that Dickens is reserving this final apocalyptic expedition for a later novel, and that Hawdon prepares the way for, say, John Jasper in The Mystery of Edwin Drood. But even in this last unfinished novel, one feels that Dickens would never

have unraveled finally the mystery behind Jasper's inward-turning, destructive imagination. It is this mystery which concerns the dangerous proclivity of the creative imagination, the dark shadow haunting every artist.

<sup>16</sup>Miller, pp. 190-205.

## Epilogue

## A HAND-MIRROR

Hold it up sternly--see this it sends back, (who is it? is  
it you?)  
Outside fair costume, within ashes and filth,  
No more a flashing eye, no more a sonorous voice or springy  
step,  
Now some slave's eye, voice, hands, step,  
A drunkard's breath, unwholesome eater's face, venereaalee's  
flesh,  
Lungs rotting away piecemeal, stomach sour and cankerous,  
Joints rheumatic, bowels clogged with abomination,  
Blood circulating dark and poisonous streams,  
Words babble, hearing and touch callous,  
No brain, no heart left, no magnetism of sex;  
Such from one look in this looking-glass ere you go hence,  
Such a result so soon--and from such a beginning!

--Walt Whitman

Doubling seems so much a part of the human imagination that in exploring scientific theories of matter and antimatter, we find it congenial to conceive of an entire universe as having a double.

Often, in literature there can be instances in which two separate visions conflict with positive results. In Cervantes' Don Quixote, for example, the relation of the Don to Sancho might be compared to Narcissus had he chosen to align himself with Echo. The Don's eccentricity, his obsession with knight errantry, makes him an artist-innovator, a reshaper of the everyday, as Auerbach has pointed out.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the Don taken by himself embodies the central romance element in Cervantes' novel. A kind of tension endemic to the novel occurs between the Don's apparent madness, the imaginative screen through which novelistic reality becomes transformed, and the everyday paraphernalia which dominates Sancho's world, very different from the Don's. By playing on just this conflict, Cervantes shows how well he understands the value of the romance to the novel. Both visions, the Don's and Sancho's, are essential in determining the basis for a distinction between art and life, one that Narcissus is unable to make. Through the Don's perverse imagination, and through the tempering agency of Sancho, the everyday world of Don Quixote has been made more substantial;

Art has transformed life because the Don learns that his fiction can be complemented by Sancho's.

But there is a deceitful kind of doubling which pertains to objects--as in the art of counterfeiting or the magic trick--that often can be applied to persons through the idea of the negative double. Thus Dickens describes the fragmenting of the imagination and consequently of the external world in the characterological and thematic pairing of Esther and Lady Dedlock. Here, although mother and daughter ultimately serve to debunk previously held illusions about each other, the demythologizing process yields limited results; Esther and Lady Dedlock are shown to be related, but they are in no way the same. Because both fail to understand this difference, their relation becomes pernicious instead of useful.

An even more pernicious doubling occurs when counterparts function as disparate halves, debunkers of illusion revealing a no less devastating reality. An extremely dense and complex case is James' "The Beast in the Jungle." Here, John Marcher, like Shelley's Alastor poet, pursues the idea of participating in some elusive, transcendent experience, only to find, too late, that the experience has been residing next to him in the form of May Bartram. Instead of participating in a love affair with her, Marcher reifies her into

a sort of "veiled maid," an intellectual emanation of his own self-consciousness. When he observes, at her grave, another face resembling his own bereaved one, mourning at another grave, only different from his in that it is ravaged by a passion he has never felt, Marcher recognizes the Beast and the Jungle of his own life; the reckoning kills him. It is significant that James could only deal openly with this notion of internalized self-haunting in a short story, although its terrible irony resembles the tenor of Maggie's equivocal triumph at the end of The Golden Bowl-- James' last completed novel.

Still another form of disparate doubling occurs when one counterpart is obsessively undermined by another, as in the relation of Gerald to Birkin in Women in Love. Sworn to Lawrencian blutbrüderschaft, these two enact an almost ritualistic sacrifice. Gerald cannot endure the emptiness he feels, the staggering burden of a life devoted to an externalized, materialistic mode of perception. Birkin is committed to destroying the old theology of object-worship and replacing it with the creation of his own, unorthodox love ethic. By the time he attempts to stir Gerald with his own excessive self-consciousness, Gerald breaks under the strain of a failed intimacy with Gudrun and also with Birkin himself, whose constant badgering and opposing presence threaten Gerald's already defective imagination.

Arnold Bennett explores a synergistic aspect of doubling in Riceyman Steps. Here, Henry and Violet Earlforward undergo a process of mutually inflicted erosion brought about through their preoccupation with a secret, abiding terror: destitution. They marry in order to relieve this terror, but the union conspires against them; instead of succor, they provide each other with support for the disintegrating fear that they cannot manage their possessions, despite the imposition of severe economic measures. Elsie, their only servant and witness, could demystify this self-annihilating focus, for they increasingly depend on her for practical sustenance. But they ignore her offer of moral sustenance, her useful intrusion of flesh and blood. Instead, they kill each other off through the multiplicity of their shared obsession.

Finally, there is a form of doubling which remains in a class by itself. For this situation, Satan's words on Mount Niphates in Paradise Lost--"Evil be thou my Good"--may be taken as a paradigm. Elias Canetti, in Auto da Fé, describes the total reversal of a livable credo when he determines that the only life purely of the mind is to be found in madness. Here, the paranoid hero is possessed totally by his imagination and he embraces this possession; he renounces sanity and defends madness by making intruders even out of others who resemble him. In this novel, the

negative double exists without its "other," for the idea of the original, like the idea of sanity, seems impoverished, derivative, thickheaded, compared to the prophetic belief in images conjured up by the senses. Canetti's work presents a world where the visionary is safe from decomposition because he is its perpetrator; he is possessed by the evil living within him and that is his inspiration. Auto da Fé seems remarkably free from irony, even the profound, torturous irony of Kafka. This is a novel where the nightmare never ceases; no one ever awakens, because it is not a dream. Canetti, unlike Milton, gives us no standpoint except the Satanic from which to evaluate the world. Iris Murdoch dedicated her own very Satanic Flight From the Enchanter to Canetti, yet Misha Fox's Satanism seems pale when compared to Peter Kien's. Canetti takes the characterization of evil to its narcissistic extreme: it is as if the reflected image of Narcissus had imagined itself in the body of Narcissus only long enough to see him dead. Narcissistic doubling has been a study of the daemonic power of that reflected image.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>See Erich Auerbach's extremely lucid essay in his Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), "The Enchanted Dulcinea," pp. 334-358.

## List of Works Consulted

### Primary Works

- Andersen, Hans Christian. "The Shadow" in The Complete Andersen: All of the 168 Stories. trans. Jean Hersholt. New York: The Heritage Press, 1952.
- Bacon, Francis. The Works of. vol. XIII. ed. James Spalding. Boston: Brown and Taggard, 1860.
- Bennett, Arnold. Riceyman Steps. London: Cassell, 1968.
- Canetti, Elias. Auto da Fé. trans. C.V. Wedgwood. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1973.
- Cervantes, Miguel de. Don Quixote. Ozell's rev. of the trans. of Peter Motteux. New York: The Modern Library, 1950.
- Collins, Wilkie. Armadale. in 2 vols. New York: Peter Fenelon, n.d.
- Dickens, Charles. Bleak House. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company/The Riverside Press, 1956.
- Dostoyevsky, Feodor. The Brothers Karamazov. trans. David Magarshack. in 2 vols. Baltimore: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973.
- Ficino, Marsilio. Commentary on Plato's Symposium. ed. Sears Reynolds Jane. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1944.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni. Vol. iv Centenary Edition, ed. William Charvat and Others. Columbus: University of Ohio Press, 1968.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. Short Stories. ed. Newton Arvin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958.
- Heine, Heinrich. xx of Die Heimkehr. Samtliche Schriften. Vol. I. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1968.

- Hoffmann, E.T.A. "Die Geschichte Vom Verlorenen Spiegelbilde." Werke. in 15 vols. ed. Georg Ellinger. Berlin: Deutsches Verlagshaus Bong & Co. n.d.
- Iamblichus. Exhortation to the Study of Philosophy: Fragments, etc. trans. Thomas M. Johnson. Oseola, Missouri: 1907.
- Ingelow, Jean. Mopsa The Fairy. London: Dent/Everyman's Library, 1925.
- James, Henry. "The Beast in the Jungle." Stories of the Supernatural. ed. Leon Edel. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970.
- Laclos, Choderlos de. Les Liasons Dangereuses. Paris: Librairie Mireille Ceni, n.d.
- Lawrence, D.H. Women in Love. New York: Random House/Modern Library, 1950.
- Milton, John. Paradise Lost in Complete Poems and Major Prose. ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957.
- Murdoch, Iris. The Flight From the Enchanter. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1956.
- Ovid. Metamorphoses. ed. Rudolfus Ehwald. in 2 vols. Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1915.
- Ovid, The Metamorphoses of. trans. William Caxton, 1480; facsimile rpt. New York: George Braziller, 1968.
- Ovid. The Metamorphoses. trans. Horace Gregory. New York: Mentor/New American Library, 1960.
- Ovid. Metamorphoses. trans. Rolfe Humphries. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1971.
- Plotinus. The Enneads. trans. Stephen Mackenna. third ed. rev. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1956.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. Selected Writings. ed. David Galloway. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Reynolds, Henry. Mythomystes...1632; facsimile rpt. Yorkshire: The Scholar Press, 1972.

- Richardson, Samuel. Clarissa or, The History of a Young Lady. in 4 vols. London: Dent/Everyman's Library, 1967.
- Ripa, Cesare. Iconologie, ou Explication de plusieurs images...trans. I. Baudoin. Paris: M. Guillemot, 1644.
- Ronsard. Oeuvres Complètes de. ed. Gustave Cohen. vols. I & II. Paris: Bibliothèque de la pléiade/Éditions Gallimard, 1950 & 1965.
- Ross, Alexander. Mystagogus Poeticus, or, The muses interpreted...3 ed. rev. and enl. London: J. Kirton, 1653.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Narcisse, ou l'amant de lui-même in Oeuvres Complètes de. II. ed. Charley Guyot. Paris: Bibliothèque de la pléiade/Éditions Gallimard, 1964.
- Sandys, George. Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologized, and Represented in Figures. ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1970.
- Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus. New York: Signet/New American Library, 1965.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. Poetical Works. ed. Thomas Hutchison. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Shirley, James. Narcissus or The Self-Lover in Elizabethan Minor Epics. ed. Elizabeth S. Donno, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963, 325-51.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Faerie Queene. in 2 vols. New York: Dutton/Everyman's Library, 1964.
- Wordsworth, William, The Poetical Works of. ed. Thomas Hutchison. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964.

Secondary Works

- Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1958.
- Auerbach, Erich. Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. trans. Willard Trask. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968.
- Baker, Carlos. Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of a Vision. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1948.
- Becker, John E. Hawthorne's Historical Allegory: An Examination of the American Conscience. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press/National Univ. Publications, 1970.
- Berger, Harry. The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Faerie Queene. Yale Studies in English, vol. 137. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press/Archon Books, 1967.
- Bloom, Harold. The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition. Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Bloom, Harold. Shelley's Mythmaking. Ithaca; Cornell Univ. Press, 1969.
- Bloom, Harold. The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1971.
- Bloom, Harold. Yeats. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970.
- Bush, Douglas. Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry. rev. ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1969.
- Cassirer, Ernst. Language and Myth. trans. Susanne K. Langer. New York: Dover, 1946.
- Cassirer, Ernest. The Platonic Renaissance in England. trans. James P. Pettegrove. New York: Gordian Press, 1970.

- Chase, Richard. The American Novel and Its Tradition. Garden City, New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books, 1957.
- Crews, Frederick C. The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966.
- Curtius, Ernst Robert. European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper & Row, 1953.
- Donovan, Robert A. "Structure and Idea in Bleak House." ELH, XXIX, No. 2 (1962), 186-201.
- Elder, Marjorie J. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Transcendental Symbols. Columbus: Ohio Univ. Press, 1969.
- Fish, Stanley. Surprised By Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost. Berkeley: The Univ. of California Press, 1971.
- Fletcher, Angus. Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Foyle, Richard. Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark. Norman, Oklahoma: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1965.
- Fowler, Alastair. Spenser and the Numbers of Time. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1964.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." trans. Alex Strachey. Studies in Parapsychology. ed. Philip Rieff, New York: Collier Books, 1966.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Study of English Romanticism. New York: Random House, 1968.
- Golden, Frederick. The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967.
- Goldin, Rita K. "Painting and Character in The Marble Faun." Emerson Society Quarterly, XXI, No. 1 (1975), 1-10.

- Gombrich, E.H. Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1972.
- Hamilton, A.C. The Structure of Allegory in the Faerie Queene. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.
- Hartlaub, G.F. Zauber des Spiegels Geschichte und Bedeutung des Spiegels: in der Kunst. Munich: R. Piper, 1951.
- Henkel, Arthur and Albrecht Schöne. Emblemata: Handbuch zur sinnbildkunst des XVI und XVIII Jahrhunderts. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerschre Verlagsbuchunderlung, 1967.
- Himelick, Raymond. "Hawthorne, Spenser and Christian Humanism" Emerson Society Quarterly, XXI, No. 1 (1975), 21-28.
- House, Humphry. The Dickens World. 2d. ed. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965.
- Keppler, C.F. The Literature of the Second Self. Tuscon, Arizona: The Univ. of Arizona Press, 1972.
- Kermode, Frank. The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968.
- Levin, Harry. The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville. New York: Vintage Books, 1958.
- Lewis, C.S. The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.
- McPherson, Hugo. Hawthorne as Mythmaker: A Study in Imagination. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969.
- Miller, J. Hillis. Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958.
- Panofsky, Erwin. Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance. New York: Icon Editions/ Harper & Row, 1972.
- Praz, Mario. The Romantic Agony. trans. Angus Davidson. 2nd ed. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970.
- Pulos, C. The Deep Truth: A Study of Shelley's Skepticism. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1962.

- Rank, Otto. The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study. trans. and ed. Harry Tucker, Jr. Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1971.
- Roche, Thomas. The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's Faerie Queene. Princeton: Univ. Press, 1964.
- Rogers, Robert. A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1970.
- Scholem, Gerschom. "The Golem of Prague and the Golem of Rehovot" in The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Idea of the Golem" in On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- Schwartz, Joseph. "Myth and Ritual in The Marble Faun." Emerson Society Quarterly, XXV, No. 4 (1961) 26-29.
- Strauch, Carl F. "The Problem of Time and the Romantic Mode in Hawthorne, Melville and Emerson." Emerson Society Quarterly, XXXV, No. 2 (1964), Part Two, 50-60.
- Tymms, Ralph. German Romantic Literature. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1955.
- Vinge, Louise. The Narcissus Myth in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century. trans. Robert Dewsnap in collab. Lisbeth Grönlund, Nigel Reeves, Ingrid Söderberg-Reeves. Lund: Gleerups, 1967.
- Waggoner, Hyatt H. Hawthorne: A Critical Study. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1955.
- Wasserman, Earl R. Shelley: A Critical Reading. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971.
- Watt, Ian. The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971.
- Williamson, Kathleen. Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966.

Wilson, Edmund. "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" in The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965.

Wind, Edgar. Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance. rev. ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968.