THE FIGURES OF NARCISSUS AND FAUST IN LITERATURE AND FILM

by

Jill Johnson

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by

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THE FIGURES OF NARCISSUS AND FAUST IN LITERATURE AND FILM

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The legends and myths of the past continue to dominate cultural thought and shared storytelling. Two of the most key figures in these myths are Narcissus and Faust. They continue to dominate stories that are told. When looking at Faustian stories, I examine and bring to the fore the layered aspect of the Faust character. In my interpretation, Faust, the character and concept, is related to the other mythological figure: Narcissus. Establishing the connection between the myths of Narcissus and Faust in my first chapter, I show how this approach aids in interpreting Faust, especially as this character appears in other stories. In most tales Faust is a Narcissus, which directs certain aspects of his narrative. He will appeal to others with his described physical beauty, enthrall the other characters as Narcissus does, obsess over himself, and cause his own destruction.

To investigate the connection between Faust and Narcissus, I examine four philosophical novels from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), and Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* (1936); moreover, I focus on the ways these two myths influence the characters in each of these novels. I have selected these books because they are usually addressed

by critics as solely philosophical. Many critics approach these books by looking at the abstract within the texts, treating them as novels of ideas. They focus almost exclusively on the philosophical, abstract behind the characters, often neglecting some of the concrete elements in the stories. I want to consider the characters of these stories from a different perspective. I focus on the representation of the characters' (especially the main characters') bodies. The central importance of the physical body to the myth of Narcissus necessitates this approach. The body of Narcissus, and by extension Faust, is what allows for Narcissus' obsession and his destruction. Any story with this type of character present requires focus on the body. However, the representation of the character's physical body is different in literature than in film. Along with the novels, I consider the film adaptations *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Branagh, 1994), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Lewin, 1945), *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979), and *Mephisto* (Szabó, 1981). By looking at the adaptations, I more closely investigate the strategies of representation between these two mediums, which helps to show different aspects of both Faust and Narcissus. In this way, I analyze the films' approach to the connection between these two myths.

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"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour."
- "Auguries of Innocence," Blake

"I will weep for Thee;
For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like
Another fall of man."
- *Henry V*, Shakespeare

"Will no one tell me what she sings? –
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been, and may be again."
- "The Solitary Reaper," Wordsworth

CHAPTER 1

FAUST AND NARCISSUS

From Kieran Gillen and Jamie McKelvie's *The Wicked + The Divine* (2014 – present) to Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), over the past twenty years, the Faust character continues to appear in many books and films. The twenty-first century is just as populated by this character as earlier centuries were, which shows that culture is still heavily influenced by the strange doctor who supposedly sold his soul to the devil over four hundred years ago. In this dissertation, I consider the character of Faust, but, more importantly, I examine and bring to the fore the layered aspect of his character. In my interpretation, Faust, the character and concept, is related to another mythological figure: Narcissus. Establishing the connection between the myths of Narcissus and Faust in my first chapter, I show how this approach aids in interpreting Faust, especially as this character appears in other stories. In most tales Faust is a Narcissus, which directs certain aspects of his narrative. He will appeal to others with his described physical beauty, enthrall the other characters as Narcissus does, obsess over himself, and cause his own destruction.

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Looking at these two characters and their myths, I use critics who have investigated Faust or Narcissus. For Faust, *Lives of Faust: The Faust Theme in Literature and Music* (2008) and *Faust Adaptations from Marlowe to Aboudoma and Markland* (2016), both edited by Lorna Fitzsimmons, and *Faust: Icon of Modern Culture* (2004) by Osman Durrani, a professor at the University of Kent proved helpful. For the analysis of Narcissus, I relied on the editor Lieve Spaas's collection of essays *Echoes of Narcissus* (2001) and Amy Lawrence's *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1991). These four critics offer beneficial investigation into the ideas I also explore. But they focus only on Faust (for Fitzsimmons or Durrani) and on Narcissus (Spaas and Lawrence); I want to join the two together.

I show how most Fausts are, by the way they are written or performed, examples of Narcissus. This connection helps to expose other aspects of the stories in which Faust appears. I particularly focus on this connection, but I also look at how these stories must include other aspects of the myths (especially the other characters, such as having an Echo to the Narcissus). Below I discuss the two characters and the stories that have defined them over the centuries. Then, I establish the connections between Narcissus and Faust. Finally, I explore the tempters and women in both stories.

Faust

Before looking at the connections between Narcissus and Faust, I establish who Faust is, explore the two most notable works that helped create his cultural mythos (Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* c.1592 and Goethe's *Faust* 1808;1832), and note the ways in which he has continued to transform with the times. Tracing the character of Faust shows that he was most likely a real man who lived during the sixteenth century, although he may have been born in the fifteenth century, as Durrani chronicled in "The Historical Faustus" (19). Durrani discusses the supposed existence of this real Faust[1] and the difficulty of having a clear picture of where this man would have traveled, and who he really was. Durrani explains that "[i]n these turbulent times, the legendary doctor's life cannot be satisfactorily mapped or reconstructed. His[[2]] itinerary is a confusing one that criss-crosses Germany and resembles that of a travelling huckster, fortune-teller and lowly apothecary" (19). The historical Faust sets up a great deal of what Faust stories will contain.

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[1] When referring to Faust the man who might have lived during the sixteenth century, I use the term "historical Faust" as is common in Faust criticism.

[2] Since all historical Fausts are male, Durrani maintains this gender in his discussion of the various versions of the character.

Fitzsimmons's *Lives of Faust: The Faust Theme in Literature and Music* contains the pertinent texts of numerous letters mentioning the supposed real figure of Faust. They span from the early 1500s to the late 1500s and are written by men with diverse professions (Fitzsimmons 22-40). All these letters mention Faust in some way, from someone paying "Doctor Faust, the philosopher" for prognosticating (Fitzsimmons 24) to his name merely coming up in conversation (Fitzsimmons 26). At this point, Faust seems to be a historical figure, but these documents are notoriously unreliable and at times contradictory. In *The English Faust Book* (1994), John Henry Jones describes Faust as "the classic outsider, rootless, a will o' the wisp, passing like Socrates and Jesus Christ, without a personally written legacy to assert his true identity" (3). Jones's description of Faust captures the difficulty of understanding who the historical Faust was. Even by the end of the sixteenth century, Faust was more myth than reality. Although the publication of the *Faust Book* of 1587 lays Faust's entire life bare, this text seems completely divorced from the historical Faust. Instead, this book presents a predictable story about how important saving one's soul is and how sinners will be punished.

It is around this time that Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* was first staged. According to Sylvan Barnet, the play's text was not published until "1604, eleven years after Marlowe's death, and at least twelve years after the first performance of the play" (x). The play was performed at a time when England was still struggling to find peace between different religious ideas, following the turbulent introduction of the Church of England by Henry VIII and the shifting leaders in the sixteenth century. It was a time when religious language was heavily censored in the theater. David Wootton, in "Early Faust Plays and Music" (2005), explains why Marlowe was able to deal with some of the religious ideas in *Doctor Faustus*, connecting it to the

fact that Marlowe's play is about Faust and deals with ideas that unified the Christians of his day rather than pulling them apart: "Marlowe dared stage the story of Faustus because his source was officially approved, and because the story dealt with the relations between human beings and devils. This was perhaps the subject on which there was most general agreement among Christians of all persuasions" (145). Because Marlowe used a story of a sinner tempted by a devil that his contemporaries saw as a true story, his play was not viewed as controversial. This allowed the play to be performed often and permitted Marlowe to get away with more than other writers. He added slight things to the *English Faust Book*, the text he adapted. As Wooten says, "These were small and subtle changes in a script, which for the most part, remained remarkably faithful to its source. But they turned an entirely predictable (if remarkably well-written) story into a tense and thrilling drama, a drama in which orthodox Christian teaching triumphs, but in which Faustus has all the best lines" (155). Marlowe's play still follows the expected set-up of Faust. Since he sells his soul to get what he wants, he has to be dragged to hell, which satisfied the Christian audience of Marlowe's time. Yet, *Doctor Faustus* presented a Faust who was the most compelling part of the story. He shows how fun sinning can be and why one might sell one's soul. Since Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* was so popular, it continued to be performed, and dominated how people thought of the character of Faust. Indeed, most people would say Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is still the preeminent Faust story written in the English language.

The other most notable Faust story, Goethe's *Faust* changed many aspects of the traditional tale. Goethe's work breaks away from the other tellings by boldly ignoring the mere didacticism of the story. As much as Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* undercut the message of the Christian teaching, the ending of the play still prioritizes the Christian elements. Goethe's *Faust*

moves away from this idea completely, presenting an audacious idea of who Faust is. As Durrani writes, "Faust needed to outgrow his role as a warning to Christians if he was to become something more than a historical oddity of severely restricted appeal" (125). This is what Goethe does for Faust. He breaks him free of the Christian morality tale and gives him a new life and message. Part of what makes Goethe's *Faust* so compelling is its complexity and the many different interpretations this play, especially *Faust Part Two* engenders. Durrani discusses "the endless debates" that Goethe's play produces (152). This complexity elevates the character of Faust.

One of the main changes to society's view of Faust comes from the addition of Gretchen, a new figure, which after Goethe continues to be tied to the story. She is the young, beautiful, innocent woman whom Faust seduces. His interaction with Gretchen drastically changes her life and ultimately leads to her death. In *Faust: Icon of Modern Culture*, Osman Durrani writes about the importance of Goethe adding Gretchen to the Faust story. From Durrani's perspective this is "[t]he most radical innovation of all" (109). Durrani notes Faust's seeming ignorance of class as the element that situates Goethe's *Faust* in the time it was written (109). One of the other reasons Durrani sees this as such a pivotal change is the treatment of Gretchen: "Rarely has a literary female revealed the depth of her innermost feelings with such intensity" (113). Gretchen, as a character, carves out a special place for portrayals of women in literature. Goethe's addition of Gretchen has become ubiquitous in the myth of Faust.

Although the most notable Faust stories are Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*, many others exist. People created ballads and songs based on the *Faust Book* of 1587, which made their way into popular singing for over a hundred years (for an example of one such

ballad, "The Just Judgment of God Shew'd upon Dr. John Faustus" see Fitzsimmons 157). In the eighteenth century, the story of Faust, particularly one based on Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* became a puppet play (Berghahn 160). Beyond Goethe's *Faust*, other Faust stories premiered in the nineteenth century. One of the most memorable is Heinrich Heine's *Der Doktor Faust* (1851), in which the devil is depicted as a woman: Mephistophela. The Faust story in music became even more present in the nineteenth century with at least two prominent opera adaptations, Gounod's *Faust* (1859) and Boito's *Mefistofele* (1868). These few examples of the overwhelming presence of the Faust story in popular culture show how this character dominated the cultural mind.

Arnd Bohm's dissection of D.J. Enright's books about Faust helps to illuminate how the many different Faust stories influence each other. He acknowledges that, in many ways, the lesser Faustian stories are more tangential to the overall analysis and understanding of Faust (especially when considering writers like Marlowe, Goethe, and Thomas Mann), but he still wants to call attention to Enright's work and its connection to Faust as a whole (103-106). This interest is useful so far as it opens up the discussion about Faust and his character's relationship to other stories, even stories overtly connected with him. Faust is ultimately transformed by the different depictions, but the society that creates the variety of different Fausts is also placed under the microscope.

As the story of Faust developed and transformed over the years, some of its aspects were dropped, while some were reintroduced. One of the most notable focus on the damnation of Faust. In the older versions of the story, Faust is always dragged to hell, usually with great fanfare and celebration. However, that began to change. Klaus L. Berghahn writes about this

shifting aspect of Faust in "Transformations of the Faust Theme," where he looks at Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's interpretation of Faust. In this version, Faust still has his fatal flaw, "Faust's desire for knowledge" (161), but as Berghahn describes, Lessing cannot bring himself to send Faust to hell. Lessing instead softens the ending, even as he struggles with how it connects with the story he has created. Berghahn relates how the "exposition and ending clearly conflict with each other; the result of Faust's sole flaw, which, of necessity, must lead to his tragic downfall, can be eliminated only by a trick: Faust merely dreamt his excesses (of the missing middle part) and the Devil is cheated out of his work. What the devils carry away is just a 'phantom' of Faust" (161). Lessing is not going to damn his Faust to hell, but he still sees that some punishment must be carried out. This idea is taken to a different conclusion in Goethe's *Faust*, in which Faust is not condemned to hell, but he is also not able to continue existing on earth. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Faust is dragged to a literal hell less and less often. The punishment that Faust receives at the end of his story becomes sometimes more complex or simply death. Even with this change of punishment, Faust still must be punished.

The punishment remaining present seems carried on into the different centuries' tellings of Faust. One notable exception to this rule of the necessity of punishment is Goethe's *Faust*. The break from the tradition of dragging Faust to hell highlights how unique Goethe's story is. Instead of being damned, God ultimately forgives Faust. This incredibly important change might suggest that not all Faust stories must end in punishment. However, as time has passed and the stories have grown into their own reality, the requirement for giving Faust his just desserts remains present. Stories where Faust escapes this punishment are the exception, which shows a different response to the Faustian tale, which is not the focus of this dissertation. Instead, I am

interested in the way the myth has grown to represent the culture's idea of Faust, which is a Faust who must be punished.

Over the hundreds of years Faust has been a figure in culture, he has become less a singular person and more an amalgamation of the different characters. Of course, each individual Faust has his own personality and has a nuanced difference from any other Faust. Even so, the myth of Faust has coalesced into having some unified qualities. The surfeit of stories about Faust creates a sprawling mass of throbbing myths that wriggles and entangles, making the myth near impossible to pin down. The different tellings take on the proverbial life of their own and propagate in strange, nigh untraceable ways. Lauren Fitzsimmons writes about this sprawling aspect at the end of her introduction to *Faust Adaptations from Marlow to Aboudoma and Markland*:

> This book thus traverses over four hundred years of Faust adaptations, ranging from the early modern tragedy by Marlowe, which exerted a significant influence in the adaptation history of the Faust legend in Europe and many other cultures around the world, to the present. Each adaptation is a distinctive expression of key facets of the period and culture in which it was created. In each, the figure of the unbound, adapted, Faust enables insights into cultural differences but also binding commonalities. (9)

These myths prove overwhelmingly powerful in what they have to say about the character of Faust and the culture that produced him. In a story that includes a Faust, the character's most prominent characteristic is that he is insatiable. This quality can take various forms, but it is most often connected to the older versions of the story in which Faust is continuously seeking more knowledge. Faust's unquenchable desire for more always leads him into trouble. The devil,

Mephistopheles, shows up to tempt Faust into signing his soul away for power, money, control, knowledge, and more. Since Goethe's *Faust* has forever changed the way the story is presented, Goethe's addition of Gretchen has found its way into the collective idea of the story. Faust is a man who sells his soul, but a woman will also be destroyed because of her connection to Faust. Finally, Faust must be held accountable for his ravenous yearning, selling of his soul, and selfish actions. He is expected to be dragged to hell, albeit not necessarily the hell of the sixteenth century. Now, the end of Faust's story will be his destruction. This necessary conclusion proves to be part of what links Faust so intrinsically with Narcissus, which is why I now want to explore the myth of Narcissus.

Narcissus

A handsome young man walks through the forest, passing a perfectly still pond. He chances to catch his reflection winking back at him. Entranced, he stops and stares into the depths of his own enthralling eyes. He cannot look away, and silently the tragic nymph Echo watches, wishing she could have him. Both get to stare at what they love, but they are left unsatisfied. They embody the paradox of love that leads to destruction. That is Narcissus' story. He sees himself in a still pond and cannot help but look. Once he sees his own beauty, all is lost for him.

Narcissus represents a story that appears again and again, much like the perennial flowering of the white blossom that bloomed from his blood. This myth is more than just the simple story, as emphasized by Lieve Spaas, editor of *Echoes of Narcissus*: "Narcissus, one of the most poignant mythical characters from antiquity, posits, in his tragic story of self-love, two

profound philosophical questions: that of the distinction between illusion and reality and that between self and other. In so doing, he raises fundamental issues of knowledge and identity" (1). This myth is known for its base of a youth seeing himself in a still pond and becoming taken with his own appearance. However, other characters are present in the myth as well. One such character is Teiresias, who prophesied "that Narcissus would enjoy a long life only if he never knew himself or saw his own reflection" (Bierlein 168). Also present, Echo, a nymph, loves Narcissus even in her silence. It is a myth that has become even more entrenched in society because of Freud and his coining of the term "narcissism" (Bierlein 283).

Even though the character of Narcissus dates earlier than Ovid, most people aware of the story are familiar with his retelling, which includes the tragic story of Echo. According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (c. 8 AD), Narcissus grows up with his mother protecting him from catching a glimpse of himself. However, one day while walking in the forest, he sees a still pond reflecting his image and immediately is struck by his own beauty. He pines for the handsome youth in the water that he cannot touch, and eventually allows himself to waste away and die. The story appears quite simple.

However, the essays included in *Echoes of Narcissus* are interested in highlighting the myth's complexity and application. This complexity is important to notice because when looking at Ovid's retelling, or any of the other mythic tellings of Narcissus, it could be easy to dismiss this story. It is short. There are only a few characters, and at first glance, it seems straightforward. Nevertheless, the myth does have some complexities that provide insight into human life. Max Andréoli, in "Narcissus and his Double," explores the reality of Narcissus falling in love with his reflection: "Narcissus is thus always accompanied by his double, which

raises the question of what kind of relationship develops between the two facets of this complex character, and also of why so many authors, in so many fields have been fascinated by this paradoxical pair, which are both two and one" (14). Narcissus needs to see himself to fall in love. As soon as he glimpses his reflection in the still water, Narcissus is caught. There is only ever one person present in the story, but Narcissus sees two.

Like Faust, Narcissus is not tied to a particular telling. Narcissus is an amalgamation of different stories and ways to read the myth. However, a few key aspects of the myth must be present. A Narcissus story must have a character in love with himself. He needs something that prompts the fall, like the mirror reflection of the still pond. This reflection will spell Narcissus' doom. Within the story of Ovid, Echo is a vital character. She is needed to witness Narcissus' beauty and fall in love with him. Because she has been cursed by Hera for trying to distract Hera from discovering Zeus with another nymph, Echo is incapable of talking to the man she loves. She must exist in silence, unless repeating another's words. Finally, the story of Narcissus has to end with Narcissus' self-destruction, which is one of the key connections to the character of Faust.

The Connections between Narcissus and Faust

Having considered both Faust and Narcissus, I bring these myths together as a concept that works in tandem. While not all Narcissuses are Fausts, I believe that most Fausts are Narcissuses. Since myths are an integral part of culture, they bleed into different aspects of culture, including other myths, legends, and stories. As described in *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2005), Julie Sanders' notion of the mythos as "archetypal texts, ripe for

appropriation and re-vision" (120) makes an argument for reading texts written in the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries as re-imaginings of certain myths, which also connects to Kristeva's concept of intertextuality (36-63). A text can never merely be a text on its own. As María Jesús Martínez Alfaro describes in "Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept" (1996), "There are always other words in a word, other texts in a text. The concept of intertextuality requires, therefore, that we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures" (268). One way to approach intertextuality is to select a certain aspect to trace, which allows the reading to be manageable instead of a seemingly infinite number of ways to approach something.

Narcissus and Faust work in this way, as these characters help provide illumination to the story that encompasses both. When considering the two figures together, I use the term Narcissus-Faust. The four narratives I focus show how seeing them as Narcissus-Faust stories opens them to some key interpretations. In addition, I want to make clear that I do not want to prioritize the novel over the film or vice versa. Rather, I am interested in the intersection of the two and in the interpretation and understanding that intersection brings. The four texts range from some of the most well-known philosophical novels (Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890) to the more obscure (Mann's *Mephisto*, 1936). I selected these texts for when they were written (the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and how they exemplify the Narcissus-Faust character.

Both the original Narcissus and Faust myths are re-read and remembered, but their contemporary importance especially derives from new incarnations. Over the past two hundred

years, these characters have been used again and again, sometimes explicitly, but usually implicitly. They are linked to the characters of novels especially through a kind of literary ancestry, which Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* describes:

> Yet one had ancestors in literature, as well as in one's own race, nearer perhaps in type and temperament, many of them, and certainly with an influence of which one was more absolutely conscious. There were times when it appeared to Dorian Gray that the whole of history was merely the record of his own life, not as he had lived it in act and circumstance, but as his imagination had created it for him, as it had been in his brain and in his passions. He felt that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvelous, and evil so full of subtlety. It seemed to him that in some mysterious way their lives had been his own. (Wilde 162-3)

The narrator is discussing, in part, how Dorian sees himself in the books he reads, especially the yellow book. He is a character in a novel that the narrator overtly connects to other characters in other novels. Dorian never felt close to his family, and he especially hated his grandfather who raised him. This separation between Dorian and his family leads to Dorian identifying more with the main character in the yellow book than with his family. This feeling that Dorian has for a mere character in a novel applies to the other characters I study in my later chapters. Victor Frankenstein, from *Frankenstein*, Dorian Gray from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Kurtz from *Heart of Darkness*, and Hendrik Höfgen from *Mephisto* all share this quality. They are less connected with their families than with other literary characters. I show how they are most intimately connected to Narcissus and Faust.

Using this idea of literary ancestors, as suggested by Oscar Wilde, I make the connection between Narcissus and Faust. Having explored both myths that surround Narcissus and Faust, I want to show how they relate to each other and why this relationship matters. The tragic ending of the Faust myth, in almost all except Goethe, is closely related to Narcissus' ending. While Narcissus was never dragged to hell, the story does not end happily either. Instead, after Narcissus falls in love with himself, drawn by his beauty to the water, he either embraces the water, falling in and drowning, or he wastes away, dying, because he cannot look away from his own reflection in the water. Narcissus' love of his own form draws attention to the vital focus on the representation of the physical bodies of the Narcissus-Faust characters. That Narcissus serves as the agent of his own death forms an essential part of his story, which connects to Faust. Faust *is* the one who signs his soul away to a devil, and he *is* the one whose decisions lead to his tragic end.

Both Narcissus and Faust are connected in the preeminence they possess in connection to some aspect of their lives: for Narcissus, his overwhelming beauty. In fact, when first mentioning Narcissus, Ovid highlights both his beauty and his youth: "This loveliest of nymphs gave birth at full term to a child whom, even then, one could fall in love with, called Narcissus" (59). As soon as Narcissus is born, one would, and could, fall in love with him even as such a young person. His mother's deep concern with how lovely he is drives her to take him to a prophet for his fortune and future to be told. Faust shows a connection with this aspect of

Narcissus. In some versions of Faust, not necessarily handsome or notably good looking,[3] Faust does possess a deep drive to gain more knowledge:

> O, what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honor, of omnipotence
> Is promised to the studious artisan!
> All things that move between the quiet poles
> Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings
> Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
> Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds,
> But his dominion that exceeds in this
> Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man. (Marlowe1.1. 54-62)

This deep desire to gain more knowledge and, therefore, have great control over people is an aspect of himself that dominates all others.

Probably the most well-known aspect of the Narcissus myth is that he falls in love with himself. As described in the story, "Flat on the ground, [Narcissus] contemplates two stars, his eyes, and his hair, fit for Bacchus, fit for Apollo, his youthful cheeks and ivory neck, the beauty of his face, the rose-flush mingled in the whiteness of snow, admiring everything for which he is himself admired" (Ovid 60). He does finally experience what all the people who saw him before did; he sees his own loveliness. This aspect is also present in the different retellings of Faust, as seen in both Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*. Although he does not fall in love

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[3] Although beauty is not a key aspect of Faust's character, the four novels' Fausts I am looking at (*Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Mephisto*) are all portrayed as handsome and desirable.

with his own physical beauty, never daring to look away from his reflection, Faust reveals a deep capacity for self-love. It is out of self-love that almost every one of his decisions are made. He does not care if something is good for another, as Gretchen's story represents most effectively. Faust simply wants whatever he wants, admiring himself all throughout the story.

Related to their self-love, both Narcissus and Faust have a great capacity for self-deception. For a large part of Narcissus' story, he deceives himself without even realizing it. He falls in love with his stunningly attractive reflection in the still pond and finds that he does not want to leave the handsome youth, not recognizing that it is himself: "Unknowingly he desires himself, and the one who praises is himself praised, and, while he courts, is courted, so that, equally, he inflames and burns" (Ovid 60). As he attempts to flirt with and seduce the youth he sees in the water, his reflection mimics his actions. Everything he does is for his own benefit. For a time he thinks he is gaining ground with the enchanting man in the water, but he is simply enamored with his own reflection.

Faust, as seen in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust,* deceives himself in a similar way. T.K. Seung describes this in *Cultural Thematics: The Formation of the Faustian Ethos* (1976). He claims that Faust has a "resolute will to control nature, his fellow human beings, and his own destiny" (258), and, for a time, Faust believes that this is exactly what he does. With aid from Mephistopheles, Faust is able to do what he wants with nothing hindering him. This gives him the impression that he is all-powerful and that his power will continue to live within him without end. Although he signs away his eternal life after death, he treats the life he lives as it would last forever. He is confident in his own ability to control and manipulate the environment so that he will always get the outcome he wants. However, in Goethe's *Faust* in

particular, he is forced to confront his own limitations. In *Faust: Part One,* he cannot save Gretchen, even though he has assured himself that he would. Narcissus and Faust both self-deceive throughout their stories.

The connection between Faust being Narcissus is stronger when the story is not a direct adaptation or re-telling of the old Faust myth. Each time the story is retold in a drastically different way, with the character not named Faust but nevertheless performing Faustian choices and desires, this character is a Narcissus. He allures others, loves himself deeply, and ends up being the reason for his own death. Victor from *Frankenstein*, Dorian from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Kurtz from *Heart of Darkness*, and Hendrik from *Mephisto* all follow the same pattern as Narcissus and Faust, making each of these men examples of Narcissus-Faust characters.

The Tempters in Narcissus' and Faust's stories

One of the key characters in Faust's story is the demon that comes along to tempt Faust: Mephistopheles. He can be an almost charming, humorous sprite (à la Puck or Robin Goodfellow), but there is always something dangerous about him. Even if for nothing else, he gets someone to sign the entirety of eternal life away. Durrani describes this in *Faust: Icon of Modern Culture*, "A pact is promptly struck between them. Its formal conditions are based on the principle of reciprocity: Mephostophilis [*sic*] will serve Faustus for twenty-four years precisely, and thereafter the situation will be reversed: Faustus voluntarily commits himself to serving the devil for all eternity. The imbalance of the time-scale is enough to signal the reader that it is a monstrously unequal deal" (15). In most of these stories, Mephistopheles represents the

quintessential tempter because he is the one who comes when summoned by Faust and who gets Faust to sign the contract to cede his soul.

Since he is the being that will lead Faust astray, he is akin to what will ultimately lead Narcissus to his demise: a reflection. According to the Roman version of the myth, as given by Ovid, Narcissus' mother sought the advice of Tiresias and was told that Narcissus would live a long life "'[i]f he does not discover himself'" (59). By the end of the myth, it is not that Narcissus discover himself in an abstract, philosophical way. He discovers himself by literally seeing his own reflection. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid describes this moment, "While he desires to quench his thirst, a different thirst is created. While he drinks he is seized by the vision of his reflected form. He loves a bodiless dream. He thinks that a body, that is only a shadow [*sic*]. He is astonished by himself, and hangs there motionless, with a fixed expression, like a statue carved from Parian marble" (60). Because of seeing his reflection in the mirrored surface of the still pond, Narcissus is trapped and incapable of turning away from this vision. What is worse is that he realizes the reflection is something that will not allow him to engage with the object of his own desire: "How often he gave his lips in vain to the deceptive pool, how often, trying to embrace the neck he could see, he plunged his arms into the water, but could not catch himself within them! What he has seen he does not understand, but what he sees he is on fire for, and the same error both seduces and deceives his eyes" (Ovid 61). At this point in the story, Narcissus is taken with the vision of himself, but he does not yet recognize that it *is* himself. When he does become cognizant of the fact that he loves his own image, he is consumed with sorrow, knowing he will never really be able to enjoy himself. Since he has seen himself, he is forever imprisoned by his own desire.

In both the Faust and the Narcissus myths, however, these elements are only a part of the Mirror-Mephistopheles.[4] For Narcissus-Faust stories written after the turn of the eighteenth century, the real Mirror-Mephistopheles lies in the character, the Narcissus-Faust, himself. Aspects of this idea clearly exist even in the older versions of the tale. It seems to be the reflection in the Narcissus myth, just as it seems to be Mephistopheles in Faust, but ultimately Narcissus' and Faust's own desires lead to their destruction. In the Roman version of Narcissus' tale, "He spoke and returned madly to the same reflection, and his tears stirred the water, and the image became obscured in the rippling pool" (Ovid 61). He cannot let himself leave the love that has been stirred in him. Even as he knows it is himself and that the desire can lead to no true fulfillment, Narcissus allows his overwhelming desire for himself to be what controls him. In the same way, Faust is the one who leads himself to his own demise. Most clearly, he is the one who has the insatiable desire to learn and accrue more and more knowledge, which leads him to the summoning of Mephistopheles. Beyond even that, Faust is not tricked into signing his soul away, he makes the agreement freely. Faust is ultimately his own tempter, but he also ends up tempting others. Just as Narcissus seduced those around him, Faust does the same to the women in his life.

Women and Narcissus-Faust

When looking at a Narcissus or Faust story, or especially a Narcissus-Faust story, women in the story should not be ignored. Since Faust is male, both as a historical figure and in the

[4] To refer to the unification of the two tempters in the Narcissus myth, the reflection, and in the Faust myth, Mephistopheles, I use the term Mirror-Mephistopheles. I investigate the different ways the tempters interact, and, more important, how they both point to the fact that in Narcissus-Faust retellings, most especially from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the tempter as an outside force is a feint. The true person tempting the Narcissus-Faust is himself.

earliest tellings of this story, he is male in most of the retellings, yet it is more than just about Faust being a man. Rarely, if ever, are women in literature shown as valuable enough for a devil to make a bargain with them. Neither are women in literature usually portrayed as desperately seeking more knowledge. In Narcissus-Faust stories, the women are more often cast in the role of Echo-Gretchen.[5] Both of these female characters, especially in Narcissus-Faust stories, not only offer important lessons about the female characters in the stories, but about women's position in society as a whole.

From the Narcissus myth, Echo represents this idea well. When Ovid first speaks about Echo, he characterizes her in this way: "she of the echoing voice, who cannot be silent when others have spoken, nor learn how to speak first herself" (61). This idea connects painfully and accurately to the ways in which women have been treated by society. Mary Eagleton opens her *Feminist Literary Theory* (1996) with the subheading "*Breaking the Silence*" (1). Amy Lawrence uses this conceit throughout her book *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema*. Her first chapter, subtitled "The 'Problem' of the Speaking Woman," investigates the prioritization of the male voice and literal silencing of the female voice in early recordings (9-32). What happens to Echo is what has happened to women for thousands of years: they are cast as beings who do not speak for themselves but can only echo another person's words.

Along with Echo, Gretchen, first introduced in Goethe's *Faust*, also offers an interesting way to approach the female characters. Gretchen is a character that is portrayed as quite naïve.

[5] I use the term Narcissus-Faust for the male character and Mirror-Mephistopheles for the tempter. In addition, I use the term Echo-Gretchen to be the reflection of the female characters in the Narcissus-Faust stories.

She is seduced by Faust and actually ends up accidentally killing her mother just because Faust wanted to spend some time alone with her. Also, by the conclusion of the story, Gretchen dies. Echo receives the same ending, as depicted in *Metamorphoses*: "she wanders in the woods and hides her face in shame among the leaves . . . But still her love endures, increased by the sadness of rejection . . . Only her bones and the sound of her voice are left. Her voice remains, her bones, they say, were changed to shapes of stone. She hides in the woods, no longer to be seen on the hills, but to be heard by everyone. It is sound that lives in her" (Ovid 63). Echo embodies a literal silence. She can only ever echo back what someone has said. She stares longingly at the man she loves, but she is incapable of truly connecting to him. Echo's tale of languishing silence is also like Gretchen, who is completely driven by her Faust, leading to her death. If Gretchen was not seduced by Faust, she would still be alive and, presumably, flourishing. But Gretchen did meet Faust and was tempted by him. Durrani writes, "After this, we return to [Gretchen] in a scene that is both harrowingly tragic and conciliatory; tragic in that her reward for loving Faust is humiliation and death" (122). This tragic conclusion will always be the end of her story as she allows herself to be conquered and manipulated.

Just as looking at Narcissus-Faust is important to interpreting the character in a retelling, so too is looking for Echo-Gretchen. Not only does this approach create space and validate the importance of the female characters that are often neglected or marginalized in *Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Mephisto*, but it also teaches the readers and reminds them about how society, in general, deals with women. Expecting women to be beautiful, as a kind of gift to others, and then punishing them for their supposed vanity is just one aspect that is highlighted by examining Echo-Gretchen. Just after a year in which women were

supposedly liberated to speak out against sexual abuse they have suffered (#Metoo), we can still see how far-reaching the Echo treatment of women is. Women are expected to be silent, not to talk, unless they are echoing what a man (their man) has already said (Lawrence 9-32).

Having discussed Narcissus and Faust and the connections that I pursue in the four philosophical novels, the next chapter will lay the foundation for the other important component in this study. Beyond the four novels, I am also looking at an adaptation, which requires a general comment on adaptation as a whole. The next chapter also explores the diverse ways these mediums provide representations of the bodies of the different characters and how the focus on the representation of the physical connects with both the Narcissus and the Faust myths.

CHAPTER 2

ADAPTATIONS AND NARCISSUS-FAUST

In American culture today, someone is likely to first encounter all four narratives, *Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Mephisto*, not by reading but by viewing. This means that considering the process of adaptations and how people interpret them will be vital. To begin, George Bluestone's *Novels into Film* (1957), one of the most important and influential books for adaptation studies, takes a formalist approach to the problem of how adaptation studies will develop. His book serves as "the earliest Anglo-American academic monograph on literature and film" (Aragay 12), so for many it sets both the standard and the underlying premise on which all book and film criticism would be based. Bluestone's *Novels into Film* indicated that the book (original) will always be more sophisticated than the film (adaptation). Although this idea is not explicitly stated, it pervades his argument in *Novels into Film*. Bluestone does establish the idea that "the filmed novel, in spite of certain resemblances, will inevitably become a different artistic entity from the novel on which it is based" (64). Even so, he holds the film back by linking the filmmaker with a "destroyer" (62) and stating that novels will always be more complex than films (7). Joy Gould Boyum says of Bluestone's book, "Implicit throughout his discussion is the crucial assumption that words, rather than images, make for the superior medium" (9). Since Bluestone did write an important book for adaptation studies, his conclusions are difficult to neglect. He traps his reader in a seemingly free intellectual space where the film is its own creation, separate from the previous work, but this free space is, in actuality, binding, as he continuously pulls from the literary text to pigeonhole the film. He attempts case-studies about film adaptations that are unbound by the

source material, as if the films are new pieces of art, but he repeatedly measures the films in the context of authorial intent and the original work.

There can be no doubt, his ideas followed adaptation studies in their movement forward. They are subtle and insidious. Even as critics try to break away from them, they are always pulled back. Thomas Leitch, in "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory" (2003), discusses how, for the past fifty years, critics have found it difficult to move away from attempting to postulate on the original. Even when critics say they are not concerned with this concept, they seem to always end up writing about it (104-119). Leitch looks at several critics who themselves claim to be going against Bluestone, but Leitch shows how, in many ways, they shore up Bluestone's argument.

Part of the difficulty in moving away from notions of fidelity is that, colloquially or idiomatically, fidelity seems to be of vital importance to the general movie-going audience. Perhaps mainly controlled by the non-academic public, whenever a film based on a widely known book comes out, especially when the film is marketed from this point of view, the majority of the audience is interested in how the two forms compare. They want to assert what they liked in the movie juxtaposed to what they liked in the book; what they think worked; what they think did not; what they were expecting and what the filmmakers failed to deliver. David L. Kranz and Nancy C. Mellerski also explore this idea in their Introduction to *In/Fidelity: Essays on Film Adaptation* (2008). They claim that "there's both big money and psychological satisfaction in film adaptation, and fidelity is no small part of the equation" (2). Thus, some films will be created merely because they fulfill either the studio's need for money or the audience's need for satisfaction, or both.

The pervasiveness of the idea of fidelity in adaptation, linked to the dominating idea that literature is more valuable than film, continues to bog down the field of adaptation studies. As Geoffrey Wagner, in his book *The Novel and the Cinema* (1975), says: it "is still trapped by an unspoken reliance on the fidelity criterion and a concomitant (formalist) focus on the literary source / filmed adaptation binary pair, to the exclusion of intertextual and contextual factors" (16). The fidelity focus of so many critics limits the ability to fully study and understand adaptation texts. Wagner's lens does not allow the important plurality to be studied.

In this same way, Linda Costanzo Cahir's approach to studying adaptation limits itself. Although she sometimes offers helpful insight and a good approach for teaching adaptation, early in her book *Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches* (2006), she asserts that it is better to think of literature into film not as adaptation but translation (14). Although this comparison is not original, it is not necessarily a bad comparison. Rather it is her formalized and prescriptive approach that proves troublesome, forcing specific ideas onto her reader. This is best seen in her aesthetic rubric she uses to critique films:

> 1. The film must communicate definite ideas concerning the *integral* meaning and value of the literary text, as the filmmakers interpret it.
>
> 2. The film must exhibit a collaboration of filmmaking skills (the details of which are provided in Chapter II).
>
> 3. The film must demonstrate an audacity to create work that stands as a world apart, that exploits literature in such a way that a self-reliant, but related, aesthetic offspring is born.
>
> 4. The film cannot be so self-governing as to be completely independent of or antithetical to the source material. (263)

These ideas are not necessarily detrimental, but Cahir's extreme insistence that they must exist is problematic.

As much as adaptation studies has been consumed with questions of origination and fidelity, many critics have attempted to open up a space to study films apart from these notions. As Leitch argues, oftentimes the critics will be pulled back into forced binaries, prioritization of the book / literature over the film, and interest in what is original even as they proclaim that these things no longer hold any attention for them. One of the early defenders of cinema as art, André Bazin, in "In Defense of Mixed Cinema," discusses how the film and the novel work together to become a "free-standing" mythology. Throughout *What Is Cinema?* (1967), Bazin continuously fights the notion that prose should be prioritized over film. Indeed, the idea of forcing a prioritization, even of silent over talking movies, seems to dissatisfy Bazin (21). Linked with the concept of not forcing a ranking of one better than another, especially simply based on which one came out first, is Bazin's understanding of stories that are often called great literature. He suggests that parts of some works, like *Les Misérables* and *The Three Musketeers*, are no longer bound to the original novel. Bazin says, "Javert or D'Artagnan have become part of a mythology existing outside of the novels. They enjoy in some measure an autonomous existence of which the original works are no longer anything more than an accidental and almost superfluous manifestation" (53). Because these stories have become so enmeshed in culture, they are not simply bound to the original book or their moment of inception. That would, in many ways, defeat what they offer to culture. Characters, ideas, worlds, and stories can become part of a joined mythos where forcing a classification of which is better, the film or the book, misses the point altogether. That is not the question to be asked, especially as a generalized concept forced

on the adaptation. Too easily are the great works of directors dismissed. These directors might not have produced a faithful adaptation, but they might have achieved a supremely successful film (as with Renoir 66-67). This approach also allows for enjoying how the new story adds to the previously formed one, or how it uncovers an ur-story that might lead to probing criticism. Bazin's ideas are often cited or alluded to, but most critics do not seem to take him at his word.

For example, Morris Beja's *Film & Literature: An Introduction* (1979), a book that attempts to act as a blueprint for students approaching film and literature, tries to discourage Bluestone's idea, and will ultimately pull down the film in favor of the original text. Beja's focus on narration allows for some potentially powerful criticism, particularly that which pertains to how stories are narrated and what all that narration engenders. However, when discussing adaptations (80-88), he cannot avoid asking questions of how closely a film must adhere to its antecedent; and he concludes with the idea that a film *must* embody the ambiguous spirit of the original. This aspect of adaptation studies is precisely the problem for Christopher Orr: "Fidelity criticism . . . 'impoverishes the film's intertextuality' by reducing it to 'a single pre-text' (i.e. the literary source) while ignoring other pre-texts and codes (cinematic, cultural) that contribute to making 'the filmic text intelligible'" (19). Orr's conception of intertextuality and film criticism embodies a desire to break the film away from mere similarity with the "original." For a film to be studied in the best way, the critic must endeavor to see or search out the multiplicity of the pre-texts, not a single, solitary one.

To some extent, Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film: An Introduction to Theory of Adaptation* (1996) attempts something similar. He wants to free adaptation studies from being the slave to fidelity because he sees that this focus is limiting and no longer fits with how books

are read: "Fidelity criticism depends on a notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct 'meaning' which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with" (8). He allows his reader to see that focusing on fidelity is not the right way to approach adaptation studies. At the same time, he forces some odd constraints of his own that limits adaptation studies too much. For example, at one point he suggests that it is vital to the study of film adaptations that the critic approaches the film and the book to see what is equitable from the source to the film and what has been changed. He wants the critic to avoid "unproductive impressionism that undermines so much of the writing about adaptation" (200). This idea is what ends his conclusion's section on "Theory and adaptation," which is helpful (critics should be called to a high standard and not write merely based off impressions) but also limits the film in a very real, specific way to how it relates to the source. He encourages scene by scene breakdowns, which typically leads to a mere binary discussion of the "original" and the "new."

Prior to McFarlane's text, Dudley Andrew anticipates what *Novel to Film* will assert. In "Adaptation," he provides a way to approach adaptation through distinct words like "borrowing," "intersecting," and "transforming" (30). Although these ideas help in discussing differing levels of adaptation, Andrew makes more insightful observations about adaptation: "In other words, no filmmaker and no film (at least in the representational mode) responds immediately to reality itself or to its own inner vision. Every representational film adapts a prior conception. . . Adaptation delimits representation by insisting on the cultural status of the model, on its existence in the mode of the text or the already textualized" (29). Like how people describe memory, a person never truly remembers the event itself. They only remember the last time it

was remembered. In fact, adaptation is a palimpsestic and textured moment, and any text created now deals with this palimpsest. It is inescapable. As Sanders says, "Genette has written at length about the 'palimpsestuous nature of texts', observing that 'Any text is a hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that it imitates or transforms" (12). Yet Sanders does not want her readers to fear this inescapable reality. Instead, she wants them to use it. A critic can detail what is part of the palimpsest, marking, decoding, and elucidating what has been layered to make up a story, but this is never an exhaustive process. Ambiguity can never be fully eradicated, nor should it be.

This is an idea touched on by Kamilla Elliott. Although she sees herself as indebted to Bluestone, as seen in her dedication of *Rethinking the Novel / Film Debate* (2003), much of her ideas and approaches are focused on treating the adaptation as its own valid piece of art. In her book, Elliott uses Lewis Carroll as a helpful key to better understanding adaptation, particularly connected with the concept of mirrors: "looking glass figures point to a reciprocally transformative model of adaptation, in which the film is not translation or copy, but rather metamorphoses the novel and is, in turn, metamorphosed by it" (229). This approach is similar to the ways in which intertextuality works. The story, text, and idea are traced both backwards in time and forwards in time, continually changing. Similarly, "Adaptation under such a model is neither translation nor interpretation, neither incarnation nor deconstruction: rather it is mutual and reciprocal inverse transformation that nevertheless restores neither to its original place" (Elliott 229). The book changes and is changed by the movie, which changes and is changed by the book. This creates a cyclical interplay that continues, as it ought, to be studied by the critic to understand adaptation best.

To some extent, what Orr, Bazin, Elliott, and the rest of the critics suggest can be best visualized in how John C. Tibbetts opens *The Pedagogy of Adaptation*: "'[Man] has always cared more for truth than for consistency,' wrote G.K. Chesterton. 'If he saw two truths that seemed to contradict each other, he would take the two truths and the contradiction along with them.' This 'stereoscopic' sight, Chesterton continues, 'permits us to see all the better for that'" (vii). Adaptation studies do not require a simplified approach or an easy way to understand a text. Rather, a difficult, challenging approach is essential. The readers / viewers must hold both texts in their minds simultaneously, inviting both truths and the contradiction into the idea's conception. Anything less would be without purpose or would defeat what can, and should, be achieved. Elliott ends her book with an allusion to a Lewis Carroll riddle, which he wrote without the intention of providing a solution (241-244). Carroll provides one, but the point is not that a solution can be arrived at (even if the solution is clever and works on many levels), but that the riddle was created without a solution in mind, and that does not lessen the riddle as a riddle.

Maybe the most useful idea in correlation to adaptation studies is intertexuality. This word is "Julia Kristeva's term for the permutation of texts by utterances and semiotic signifiers deriving from other texts (1980). Now the term is used more widely to refer to the relationship between literary texts and other texts or cultural references" (Sanders 162). To put it another way, Lunsford and Glenn claim that "intertexuality denotes the great conversation among texts, the way texts refer or allude to one another, build on or parody one another, revolve around one another" (458). Practically applied, *Young Frankenstein* (Brooks, 1974) is an adaptation of *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931), which is an adaptation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which is an

adaptation of the myth of Prometheus, which is an adaptation of the myth of the lost paradise. As soon as it seems as if all the connections have been identified, more become apparent.

One of the films that I use in the coming chapters captures these ideas: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Lewin, 1945). They add something that works to strengthen the fidelity of the movie to the novel. In the mise-en-scéne throughout the film, Lewin carefully integrates *The Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, especially at some key moments in the story. This addition connects with Wilde's own love of the poem and the different ideas spawned by the poem's translation into English. It is this very invitation to add, subtract, and create that provides the power of adaptation. This power is not to be avoided, but embraced as it adds to the plurality of meaning that texts can achieve. I will consider each of these novels, *Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Mephisto*, and films, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *Mephisto*, under the lens of Narcissus-Faust legend. Besides the fact that film adaptations are often the only way culture engages with these stories, they also need to be considered because of the way they represent the body, which is always important to Narcissus-Faust stories.

How the Body and Appearance are Represented in Novels

Germane to any Narcissus or Faust story, critics must consider the representation of the body of Narcissus and Faust. In many ways, Narcissus' body *is* his story. His beauty dominates the tale, and by the end, his physical self must waste away. The physical body serves an important role in the Faust legend. He barters his immaterial soul away for the satisfaction of his present material self. This forces the story to deal with discussing the body of Faust. Because of

these aspects of the Narcissus and Faust legends, the study of the representation of the body is important for all four philosophical novels.

When looking at philosophical novels, scholars usually investigate how they relate to philosophy or the ideas behind the characters. In *Henry James and the Philosophical Novel: Being and Seeing* (2009), Merle A. Williams reads each of James's novels from a philosophical perspective and shows how Henry James's novels explicate philosophy better than his philosopher brother William. In *Philosophy as Fiction: Self, Deception, and Knowledge in Proust* (2004), Joshua Landy investigates Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* as a lived-out exploration into philosophy. These two books are examples of how most scholarship on the philosophical novel deals with philosophy and ideas. Even most of the articles, like "Aldous Huxley and the Novel of Ideas" (1946) by Frederick J. Hoffman and "The Novel of Ideas and the Reconciliation with Reason" (2010) by Alan Singer, focus almost exclusively on philosophy and ideas. The approach of reading for the ideas when analyzing philosophical novels is of high value.[6] But I want to open up these works by looking at the characters themselves as physical beings, not simply the ideas behind the characters. As a result, I pay particular attention to the way the physical bodies of Narcissus-Faust characters and Echo-Gretchen characters are described in the text.

The Narcissus-Faust story necessitates abuse of the body. Burwick ends up touching on the abuse of the body in Faustian stories, but it is limited because he is using Byron's *The Deformed Transformed*, which was never finished. The fragment presents a deformed body at the beginning of the story. The character blames this body "for the abuse and scorn he suffered.

[6] These are just a few examples of the approach to philosophical novels, but it connects with most criticism written about the philosophical novel as such.

In part I he is granted the beautiful body of Achilles. In part 2 his desire for power is fulfilled. But his physical form does not suffice to secure love" (Burwick 62). Since the story is not finished, it is unclear what was needed to secure love, and what would have happened to his body at the end. Even so, the clear focus on body and questions of abuse and scorn in relation to one's state of body is vital to Faust narratives.

Since novels are a verbal medium, it directs the way representation is provided to the readers. For the supposed bodies of the characters in a novel, the narrator or other characters provide descriptions that help to flesh out what those bodies look like in the minds of the readers. This often creates a gap between the writer, the narrator, and the reader. Bodies are important components to stories, particularly when something happens to them, like consumption consuming them or a stunning transformation occurs (Shahar 462), but they are often ignored when studying novels. This is especially true of almost all philosophical novels; whose critics tend to approach them from the perspective of ideas rather than stories that encompass ideas of physical bodies. These bodies become even more important to consider in the context of the Narcissus-Faust story.

How the Body and Appearance are Represented in Film in the Narcissus-Faust Story

Because the body presents an important element in any Narcissus story, critics must have an aspect of consideration in looking at the novels' film counterparts. Obviously live-action films invest more in the representation of bodies than novels. Although novels create a world that should feel like a physical reality, seen in their approach to representing bodies by descriptions, films have a more compelling visual component. They tell their stories while their viewers

constantly watch the represented physical bodies of the actors. Of course, there are times when the screen shows a shot of a landscape while a character is talking or offers an establishing shot, but the majority of a story about humans is delivered with the humans' bodies represented on film. This becomes a significant attribute for the Narcissus-Faust stories that are already concerned with the body.

Since the major representative of the Narcissus-Fausts are so often male, the way these four films present the masculine body provides a component to the study. Most of these films show some commentary on the masculinity of their characters. From the weirdly sensual Victor in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Branagh, 1994) to the "corrupted" (Jeffords 988) relationships of men in *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979), they connect with the commentary already happening in most Narcissus-Faust stories. The baggage of the film, as a medium, adds to this treatment of the body. From Paul Smith's perspective, for men, the representation of masculinity and sex as a metaphor are always overt and directly treated. He describes how "the articulation of the male body and male imaginary in the construction of a preoedipal register for masculinity" (1011), meaning that these men are not ashamed of their bodies. Nor do they want to hide them or repress their feelings. They glory in their bodies and their beauty. This heavy adoration for themselves builds upon their Narcissus-Faust natures.

The other aspect of the body, as presented in film (in comparison to novels), is that once an image is provided to the viewer, it captures both more unification (in providing one image for all of the viewers to perceive), potentially, and more divisiveness (because of how the viewers might respond). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* part of how Oscar Wilde handles the aspect of describing a character, supposedly the most beautiful being anyone in the novel has encountered,

is making sure his readers all accept the idea he suggests. He provides some descriptions so that the audience knows Dorian has blonde hair and blue eyes. However, the substantial part of what Dorian looks like is left in the minds of the readers. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley does something quite similar with her description of the Creature, the supposed monster that Victor Frankenstein creates out of dead bodies. We get one short description that feels more vivid than it actually is. Both of these examples show how novels are able to rely on a few quick descriptions and allow the reader to fill in the rest. That way, if I am told by the narrator that Dorian is the most handsome man in a room, I am able to imagine my idea of the most handsome man. In this same way, if the narrator says the Creature has a horrifying body, in my mind's eye I picture the body and physical reality of the Creature that would horrify me the most. Since the body is often more clearly represented for the viewers in film, we are given the same image to see. There is only one Dorian or Creature, which creates the unity. However, it also can create disunity when the intention (of stunning beauty or horrifying terror) is not created effectively, losing the viewer.

In film, the representation of the body dominates the viewers more than the readers of the novel. As a result, the treatment of the Echo-Gretchen characters becomes especially significant. Of course, the handling of the female body on camera and the idea of the male gaze has been approached by numerous critics, but the question of Echo-Gretchen proves still valuable to consider. In many films, the creators give the women the role of being beautiful but silent. Rosalind Galt, in *Pretty: Film and the Decorative Image* (2011), says, "Close-ups of the female face and body have a privileged place in film history" (13). In *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (1991), Mary Ann Doane builds from this idea as well, saying that

women are pushed into a less important place in the film and in “history which inscribes women as subordinate” (165). They are the background dressing up the story and making it more palatable to watch. Yet in Narcissus-Faust stories, women rarely have powerful speeches or strong moments, unless it relates to the Narcissus-Faust. If he needs her to do something drastic, she might do it, but she will not if she is the one who needs it to be done. This is the treatment of Elizabeth in *Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein* (Branagh, 1994). Everything Elizabeth does in the film is in service to Victor. Even when she has moments of power, like her interrupting his scientific experiments and her final act, they are only for Victor’s benefit.

For Narcissus-Faust stories, the body will be shown in an attractive, but also in a wasting, languishing way. It will be punished. Tracking these punishments and abuse to see how the creators depict them affects the viewing and interpretation of the Narcissus-Faust and Echo-Gretchen.

Narcissus-Faust Ending

How both myths ends shows the final aspect of the Narcissus and Faust connection, which means something very specific for any character that fall into the Narcissus-Faust categorization. Tracing the myths back to their origins, the body appearing in them has always been punished for self-love --Narcissus--or for lustfully seeking of knowledge--Faust. As such, each story following Narcissus or Faust demands punishment of the physical body. Faust, like Narcissus, does not choose love. When he is exhorted, for example in Byron’s *Cain*, he instead willfully “departs with Lucifer on a quest for knowledge” (Burwick 62). This prioritization of knowledge rather than love actually connects to Narcissus, who does not love others either.

Depending on the use of the myth, he is either scorning Echo or Ameinias or both, which leads Nemesis to inflict him with his deadly bout of self-love. For Narcissus, the love for himself leads to his own self-destruction. Faust has to be punished, or much of the story has to deal with his escape from punishment. Typically, the older Faust legends are the more likely to include a literal Faust being dragged to Hell. In "Heine's *Doctor Faust, a Ballet Poem*," Beate I. Allert writes about how the stories written after the 1800s, which have Faust reaping exactly what he sowed, usually go out of their way to connect themselves with the older versions of the story, like Marlowe's or the chapbooks (66-72). Connected to this idea is what happens to Narcissus. When Ameinias, in his hurt and anger right before he commits suicide, asks the gods to punish Narcissus, it is notable because, as Grant and Hazel write, "Narcissus' sin is sometimes said to have been to cause his [Narcissus'] death" (25). Ameinias wanted Narcissus to destroy himself through his own self-love, which is what, in fact, happens in the story.

In the Narcissus-Faust stories from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the conclusion is still self-inflicted destruction, often done in a subtle or different way. Christa Knellwolf King explores how the Faust typology has changed. Looking at Albert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl,* King works through connecting this story with the traditional Faust, clarifying how it is different. Most notably, rather than the more concrete soul of the 16th century, which was believed to reside in the human body the use of an abstract soul occurs. Also a less concrete hell exists: he is "saved from rabid materialism, rather than from the fire and brimstone of traditional hell" (42). This shifting of concrete to abstract is carried through in the four narratives I investigate.

For both Narcissus and Faust, the self-destruction they bring upon themselves destroys the character's body. For Narcissus this is an especially deep cut as he destroys the very thing he loves about himself. He wastes away. As described in *Metamorphoses*,

> as he sees all this reflected in the dissolving waves, he can bear it no longer, but as yellow wax melts in the light flame, as morning frost thaws in the sun, so he is weakened and melted by love, and worn away little by little by the hidden fire. He no longer retains his colour [*sic*], the white mingled with the red no longer has life and strength, and that form so pleasing to look at, not has he that body which Echo loved. (Ovid 63)

His death comes to him as he allows himself simply to die: "He laid down his weary head in the green grass, death closing those eyes that had marveled at their lord's beauty. And even when he had been received into the house of shadows, he gazed into the Stygian waters" (Ovid 63). In Callistratus' *Descriptions*, Narcissus is presented as a legend with only a statue of him and the rumor of what happened, but the ending is still tragic: "as the story goes, came to the spring, and when his form was seen by him in the water he died among the water-nymphs, because he desired to embrace his own image" (n. pag.). This rumor seems to imply that Narcissus died by drowning, but both versions lead to the same outcome for Narcissus: his own death, brought upon himself.

This conclusion belongs to any Narcissus or Faust myth, and more so when it is Narcissus-Faust, which helps to shed some light on certain characters in the four stories. The novel and film adaptation of *Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Mephisto* demonstrate this. In *Frankenstein*, Victor dies in a state of exhaustion, having pushed his body past what is healthy. Dorian literally stabs himself through the image he has come to

prize, leaving his body a distorted, grotesque caricature of the person he had been. Kurtz pushes himself into death, languishing away as he contemplates his life. Finally, Hendrik's story limps to its tragic conclusion as he is left with all that he has done, which readers know will shortly devour him. These are the endings of the characters that are demanded by their close connections and the ultimate fulfillment of the Narcissus-Faust legend.

The first two chapters in this study provide the foundation for the focus of the next four chapters. Each of these chapters will deal with a specific philosophical novel and adaptation. I start with *Frankenstein* and then proceed in chronological order according to publication of the novel. These chapters provide specific, concrete evidence from the novels and then the adaptations to show the Narcissus-Faust nature of certain characters and how this reading elucidates other aspects of the story. I also spend time investigating the way the representations of the physical bodies are handled and how that connects to the interpretation of these texts.

CHAPTER 3

THE FAUSTIAN NATURE OF VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

Frankenstein, not only a two-hundred-year-old text, has seeped into the American cultural consciousness. The story of *Frankenstein* seems to provide endless ideas from films (*I, Frankenstein)* to comics (*Doc Frankenstein*), and even people who have not read the book, know something of the story. Because so many iterations of this narrative exist, *Frankenstein* lends itself to many interpretations. David Seed in "'Frankenstein' – Parable of Spectacle?" (1982) discusses how some parts of the text push a moralistic reading (327), while Steven Lehman suggests that the text calls for a maternal (or anti-maternal) reading (49). On the other hand, I find that *Frankenstein* offers a surprising illumination when approached from the Narcissus-Faust perspective.

Frankenstein begins by situating itself in a mythic world with its subtitle: *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*. This subtitle is important to the Narcissus-Faust concept in two ways. First, with the joining of Prometheus with Frankenstein (presumably the character), the story invokes a narrative from Greek mythology. Second, Shelley names her story as "modern," which connects to the four narratives I am looking at. The subtitle could link with the Narcissus-Faust idea, with Narcissus the Greek and Faust the modern. Before even opening the book, readers know two interesting aspects the story will cover. However, it is not merely the subtitle that immediately aligns with Narcissus-Faust in *Frankenstein*.

The epigraph, from *Paradise Lost*, on the title page calls to mind Narcissus-Faust. *Paradise Lost* contains one of the most obvious examples of this character from the 1600s: Satan. Satan is the quintessential Narcissus and the ultimate Faust. He loves himself and, of

course, at the beginning of *Paradise Lost* he has already ceded himself to hell, seeing it as preferable than serving God. In "'Frankenstein' and the Tradition of Realism" (1973), George Levine says, Frankenstein "is clearly conceived as a figure sharing many of the qualities of Milton's Satan" (15). Even so, Adam presents a comparison as well: "Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay / To mold Me man? Did I solicit thee / From darkness to promote me" (X. 743-5 qtd. in Shelley 19). Although these words evoke Wilfred Owen's "Futility," they also set the stage for the unfolding story. These words are from the perspective of the created rather than the creator, which unifies the epigraph and the Creature. A few pages later, in the "Preface," Shelley writes, "I have thus endeavored to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations" (26). In fact, one of the books the Creature finds and reads in his quest to understand life is Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Shelley 115). A little later, the Creature says, "Many times I considered Satan as the first emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me" (Shelley 117). Shelley sees Milton's *Paradise Lost* as the shining example of this pursuit to understand and find a place (Shelley 26), and uses aspects of the epic as her story's foundation. This foundation sets up *Frankenstein* to be a Narcissus-Faust story by creating links between the story and previous myths and by mimicking certain aspects of the myth similar to another Narcissus-Faust story.

Shelley's structure for the narrative also shows how *Frankenstein* serves as a Narcissus-Faust story. The novel begins with Robert Walton writing to his sister. According to Theodore Ziolkowski, Shelley created the novel's intricacy mainly through its organizational structure. It is this complexity that elevates the novel into a subtlety, not suggested by the outline of the story

(40). The use of a double frame, (Walton writing to his sister, and, then, Victor telling his side of the story), helps to show that, in many ways, Walton works as an example of Narcissus-Faust because he is something of Frankenstein's protégé. In some small part, Walton's hunger for knowledge links him to Frankenstein: "I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man" (Shelley 28). This idea is made even clearer after Walton picks up Frankenstein and the doctor tells him, "'Do you share my madness? Have you drank also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me, - let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!" (Shelley 38). The Frankenstein story is not told to save Frankenstein, but to save another from becoming too much like him -- to save Walton from fully becoming a Narcissus-Faust. The speeches from Frankenstein not only show Walton to be a Faust character, but also Frankenstein. In Walton's next entry, he reports what Frankenstein says, "You seek the knowledge and wisdom, as I once did" and that "my fate is nearly fulfilled" (Shelley 39). Both of these statements connect Frankenstein with Faust in that he admits he sought knowledge and sees the conclusion of his life as something he cannot escape. Frankenstein again iterates the control on his life: "It was a strong effort of the spirit of good; but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction" (Shelley 49). At this point, Frankenstein is ceding all control of his life over to the nebulous notion of "Destiny." He sees it as the force that will bring about his destruction and damnation. This treatment of destiny works with Faust as a whole because he so often pushes away the onus of his actions.

Victor Frankenstein soon takes over the story and quickly connects himself with Faust. He unabashedly admits that "[t]he world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity,

earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember" (Shelley 44). He talks at length of his insatiable desire to know more, returning to this subject repeatedly. Finally, this desire culminates with his ability to essentially create life out of the lifeless. It is this achievement that underscores his obsession with pursuing all knowledge. Victor even explains how the achievement worked against him because "this discovery was so great and overwhelming, that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result" (Shelley 57). He tells Walton to "[l]earn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow" (Shelley 57). In the framework of the story itself, Frankenstein is like Faust.

Because Frankenstein's thirst for knowledge links him with Faust, he is also connected to Narcissus. One of the most evident aspects of Frankenstein as Narcissus is his glorification of self. As he is attempting to bring man to life, he says, "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (Shelley 58). Victor is glorifying himself before he even succeeds. This thought is especially troubling because of where this new species ends up. He creates a creature who is so ugly and repulsive that no one can abide to look at him: "His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was 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 the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and

straight black lips" (Shelley 60). Victor denies his creature the ability to connect to others because he does not give him what he prizes so much in himself: a gracious, appealing aspect that will make people (like Walton) immediately sympathetic.

When Victor finally succeeds with his doubtful experiment, the description is eerily similar to when Mephistopheles shows up in Marlow's play (Shelley 60). It is throughout this whole chapter that Victor's consuming selfishness is really shown. He is self-focused to the exclusion and detriment of his creature. Victor can only see his own suffering and pain, which necessarily sets up what will happen to others when the Creature seeks him. Frankenstein is also so focused on himself that he neglects his family (Shelley 65). Even so, it is the Creature that more overtly connects Frankenstein to Narcissus. Frankenstein created the Creature in his own image: "my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me" (Shelley 76). Even after the death of his brother and the false accusation of the maid, Victor makes everything about himself: "the tortures of the accused did not equal mine; she was sustained by innocence, but the fangs of remorse tore my bosom, and would not forego their hold" (Shelley 82). His hubris is very much connected to Narcissus, destroying others as well as himself.

Ultimately, when the Creature mourns over Victor, he calls him a "self-devoted being" (Shelley 186), which captures who Frankenstein is. Throughout the novel, he is a Narcissus-Faust. His overwhelming curiosity and thirst for more knowledge sets him up as Faust: "Frankenstein sees his own guiding impulse as somehow autonomous, as independent as a natural process. The curiosity which the metaphor refers to is the premise of his character and, although we can observe this curiosity taking on different forms, there is never a suggestion that

Frankenstein can bring it under control" (Seed 328-9). His complete focus and devotion to his desire to create himself again make him a Narcissus. These qualities are deeply a part of his character, and not only do they set up the other actors in his life to fit certain characters themselves, they also push the story to its final, tragic conclusion when the Narcissus-Faust must, and will, be punished by the destruction of the physical body the character values so much.

Mirror-Mephistopheles in *Frankenstein*

A Faustian story necessitates an identification of the Mephistopheles, though it can be misleading in *Frankenstein*, as with all Narcissus-Faust stories. At first blush, the text itself seems to explicitly mark the Creature as the Mephistopheles. Throughout the story, he is repeatedly called the devil or demon: "the filthy daemon, to whom I had given life" (Shelley 75) and "said the dameon" (Shelley 93). In fact, Victor addresses his Creature as "Devil" (Shelley 93), which underscores the confusion of the question of who the Mephistopheles is. As is a trope with all Narcissus-Faust characters, Victor seems to continually cast the Creature in the role of Mephistopheles, trying to push the onus away from himself.

However, Frankenstein created the Creature, so surely he is more like Mephistopheles, leading others (like the Creature) astray. Since Frankenstein is the one telling the story, he is trying to create a narrative that he can live with. The way he frames the Creature provides him with a release from his responsibility of what occurs in the course of the story. The words Victor uses necessarily cast the Creature in the Mephistopheles role: "Abhorred monster! fiend that thou art! the tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! you reproach me with your creation; come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently

bestowed" (Shelley 93). He calls the Creature, that he created, an 'abhorred monster' and a 'wretched devil.' Even more important, Frankenstein neglects the Creature. He was repulsed and disgusted by his own creation, so he denies it any sort of human warmth or connection.

In this denial, the Creature is set up for being rejected by all of humanity, described by Shelley in a heartbreaking way. The Creature's feelings connect to a family, seeking to help them in their own distress, building a relationship with the vulnerable father, and finally being cruelly rejected by them. When the Creature recounts his own story, it becomes clear that he cannot be Mephistopheles. Instead, he inverts the Narcissus-Faust story, which necessarily shows he is not the Mirror-Mephistopheles.

The great inversion presents when the Creature sees himself in the pool -- a cruel mockery of the Narcissus myth. At first, he is just enchanted by the sounds and sights of the forest. He is almost giddy as he describes nature with its "gentle light" and "clear stream" (Shelley 96). However, when he finally sees himself in the water, he is not entranced by his own beauty. Instead, he is horrified and disgusted with himself. He describes how it was not a joyful discovery. He recounts, "but how was I terrified, when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! 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 despondence and mortification" (Shelley 104). He cannot even believe that it is himself because that is not how he imagined himself to be. As Peter Brooks notes, at this point, the Creature's reading is "convincing the Monster that he is, indeed, a monster, thus in no conceivable system an object of desire" (207). After seeing the beauty of the cottagers, his own ugliness is shocking and difficult for him to sort in his own mind: "The Monster, on the other

hand, discovers himself as different, as violation of the law, in a scenario that mirrors and reverses Lancan's; the outer image – that in the mirror – presents the body in its lack of wholeness (at least in human terms) while the inner apprehension of the body had up until then held it to be hypothetically whole" (Brooks 206-7). The Creature's aggressive repulsion at his own image denies him the ability to be a Narcissus.

The Creature also presents an inversion of Narcissus-Faust because, although he wants knowledge, his desire does not spring from selfish ambition like both Faust and Victor. He seeks to learn: "These thoughts exhilarated me, and led me to apply with fresh ardour to the acquiring the art of language" (Shelley 105). However, this thirst for knowledge is born out of a desire to connect and communicate with other humans (the cottagers) and not because he cannot learn enough. In fact, there is a definite end in his goal. He does not indicate that he would keep on learning and seeking with an insatiable desire. This notion becomes evident in the rest of the story. The Creature seems to be continually struggling with his own self-worth: "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 even from the very resemblance . . . I am solitary and abhorred'" (Shelley 117). What he seeks so desperately is a companion and someone to love -- and when he is denied this, he seeks revenge.

As the Creature continues his story, his inversion is highlighted, which is especially notable as his listener is Victor, the Narcissus-Faust. The Creature says, "Of what a strange nature is knowledge! It clings to the mind, when it has once seized on it, like a lichen on the rock. I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling; but I learned that there was but

one means to overcome the sensation of pain, and that was death" (Shelley 109-10). A short time later, he returns to the theme of seeing himself in the water: "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" (Shelley 118). These are mere reiterations of the inversion, but it is also this deep desire to have a female creature to love (Shelley 128) that separates him from Narcissus-Faust. His desire for a female mate stands in sharp contrast to both Narcissus, who did not even want Echo to bother him, and Faust, who neglected Gretchen and is the reason for her destruction and death. This is not what the Creature would do with his female Creature (at least according to him). Perhaps the most telling moment is when the Creature, toward the end of the tale, simply says, "I abhorred myself" (Shelley 187). Some of his last words also highlight this: "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" (Shelley 188). Nothing could be less germane to Narcissus-Faust, and Mephistopheles, than complete self-hatred.

Evidently, the Mephistopheles in *Frankenstein* cannot be the Creature, even as Walton and Frankenstein both suggest it. Rather, it is Victor himself who is the Mephistopheles. He is the one who leads himself into darkness by giving in to the grief of his mother's death. He throws himself into studying and animating the inanimate, or bringing back to life the lifeless. When he is describing what he was attempting to do, he says, "This was indeed a godlike science, and I ardently desired to become acquainted with it. But I was baffled in every attempt I made for this purpose" (Shelley 103). Even so, Frankenstein is able to finally untap this "godlike science." It is a bit unclear how he finally accomplishes it, but it comes from himself.

He is certainly his own Mephistopheles, but he also becomes one for others, at least to some extent. Frankenstein's influence is clear when Walton says, "If we are lost, my mad schemes are the cause" (Shelley 181). He was already being driven beyond what he should, but upon finding Frankenstein, Walton was renewed in his desire. In some ways, he seems obsessed with the same thing as Victor, and he shows both his fascination with and adulation of Victor. Victor acts as a warning to Walton to not go too far in his attempt to reach the North Pole, but Walton's end is not recounted in this novel. It is left ambiguous what Walton will do with the strange story he heard and, in part, witnessed.

Beyond Walton, Frankenstein also acts as a Mephistopheles to the Creature, leading him astray. Part of the Creature's fury is that Victor is comely and is in love, both of which Victor denies the Creature. However, it is even more the way Victor treats and talks to the Creature that pushes him into the destruction he causes. Victor leaves him, does nothing to find him, and allows him to murder Victor's brother unchallenged. Even worse is that once he talks to the Creature, he does not seek to help him. He promises to create a female creature for the Creature to enjoy, saying, "Devil, cease; and do not poison the air with these sounds of malice. I have declared my resolution to you, and I am no coward to bend beneath words. Leave me; I am inexorable" (Shelley 146). However, he cannot bring himself to do it, even though he knows this means death and destruction to his family and friends. Victor seeks to blame the Creature, when he is the one who created and tempted him: "the monster whom I had created, the miserable daemon" (Shelley 170). Rather than attempting to placate the Creature, or just accept him, he ignores his creation, which leads directly to the death of his best friend and his wife.

Frankenstein leaves the power of choice and persuasion in Victor's hands. He is the one who directs the path of more than three characters in the novel. Indeed, when each character in the novel is considered by himself or herself, Victor seems to have controlled their fate to some extent. Clerval is murdered by the Creature because of Victor, and Victor allows Justine to be hung for a murder she did not commit. Victor feels as if he could not say anything about what really happened because no one would believe him. He hardly tries to get her free and he certainly cannot say no one would believe him if he does not tell anyone. Victor Frankenstein pushes and directs the action throughout the entire novel, but most importantly he pushes and directs himself. He allows himself, this selfishness, to become enamored of a dangerous science without taking any of the most basic precautions to protect others. If we take together all of these aspects, the Mirror-Mephistopheles expresses itself in the person of Victor.

Echo-Gretchen in *Frankenstein*

Perhaps the most important reason for a Narcissus-Faust analysis of philosophical novels from the 1800s and early 1900s is that it provides a way to approach these stories to help highlight the female characters. Thinking about Victor like Narcissus-Faust, also opens the novel up to seeing the female characters as similar to Echo and Gretchen. As Lucy Morrison observes, *Frankenstein* is a novel that "both endorses and challenges the traditional gender roles of its late-eighteenth-century time period. Set principally in Switzerland, *Frankenstein* depicts women firmly entrenched in the domestic sphere, their focus conventionally invested in children and household, while men are more active, more powerful, and encouraged to study and explore the world" ("Daring Creation: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818, revised 1831)"). Throughout the

whole novel, Elizabeth is functionally denied a voice. Part of this reason is that she is dead during the recounting of her story; consequently, she only gets to speak through her letters (Shelley 65+). Still, she gets a chance to speak only when Victor chooses to read them. For example, while he is away and allowing himself to be consumed and caught up in his search for the reanimation of life, he chooses to ignore her letters. Her silence becomes more explicit after the death of Frankenstein's brother. As Victor says, "From the tortures of my own heart, I turned to contemplate the deep and voiceless grief of my Elizabeth. This also was my doing!" (Shelley 85). Elizabeth's voicelessness throughout the novel links not only her with Echo-Gretchen, but also with the women of the 1800s who were so often silenced.

Since Victor is the one who tells most of the story, he gets to control who speaks, including Elizabeth. The dynamic between Victor as Narcissus, and Elizabeth as Echo, sets up the true horror of the novel. This bond is similar to Amy Lawrence's descriptions of the overall connection between Narcissus and Echo: "it is the relationship between Echo and Narcissus that sets into play the series of oppositions the myth works through. Echo longs to speak to Narcissus but can only repeat his words; Narcissus gazes at his reflection in the water and becomes so enamored he drowns in his own image . . . And so Echo fades away, unable to contact Narcissus once he ceases to speak" (1-2). She continues to explore this idea in her introduction: "In film and mythology, Echo's voice is continually taken from her – by a jealous image frightened of her power, by a patriarchal system that wants to keep women silent . . . Can she be heard? Will Narcissus ever wake up and hear what Echo has to say?" (Lawrence 7).

These are the questions that dominate the relationship between Victor and Elizabeth. When will he stop working on his mad experiments and write back to her? When will he actually

talk to her about what he has created instead of treating her as simply a beautiful object? It is clear that Victor ignores her, for he writes that " the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them" (Shelley 59). Since Victor is choosing not to speak or engage with the letters Elizabeth sends him, he has silenced her as well. Mimicking the dynamic between Echo and Narcissus, Elizabeth is completely at Victor's disposal, and his choices hold power over their communications.

Throughout the novel, Elizabeth is portrayed as beautiful while her other characteristics are largely ignored. As expected, her first description focuses on her beauty: "Her hair was the brightest living gold, and . . . seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness, that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features" (Shelley 43). The way Victor details how he remembers his first glimpse of Elizabeth already pushes her out of the earthly realm. His descriptions are angelic and seem to foreshadow her ultimate departure from this realm in the novel.

Of Victor's life choices, it is Elizabeth's end that is most troubling because he essentially offers her up as a sacrifice to the Creature. The Creature made it very clear what he would do when he repeatedly says he will be with Victor on his wedding night. It is in a letter that Elizabeth gets a chance to describe how much she loves Victor (Shelley 161-3), which makes her death by the Creature so cruel. It seems so achingly avoidable and horrible because of how little Frankenstein treated her like a human. Born out of his Narcissus-Faust characteristics, Victor

allows himself to simply stare into his own pool, which leads to not only his destruction but hers as well. His choice and Elizabeth's subsequent death connect to Teresa de Lauretis's investigation into Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*: "Thus, if the mystery story's true achievement is its successful demonstration that the murderer is the reader, as Eco suggests, that 'we are the guilty ones,' then from at least some readers he should expect the question, Who's we, white man?" (68). Frankenstein does this type of exchange as well. He is telling his story to Walton and seems to be asking, this is crazy, right? What a wild Creature! And Walton is nodding along. But Elizabeth is the one who gets caught up in something that she has absolutely no idea or understanding about, just as Justine had been earlier in the novel. How are these women supposed to break away from a society that binds their needs, thoughts, and voice so exclusively to a man?

Besides her connection to Echo, Elizabeth displays similarities to Gretchen in the Faust stories. Frankenstein creates a facsimile of Elizabeth for his mind and plays with it as needed for his own pleasure and pain: "I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets" (Shelley 61). But Frankenstein does not seem to be concerned by it. Instead, he uses the story as an impetus for himself. Elizabeth is again denied any real agency or power. She is merely in the story, as he tells it, for his own service. All of this builds to her tragic, yet highly avoidable, death. She is the one who must die to help Frankenstein feel the deepest pain and find the reason to finally stop the "monster." Here we find parallels to Gretchen's plight in Goethe's *Faust*. She gets pregnant by Faust and gives birth to his bastard child. Here, she does seize some of her own power by drowning her child, but she is ultimately executed. Faust seeks to set her free, but she refuses to leave her dungeon. Elizabeth shows some

of these characteristics when she is in mourning: “Elizabeth was sad and desponding; she no longer took delight in her ordinary occupations; all pleasure seemed to her sacrilege toward the dead; eternal woe and tears she then thought was the just tribute she should pay to innocence so blasted and destroyed” (Shelley 87). Yet unlike in Goethe’s drama, this Gretchen is bound to her Faust: “my tranquil demeanour contributed greatly to calm her mind” (Shelley 165). She seems to be completely swayed by her love for Victor. What she observes in him she mimics for his benefit. However, he is being incredibly selfish because he keeps worrying for himself when he should clearly be worried for her safety after what happened to Henry (Shelley 165). A few paragraphs later, she is shown reacting negatively when Victor seems troubled (Shelley 167), a reaction which casts her in the role of Echo who is merely capable of echoing what is said to her. Elizabeth seems to only echo Victor’s emotions with no real agency herself.

Even so, there are more imperative connections between Elizabeth and Gretchen. While R. Bruce Elder explores several different adaptations of the Faust story, he highlights something important about Gretchen, and by extension about Echo: “*Candida Albacore* uses the psychodramatic form to elaborate patterns of splitting, doubling and merging, and these motifs serve to convey the dynamic of female erotic desire. Gretchen’s prayer in Goethe’s original and Stein’s reworking of it, suggest another meaning: Gretchen herself is a dual character, half saint, half witch” (60-61). This aspect of Gretchen works well with Echo, being her double. Since her voice was silenced, she can only find expression in another. She is a character who gets silenced in a capricious punishment and equally capriciously she falls in love with someone who will never be able to reciprocate her feelings. The same is true of both Gretchen and Elizabeth. Gretchen falls in love with a man who will always be unavailable and who will end up with the

ultimate ur-woman (like Helen of Troy), something she could never truly compete with. Equally frustrating, Elizabeth can never fully win Victor's affections because he is too much involved with his own mind and science.

Essentially, Elizabeth represents an example of Echo-Gretchen, who exposes aspects of society's unfair treatment towards women. She is not allowed to freely speak, her voice being carefully curated by Victor. Nor is she able to ever truly act. She is left alone on her wedding night, a night she would not expect to be left alone, so that her murder by the Creature is accomplished in a shockingly simple manner. Her life is destroyed because of Victor's presence in her life, just as Echo's life is destroyed by Narcissus and Gretchen's by Faust.

Narcissus-Faust at the End of *Frankenstein*

The image of water in a story already charged with Narcissus themes becomes even more significant because of Narcissus' end. In many recountings, he drowns himself as he seeks to embrace his own image. At one point in *Frankenstein*, Victor says, "often, I say, I was tempted to plunge into the silent lake, that the waters might close over me and my calamities for ever" (Shelley 87). The desire for an end that is eerily similar to Narcissus is made even more poignant when some of hell's imagery appears. "My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed" (Shelley 87). As the story progresses to its final conclusion, the narrative is rife with connections between Narcissus' and Faust's end.

These men both do away with themselves in a similar fashion. In the Narcissus-Faust characters found in novels from 1800 – 1950, the destruction must be self-fulfilling. The

dragging to hell must be tied to the destruction of the physical body as Narcissus' death must be a punishment to his physical body. For Victor, this happens at the start and conclusion of the novel. His physical body is plagued by illness (Shelley 153). However, it cannot merely be self-inflicted death to make it a Narcissus-Faust death. There must be some aspect or hints of a type of hell also heralding the death of the character. Describing his deteriorating body, Victor says, "Cold, want, and fatigue, were the least pains which I was destined to endure; I was cursed by some devil, and carried about with me my eternal hell; yet still a spirit of good followed and directed my steps; and, when I most murmured, would suddenly extricate me from seemingly insurmountable difficulties" (Shelley 174). Although he sees a spirit of good in the way he is able to limp on (perpetuating his existence until his death), Victor is more consumed by the "cursed devil" to which he is bound.

As he is being dogged by an incorporeal and abstract devil, he is also allowing his body to waste away. The other way Narcissus dies, if he does not drown by trying to embrace himself, is by starvation or lack of water because he cannot bring himself to leave the beautiful youth in the water. Victor reflects this as he pushes himself to death through exhaustion. "You took me on board when my vigour was exhausted, and I should soon have sunk under my multiplied hardships into a death which I still dread – for my task is unfulfilled" (Shelley 178). The connection of Victor with Satan formalizes even more: "All my speculations and hopes are as nothing; and, like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell" (Shelley 180). Almost right after this statement Walton says, "I would reconcile him to life, but he repulses the idea" (Shelley 180), which makes it seem clear that Victor is choosing death for himself on his own terms.

Walton seems to be continually attempting to fight Victor's yearning for death. He clearly is concerned for his friend and takes the time to track his wellness over the course of his letters to his sister. Walton loves Frankenstein and seems to place him on a pedestal, but he is troubled by his friend's continued illness. Near the end of the story, he describes that "[s]ometimes, seized with sudden agony, [Victor] could not continue his tale … His fine and lovely eyes were now lighted up with indignation, now subdued to downcast sorrow, and quenched in infinite wretchedness" (Shelley 178). Victor seems to go through a cyclical physical reaction to his own story. He gets into telling it, but after a time, he loses his vigor and must relinquish the telling. Walton sees this happen repeatedly, and seems troubled by it, especially as he has to watch Frankenstein's health becoming more and more of a problem: "Frankenstein has daily declined in health: a feverish fire still glimmers in his eyes; but he is exhausted, and, when suddenly roused to any exertion, he speedily sinks again into apparent lifelessness . . . I sat watching the wan countenance of my friend – his eyes half closed, and his limbs hanging listlessly" (Shelley 182). It seems that Walton is only able to slowly watch his friend fade. As he writes, "They retired, and I turned towards my friend; but he was sunk in languor, and almost deprived of life" (Shelley 183). The life that is slowly being drained from Victor does connect to the way Narcissus wasted away in front of his own image, and Faust, according to some retellings, has to watch his remaining time on earth with his freedom and power dwindle.

This image works for Victor as well. He knows what he must do, even as he knows it must necessarily kill him. He has to admit to himself that this is the end he must work for because, after the Creature took Elizabeth, he cannot allow the Creature to continue: "'Do so, if you will; but I will not. You may give up your purpose, but mine is assigned to me by Heaven,

and I dare not. I am weak; but surely the spirits who assist my vengeance will endow me with sufficient strength.' Saying this, he endeavoured to spring from the bed, but the exertion was too great for him; he fell back, and fainted" (Shelley 184). At the end of the story, Victor does take the time to repeat a few times that his mission is from heaven and that he must complete it because he is being divinely directed. Again, he connects himself with Faust as he hubristically casts himself in the role of God. He prioritizes his own view and the ways he thinks his reaction should be.

Similar to many other texts of the 1800s and early 1900s, his death is not an exciting climactic battle. He does not go out in a blaze of glory, feeling as if he accomplished something meaningful. Instead, his end is like a petering out of a stream: "His voice became fainter as he spoke; and at length, exhausted by his effort, he sunk into silence" (Shelley 185). This silencing of the voice that has spoken for much of the novel takes on a poignant note. After his death, Walton catches the Creature coming to mourn over the body: "I entered the cabin, where lay the remains of my ill-fated and admirable friend. Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe; gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions" (Shelley 185). Walton sees the Creature as indescribable, but he touches on an important aspect of Victor.

He is "ill-fated," which is something that Victor certainly sees in himself. He feels that he is part of a fate that is inescapable – much of the beginning and end of the novel connects to this idea. Since he cannot see how to avoid it, he does not seek to do so. When describing his own mind, Victor shows his desperation, "These were wild and miserable thoughts; but I cannot describe to you how the eternal twinkling of the stars weighed upon me, and how I listened to every blast of wind, as if it were a dull, ugly siroc on its way to consume me" (Shelley 131).

Obviously he is aware of the danger he plays with, but willfully continues playing. He seems to treat this ending as what he has earned for his desire to create life. When describing his path to creating life, he remembers, “but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man” (Shelley 57). With Frankenstein’s remembrance, this idea touches both the Faust and Frankenstein stories of culture. These men’s obsession with their selves allows them to become myopic and disturbingly self-serving. They subjugate, ignore, and, finally, silence the women they pretend to care for, which leads them not to their salvation, but to their destruction.

Early in the narrative, Frankenstein ignores the real implications of what he is striving to create. As soon as he succeeds, he panics, and allows the Creature to get away. His willful ignorance of the Creature’s fate is what sets up the conclusion of the novel’s structure. He allows himself to fall victim to one of the most troubling aspects of the Faust character, which is his detachment from the world around him. It is how he wants to learn more, but does not consider the implications of what he is uncovering. As Lenn E. Goodman argues, “The move to metaphysics is the move from the reductive, partitive question that seeks ultimacy in ever finer levels of analysis, at a cost of ever higher orders of abstraction from the wholeness and thickness of life, what Havel calls our natural world, and toward larger questions, where ultimacy is understood in more comprehensive terms” (99). Goodman describes this aspect as it connects to Faust: “This Faustian role brings responsibilities, not for unintellectual toilers, or even for ‘a large proportion of so-called intellectuals,’ but for ‘those engaged in creative intellectual work,’ planning for the future, developing institutions: they must become gods and demigods, the masters of human destiny, rather than its slaves” (96). Similarly, Anne Buttimer discusses

Frankenstein's world, which seems to dominate today (22). The warning that Frankenstein represents for us, with his Narcissus-Faust characteristics on full display, offers a warning that should not be ignored. Thus, it is valuable to see and note the characters of Narcissus-Faust because they allow both an identification and an avoidance of actions, which not only destroy others, but will, ultimately, destroy the self.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Book *Frankenstein*:

The more abstract nature of the philosophical novel may be seen as a detriment to its form. Nevertheless, even though philosophical novels, as all novels, take place in a reality of words, which the author creates, they still have a framework. They have to be bound by the rules of the world, and the author may choose to describe aspects of the characters to bring their form to the fore. These descriptions become even more valuable in the Narcissus-Faust character. A Narcissus, by his very nature, will be interested in seeing himself because of his story. Beyond the form of Narcissus being depicted, the description of the physical body pushes to the conclusion of the Narcissus-Faust story. The body's punishment must, and will, be born out of the hands or overt choices of the character. These novels do not contain the supernatural as such, so the hell that the Faust character will be dragged into is a destruction of self. He will no longer exist, a state which will silence him forever.

With this in mind, paying attention to the way the physical bodies are represented and described in the novel will aid in understanding the Narcissus-Faust arc. Part of the Narcissus and Faust story connects homosexual aspect, which is something that many critics have connected with *Frankenstein*: "And it is important to point out this homoerotic dimension"

(Laplace-Sinatra 256). Narcissus is a young Greek boy, reminiscent of Ganymede or Tithonus (both beautiful boys desired by Zeus). As Chris Straayer highlights in "The Talented Poststructuralist: Heteromasculinity, Gay Artifice, and Class Passing" (2004), there has long been a link between narcissism and a space for homosexuality (117-22). However, narcissism is not only connected to homosexuality but also to masturbation (Laplace-Sinatra 257), or self-love. For Victor, the masturbatory undertones in the novel are made clear with the description of the way he makes the Creature, seeming shameful and dirty throughout (Hirsch 126, Musselwhite 62-4). The creation as an act of masturbation works especially well since at this point Victor is actively avoiding Elizabeth, which means he needs to find his sexual satisfaction elsewhere.

In *Frankenstein,* the plot is told in waves by different characters taking over the narrative, with several frames around the story as a whole. Shelley's layers of framing make the novel complex, but it also the ideas the book deals with: "The story of this ugly, larger-than-life, monstrous body raises complex questions" (Brooks 199). Early in the novel, Frankenstein is described near his death: "His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition" (Shelley 35). He is literally wasting away, as Narcissus did, and his physical body is being punished, as demanded by the Faust story. Over the next several of pages, Frankenstein's weak body is described as "The decaying frame of a stranger" (Shelley 37); "he is far too weak to sustain the rawness of the atmosphere" (Shelley 37); "his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness" (Shelley 36). Yet even in his madness and the description of Victor's looks, to some extent, like a man possessed, sections also highlight his supposed beauty: "but there are moments when, if any one performs an act of kindness towards him, or does him any the most trifling

service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equaled" (Shelley 36). However, as soon as this is described, Walton continues his account, saying, "But he is generally melancholy and despairing; and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him" (Shelley 36). The gnashing of teeth is an often-used euphemism for hell. With these examples, the representation of Victor's body early in the novel immediately connects to Narcissus and Faust.

Walton's description of Victor seems strangely charged with the story that is about to unfold from Frankenstein. Walton describes how "his lustrous eyes dwell on me with all their melancholy sweetness; I see his thin hand raised in animation, while the lineaments of his face are irradiated by the soul within. Strange and harrowing must be his story; frightful the storm which embraced the gallant vessel on its course, and wrecked it – thus!" (Shelley 40). His use of the word "animation" and "lineaments" and "soul" seem to foreshadow what Victor is about to explicate. Even though Victor is described as a "wreck" when he shows up, Walton still sees him as "a noble creature in his better days" and "attractive and amiable" (Shelley 37). His body is wasting and fading away, and he is about to die from exhaustion, yet, Walton sees him as an attractive man.

In sharp contrast, the Creature appears wholly unattractive. In fact, the narrative seems to almost go out of its way to explain how repulsive he is. Throughout the story, the Creature remains something of a mystery to the reader. Only once do we get a very clear description of what he looks like: "His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was 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 the same colour as

the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion and straight black lips" (Shelley 60). In the rest of the novel, the reader merely gets descriptions of other people reacting to seeing the Creature or pretty general statements of what he looks like: "He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes" (Shelley 93). This choice creates a distance between the concept of the Creature's physical reality and the readers' conception of that reality. Each reader could be imagining something vastly different from the next, creating an unwieldy plethora of Creatures.

However, in the context of the plot, there is only one Creature whom the people in *Frankenstein* see. Even as there are as many Frankensteins in the readers' minds as there are readers, there is really only one in the book. Since we are told most of this story by Victor's voice, his viewing of the Creature takes on its own powerful meaning. The Creature is well spoken and quick, but he is repulsively ugly. This ugliness is what Victor cannot move past: "Thus, this first meeting of Frankenstein and his Monster since the day of his creation presents a crucial issue of the novel in the opposition of sight and language, of the hideous body and the persuasive tongue" (Brooks 201). In the same way, "the monster's ugliness of face and form blinds Victor to the beauty of his soul, which is revealed in words that Victor cannot or will not understand because they come from one who seems to him nothing but a repulsive killer. Yet while the novel thus exposes Victor's double blindness, it also shields the reader from – or blinds the reader to – the shock of what Victor sees" (Heffernan 157). As the Creature recounts his story, it is easy to forget about his grotesque body. He speaks with power and feeling when describing the cottagers, which makes us want him to meet them and find community. This

tension is present during his telling: “All of the Monster’s interlocutors – including, finally, the reader – must come to terms with this contradiction between the verbal and the visual” (Brooks 202). The contradiction is made more complex with its medium. The novel’s visual aspects rely on verbal descriptions to take shape at all, but this is a shape that cannot be relied on. A reader could have missed the description of the “yellow” skin of the Creature, spending the entirety of the novel picturing him with bright, white skin. It is impossible to control this aspect of the reader. Linked with this, Peter Brooks also talks about the way writing influences imagining what is described in the book. He writes, “In *Frankenstein*, language is marked by the body, by the process of embodiment. We have not so much a mark on the body as the mark of the body: the capacity of language to create a body, one that in turn calls into question the language we use to classify and control bodies. In the plot of the novel, that body cannot be touched by any of the human bodies” (Brooks 220). The Creature is denied the one thing he seems so desperate about. He wants some kind of connection, but he can never seem to really get it.

After Victor creates the Creature, he wants to move on, but the Creature desperately wants a female companion. This desire leads him to convince Victor to make him one, but Frankenstein cannot bring himself to complete this creation. In a wild fit, he rips up the female body he was creating out of dead females, which means there are body parts strewn around him as the Creature watches on in horror and sadness. This underscores how Victor and society as a whole treat women. Here, “The woman’s alliance with the image . . . brings her madness, not power” (Lawrence 7). Here we are confronted by a horrifying scene where Victor certainly does not respect the bodies he has been using to stitch together a new creature: “In this scenario, it is the masculine embrace that renders the female body corpse-like, that reveals the decaying body

lurking behind the shroud of femininity. Masculine fear of female sexuality is here anchored in the twinning of the female body with the putrid corpse" (Liggins 138). Shortly after this scene, Elizabeth will end up dead as well. She will be strangled by the Creature in his bid for revenge. The last connection to the body of Elizabeth in the text is her lying on her wedding bed dead. Essentially, all of the women in the story (from Victor's mother to Justine) end up dead. As Liggins explores, "What is disturbing is that the novel co-opts the reader into viewing the female body through the official eyes of the doctor, whose ardor for scientific discovery feeds off images of helpless and violated femininity. Male fantasies of mutilated, virginal women ensure that death and femininity continue to be entwined. Despite, or perhaps because of, the horrifying visibility of feminine death" (142). Even though *Frankenstein*'s author is a female, or perhaps because she is female, Shelley does not ignore the male fantasies of the female body, as Liggins explains. Instead, she has used the very thing we would assume would bother her greatly in her book to create an indictment against how women are continuously treated in society. Hence, death seems to be required from the women, which unsurprisingly connects them to the Narcissus-Faust of Victor.

He becomes the central part of the story, as he always sees himself to be, allowing the women who come in contact with him to die or be destroyed. Although shocking things happen to others, and, indeed, many people end up dead, he is the one with whom the story seems most concerned. As London says,

> Frankenstein himself illustrates the point: the novel relentlessly highlights the body of this exemplary man even where other bodies seem to be in question. Thus while the novel's most sensational moments – the animation of the monster, the destruction of the

> monster's 'bride,' the discovery of Elizabeth's death – point to specular objects other than Frankenstein, the narrative witnesses these dramatic passages on Frankenstein's body and replays them in his broken utterances. (261)

This is clear right after Elizabeth's death when Frankenstein says, "I fell at last in a state of utter exhaustion; a film covered my eyes, and my skin was parched with the heat of fever" (Shelley 168). He describes himself and what he is experiencing, instead of keeping the focus on Elizabeth, even though she is the person who has just lost her life because of him. When Victor explains, "before misfortune had tainted my mind, and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self" (Shelley 46), he blends his Faust and Narcissus sides together. His Narcissus side remains subtler, but nevertheless present. At one point he spends a lengthy paragraph extolling himself and the love everyone has for him (Shelley 51).

The overtly Narcissus-Faust nature of Victor pushes the story to its conclusion, even in relation to the representation of his physical body. As London describes it, "In the scenes of horror cataloged in the narrative, Frankenstein thus remains the prime representational stage – experiencing in himself all the wrackings of the body and the tortures of the unsolicited gaze, displaying an imagination acutely sensitized to the martyr's fate, claiming, at the last, preeminence in suffering" (262). He does end up suffering, with his body being tortured. But it is a choice he makes for himself, adding a clear ownership to the suffering.

Victor does end up dying by the end of *Frankenstein*, and the Creature is left to mourn for his creator. He moans over him when Walton catches him in the act. He is both shocked and moved by the Creature who seems to represent to him the rightful mourner for Victor. Yet he

does not stay. He disappears at the end with the promise to burn himself on the pyre. London elaborates on this strange ending and on this ending's meaning for readers:

> But if, as Walton intimates, we refuse the position allocated for woman, the laugh of the Medusa will echo in our reading. In *Frankenstein*, this laughter might produce a new mythology, focusing not on the spectacle of female monstrosity but on the extravagant fantasies of a deficient masculinity. Reading *Frankenstein*'s spectacle of masculinity, we might turn the Medusa story on its head; for in the version I am constructing, the laugh of the Medusa would animate articulation. (265)

London's suggestion that in *Frankenstein* we can read in order to see masculinity's warped nature underscores the power the reader holds in imagining the physical bodies of the characters. The abstract nature of reading allows for this proliferation of different conceptions of the characters' physical bodies in *Frankenstein*, which opens the concept of masculinity in this novel.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Film *Frankenstein*

Clearly, the representation of the physical body appears quite differently in film than in the novel. Instead of relying on the reader to interpret everything through words, the film relies on an interpretation of images carefully curated and manipulated by the filmmaker. For studying how the body is represented in this story, I focus upon Kenneth Branagh's visceral approach in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994). Fernando Vidal claims that the "[f]ilms are a significant resource in [Frankenstein adaptations] . . . More importantly, since they are themselves part of the contexts they supposedly 'reflect,' they must be considered as active agents in structuring

them" (91-2). Most people misname the Creature "Frankenstein" because of their engagement with the film versions of the story. The image of Boris Karloff carrying the body of the child or just looming in front of the camera make up what most people think of when they hear the word "Frankenstein."

However, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* not only has a clear and dominant pictured reality, but Branagh depicts the story in a wildly over the top way, which makes it especially compelling in this study. Branagh makes everything in the film maximal. The music possesses a sharp, loud, heavy handed quality that closely follows visual cues. The costumes are precise, although Victor is frequently filmed without his proper garments. At one point, when the film shows Frankenstein recovering after the ordeal of the Creature's birth, Henry cares for Victor. Henry is next to Victor as he sleeps in his bed, but Victor's bed sheets and blankets are strangely pulled down too far to be comfortable as Henry feeds him soup.

Overall, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* is quite erotically charged. Each character seems connected to another with some sort of sexual tension, including both of Victor's professors. However, this idea is most evident between Victor and the Creature. For example, "In Branagh's film, the 'birth' of the Creature is a highly erotic scene. Viewers see the Creature naked, and the actor Branagh engaged in his act of creation topless, sweating, and visibly very excited by the whole affair. That Branagh's body is so exposed is in itself unusual in Hollywood films" (Eberle-Sinatra 193). Branagh glorifies his body in this section of the film, boldly showing his six-pack (see fig. 1). The birth of the Creature is grotesque with everything getting coated in amniotic fluid, which the viewer earlier saw Victor purchasing after births in poor houses. When the Creature gets out of the sarcophagus he is laid in the fluid and charged by the electric eels.

Fig. 1. Kenneth Branagh as Victor Frankenstein from Douglas van Hollen; “Top 10 Movies Featuring Slime – Part 1”; *flickchart: the blog*; flickchart.com, 4 Jan. 2017, http://www.flickchart.com/blog/top-10-movies-featuring-slime-part-1/.

He spills all of the fluid over himself and Victor. He is naked and completely covered in slick fluid, which now coats Victor, who is only clothed in pants that are wet and stick to him (see fig. 2). Just before the Creature comes out of his sarcophagus, “the camera angle closes in on Branagh's physical presence, framing only his hairy, sweaty torso and thus offering another detailed shot of his masculine anatomy. Making good use of the cinematographic medium, Branagh combines music and rapid movements of the camera to emphasize the growing excitation of his own character” (Eberle-Sinatra 194). This part of the film capitalizes on the Faustian aspect of his character. The swell of the music and the over-exaltation of the triumph that Victor has achieved shows Faust.

Fig. 2. Both the Creature and Victor seeped in amniotic fluid from “Review: *Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein*”; *Etc-Etera: Thoughts, Musings, etc.*; wixsite.com, 4 Nov. 1994, http://pvillafl.wixsite.com/etc-etera/single-post/1994/11/4/Review-Mary-Shelleys-Frankenstein.

The way Branagh treats his body throughout the whole film is curious and remarkable, highlighting the Narcissus aspect of Frankenstein’s character. For example, the film begins in the extreme north where men on a ship are struggling through icy waters until they run aground. The viewer first gets to see Victor Frankenstein in this setting. According to the book, Victor should be looking worn and rough. Walton touches on his attractiveness, but it is almost always tempered by Walton thinking about how he could have looked or how did he look in the past before his troubles. In the film, Branagh, who is playing Victor, appears more like an action hero (see fig. 3). He is dragging a sled behind him with the body of dogs and generally looking pretty

Fig. 3. Victor Frankenstein as Action Hero from "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: 1994"; *Rotten Tomatoes*; rottentomatoes.com, 2018, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/mary_shelleys_frankenstein/.

impressive. He pushes back his hood, not revealing an exhausted man who looks ready to keel over from lack of eating and attempting to endure the harsh winds. Instead, Branagh looks a little weather-beaten, but more like he has spent a day too long on the ski slopes, a little sunburned and wind chapped. His hair is flowing like a mane, and he has a neatly trimmed beard. On his hair and beard, there are some indications of the weather, but again, it looks as if he has stayed out a little too late on the slopes and got caught in the most recent snowfall. In this section of the

film, Branagh's main physical flaw (extremely thin lips) is nicely disguised by the beard. He hardly looks troubled, aggravated, or deeply concerned.

Branagh approaches the depiction of all the characters in the movie with a romanticized, gothic air. He depicts the birthing scene of Victor's brother as intense and bloody. There is so much blood that when Victor's father comes down the stairs to tell Victor his mother is dead, blood covers him from head to toe, especially noticeable since he is shirtless and not wearing shoes. Branagh also shows Elizabeth in a distinct way in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. Played by Helena Bonham Carter, she has dark hair and eyes, differening from the fair Elizabeth in the book. The film often depicts her as filling the full shot. For example, at one point she is reading a letter Victor sent her and the camera moves around her as she is seated outside. Branagh has her dress stretched out in all directions so at any given moment in the shot she is spanning all sides. This shooting of her reflects how Branagh wants her character to develop and be used in this version of the story.

Beyond the other characters, the Creature is depicted in a romanticized, gothic way. He is often swathed in a coat, which allows him, for some brief moments, to pass without anyone bothered by him (see fig. 4). The coat moves beautifully around him and allows for some truly arresting images: But rather than being terrifying, they usually are beautiful. On the other hand, when he is shown, "the visual medium of film highlights something at once crucial to the novel and virtually invisible to the reader: the repulsiveness of the creature's appearance" (Heffernan 141). In *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, Branagh chooses to show the viewer the body of the Creature, locking his audience into one vision of what the Creature looks like. This aspect of the film over the novel, where the Creature's appearance is left in the minds of the readers to be as

Fig. 4. Gothic and intriguing Creature swathed in his large coat from “Le mythe de Frankenstein au cinema”; *Télé-Lousirs.fr*; programme-tv.net, 2018, https://photo.programme-tv.net/le-mythe-de-frankenstein-au-cinema-4815.

horrible or tame as they choose, works both for and against the film. Since the Creature's monstrous appearance unifies the viewers' visions, the Creature necessarily must look truly horrific. But *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*'s Creature is not that horrific. Although large and imposing, his face reveals nothing truly terrible. Some thick stitching across four places, notably around an entire eye, exists and his eyes are different colors (see fig. 5). However, this eye color is exactly what does not work for the film. In choosing to allow the Creature to have sharp, intelligent eyes, Branagh undercuts his attempt to make a horrifying monster that would loom in

Fig. 5. Close up of the Creature with his intense eyes from "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein – USA, 1994"; *Horrorpedia*, horrorpedia.com, 24 Nov. 2013, https://horrorpedia.com/2013/11/24/frankenstein-1994/.

the minds of the viewers. In the novel, the eyes are described in a grotesque milky way, as hard to tell the colored iris from the white of the eye. This image is much more unsettling than the spark-filled eyes of the film's Creature.

Even though the viewers might not all be repulsed by the Creature, the people and characters shown in the film seem to be truly terrified. When he loses his hood during the village scene, all of the villagers respond with utter horror. They immediately (in too short a time one might think) jump into attack mode. They seek to destroy and tear down the Creature. This reaction is not just limited to the villagers (the cottagers too react very poorly to the Creature): "Branagh's Victor is also horrified by the sheer ugliness of the creature, by the barbed-wire stitches that harrow his body and distend his face. The stitching of the creature – nowhere explicitly mentioned in Mary Shelley's text – originates in film" (Heffernan 144). This stitching is almost expected in representations of the Creature, and in this way the film did not disappoint.

The stitching is large, over the top, and impossible to miss. Also related to the stitching is the unhealthy-looking skin on certain areas of the Creature. Scott J. Juengel discusses how the Creature, as an amalgamation of corpses, really embodies the "limits of representation" (373). Perhaps it is repulsive to think about skin from dead people stitched together to create a new being, but, for today's viewers (or even viewers from the 1990s), taking skin from one part of the body and transferring it elsewhere is a common medical practice. The Creature simply does not look too monstrous in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. He just looks like a man who has had some work done, albeit poorly.

Distinct Choices that Influence the Narcissus-Faust Viewing of *Frankenstein*

Since film is different than the novel form, and adaptation provides an interpretation to a story, Branagh's film makes fascinating, sometimes odd, choices that push the story of

Frankenstein into more of a Narcissus-Faust direction. For example, during the scene when Frankenstein and the Creature truly meet for the first time, Branagh chooses to employ a classic dialogue technique. He cuts from one close up to the next as Victor and the Creature talk. This choice juxtaposes the smooth handsomeness of Victor to the sewn grotesqueness of the Creature, highlighting Victor as a Narcissus -- especially as he is looking at (or into, if we want to follow the metaphor) a clear inversion of himself. In the novel, Shelley is only able to use words to move back and forth from Victor and the Creature. In the film, the inversion of Narcissus becomes unmistakably clearer.

However, overall, it is Branagh's choice that often make the most obvious difference.

Fig. 6. Walton as Romantic hero from Glowworm; "Frankenstein: Publicity Still of Aidan Quinn"; *MovieStillDB*; moviestillsdb.com, 2 Nov. 2012, https://www.moviestillsdb.com/movies/frankenstein-i109836/03a21584.

The film opens on the character of Walton (see fig. 6). He is struggling to maintain control over his men as he wants to keep pushing forward. He is also romantically depicted, with long, dark hair, and seems to be brave and bold. He does not seem to care about his men, a point that is perhaps belabored too much. Walton in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* seems to represent the figure in need of saving. He allows the story that Frankenstein shares to be redeemed in part because he listens and changes his mind. This aspect shapes the narrative into more of a *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* with Frankenstein as the Ancient Mariner and Walton as the Wedding Guest. This reading may be seen as present in *Frankenstein*, but the ending of Walton is left in more ambiguity than in the film. At the end of the movie, Walton makes a spur-of-the-moment decision to return home, seemingly swayed by the Creature's own choice. In the novel, it is a bit more ambiguous because of the narrative structure. Since he is writing letters to his sister, the writing cannot capture the same sort of quick decision the film does.

The destruction of the women in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* is also much more overt than in the novel. The first woman to die is Victor's mother. Instead of passing away from scarlet fever, which is hardly pleasant but certainly less bloody, she dies while giving birth. The birthing scene is shown in a way that is reminiscent of a battle. The woman is stationary, so movement is provided by the constantly roving camera, which circles around and around the birthing chair. Blood gets everywhere, and when Victor runs into the room to grab his mother, he also gets coated in her vaginal blood. This is a gruesome scene that demands death from the woman.

Another terrifying scene shows Justine's end. The people execute her for the murder of William, but it is not really an execution. Rather, they lynch her. The pace of this sequence is frenetic and wild. The sky lacks color and the setting presents itself as dark, filled with grays and

blacks. A mob grabs Justine and drags her through small crevices and holes to lead to the top of the city. As she is being dragged, the film cuts back to Elizabeth and Victor calling for Justine and screaming "No!". Of course, it is to no avail, and Justine is hanged. They push her off the very high wall to plunge to a far death where Branagh highlights the cracking of her neck noticeably. It is disturbing because it almost feels cavalier, which the screenplay captures: "Victor and Elizabeth look on to see: a group of men on top of the high wall pull Justine to her feet and throw her off. VICTOR/ELIZABETH: *No!!* A pair of feet drop heavily in frame. Thump-crack!" (Lady and Darabont 112). The coldness of her death and her ultimate destruction again connect to the vicious treatment of women in the Narcissus-Faust legends. She seems most like Gretchen here, suffering her fate in life (if not in death).

Instead of leaving Justine's body in peace, in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* the Creature has a different plan for her. As Lorie Leathers Single notes, "In another piece of rewriting, it is De Niro's creature who supplies the body for his mate. In the novel, only Victor dabbles about with corpses, doing all the dirty work as it were" (9). An important distinction, in the film, Victor's decision to not make the Creature a female companion seems to have everything to do with the fact that he cannot destroy a friend's body, even though, we will see, that this does not bother him for long.

This choice leads to the most shocking change in the film, which has to do with Elizabeth's death and resurrection. Branagh presents her death in a wildly different way: "Her death on their wedding night in the novel is bloodless, with her strangled body draped across the bed; in the film, the Creature plunges his hand into her chest, pulls out her heart and thrusts it as the camera" (Brannon 17, see fig. 7). It is a strange moment in the film, setting up what Victor

Fig. 7. The Creature holding Elizabeth's heart from Rob Kirchgassner; "*Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994)"; *The Agony Booth*; agonybooth.com, 26 Oct. 2017, http://www.agonybooth.com/mary-shelleys-frankenstein-1994-59599.

chooses to do after he finds her dead body. Instead of collapsing in sorrow as he does in the book, in the film, Victor takes her body to his lab. This part of the story neglects what occurs in the book and instead seems to draw more from *The Bride of Frankenstein*: "However, the more radical change involving Elizabeth rest more in the plot addition of Victor's reviving Elizabeth's lifeless body as a counterpoint to the initial creation scene, and this addition speaks to Branagh's reliance on the Whale films as antecedents rather than Shelley's text" (Brannon 14). Victor wants to make a female companion after all, but this one is for him. Even so, as Linda Gill claims, "Her physical deformation and physical death are simply the lateralization of the possibility that in assuming her role as the idealized object of masculine desire, which the negotiation of the Oedipal complex en-tails, [*sic*] woman has already died as a subject" (94). The film brings to the fore what seems to be happening in the novel, as well: "The novel implies and

the film seems to insist that woman's ability to break the chain of victimization is nearly impossible because in a patriarchal world man is all-powerful, and woman's destiny is inextricably linked to him" (Gill 97). Her revival shows an extremely stomach turning scene. Branagh makes the female companion grotesque and difficult to look at (see fig. 8). She

Fig. 8. Elizabeth's inexplicably restitched face from "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein – USA, 1994"; *Horrorpedia*, horrorpedia.com, 24 Nov. 2013, https://horrorpedia.com/2013/11/24/frankenstein-1994/.

inexplicably has all sorts of cuts on her, which seems very odd because she simply needs a new heart or at the very most a new torso section. Instead, she is cut up and re-stitched, which makes her look repulsive. Perhaps most significantly, this works to overtly connect Elizabeth with

Echo. When she is brought back, she cannot clearly communicate at all. In one of the most chilling scenes, she becomes a doll for Victor and the Creature to spin around in a twisted waltz.

It is this doll-like aspect of her resurrection that emerges as so frightening. She calls to mind other films with grotesque dolls, and the female companion shows the most evident examples of the grotesqueness. Linda Gill writes about how the grotesque in the female companion also shows Elizabeth's limited agency. She claims, "In the film's revision, woman's complete reliance upon man is reiterated when the monstrously re-created and de-formed Elizabeth proves obviously too weak, too impotent and too grotesquely mis-shaped to exist outside the perimeters of Victor's world, and she can only register her rebellion and express her subjectivity and autonomy in self-immolation" (Gill 97). She is completely at their mercy if she wants to continue in existence. Victor has truly taken any choice she had of continuing living away. This reality forces Elizabeth to take charge in the only way she can.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein provides a wild interpretation of *Frankenstein*, focusing on the visceral aspect of the viewing experience. Since each director views the story differently, each *Frankenstein* adaptation provides its own interpretation of the story. This aspect of adaptation works well for the story of *Frankenstein* because this story has become so ubiquitous in today's popular culture: "For the plot of Dr. Frankenstein and his monsters, rather than assuming any fixed representational form, is constantly being rewritten and reinvented . . . If it is Mary Shelley who has the first word on the monster and his mate, it is the film's spectators-heterogeneous and unbridled – who have the last" (Young). This reality does leave the story open to forever being worked and reworked. It will be constantly hammered into a new story.

Frankenstein and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* both show how Frankenstein embodies the Narcissus-Faust and how that works within the tale. It takes the form a story that also allows for the representations of the physical to greatly connect to the narrative, which helps to show their value to the general story. This importance of the physical to the story leads into the novel and adaptation that will be the focus of the following chapter: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde's story greatly depends on the way the physical is represented, in either the novel or the adaptation. It is also a story that works exceptionally well for the Narcissus-Faust reading.

CHAPTER 4

THE FAUSTIAN NATURE OF DORIAN GRAY

The Picture of Dorian Gray is the next philosophical novel I want to look at with the lens of Narcissus-Faust. This novel appears to be closely connected to Oscar Wilde himself. As Richard Ellman claims, "A latter-day Faust, [Wilde] knew in advance that every pleasure would discontent him at last, and saw himself as the prey to the very moods he sought to experience. To fall victim to himself was to bring his experience to the utmost bound; unfortunately, it was like committing suicide, as Dorian Gray would discover" (270). Ellman also discusses how deep Wilde's interest in the tales of Narcissus runs and how he would often include symbols or overt references to this story (311). Throughout the novel, Dorian is repeatedly and overtly connected to Narcissus. After Basil's somewhat shocking reveal that he has put too much of himself in the painting, Lord Henry says, "he is a Narcissus" (Wilde 3). And there are also times when he is linked to one more subtly. He is termed beautiful and dream-like and frequently connected to the spirit of the Greeks (Wilde 11, 19, 41). One of the most important moments of Dorian as a Narcissus is when he sees the painting of himself for the first time. Most of the description mimics Narcissus seeing himself for the first time in the still pool (Wilde 28). The painting entrances him and he cannot look away from what Basil has created just as Narcissus could not tear himself away from his reflected image.

Early in the novel, Wilde establishes Dorian's relationship with Faust. Not just because of the deal that gets struck between Dorian and the painting, Dorian as Faust shows up in other ways as well. Of course, the overtly Faustian deal is not clear to Dorian until after he viciously breaks off his engagement with Sibyl. Before this event occurs, however, Dorian does exhibit

Faust's classic thirst for knowledge: "'You must lend me these, Basil,' he cried. 'I want to learn them. They're perfectly charming'" (Wilde 17). A bit later in the story, when Dorian describes his love of Sibyl, the account does not sound like love. Instead, he seems to be simply indulging in his own Faustian curiosity, comparable to how Faust felt towards Gretchen: "His sudden mad love for Sibyl Vane was a psychological phenomenon of no small interest. There was no doubt that curiosity had much to do with it, curiosity and the desire for new experiences; yet it was not a simple but rather a very complex passion" (Wilde 66). Almost immediately after Dorian awakens to his own beauty, we get one of the most overt moments of Faust in the story, when the deal is actually struck: "If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that – for that – I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" (Wilde 29). Dorian is a quick study in his prioritization of youth and beauty. Prior to his last sitting of the painting and his chat with Lord Henry, he did not understand his own beauty and the value of youth. However, as soon as the chat takes place, he is depicted as embracing the desire to keep both his beauty and his youth. He formalizes his obsession by going so far as to say he would give up his soul to keep these things. Dorian does not think this throwaway statement will achieve anything, but it is a bold statement to make.

The three characters treat the painting in this scene with almost too much reverence. They all immediately revere the painting, as if it were alive: "He was going to rip through the canvas . . . 'Don't, Basil, don't!' he cried. 'It would be murder! . . . It is part of myself. I feel that'" (Wilde 31). And then a little later, "'I shall stay with the real Dorian,' he said sadly. 'Is it the real Dorian?' cried the original of the portrait" (Wilde 33). The painting being labeled as 'the real

Dorian' foreshadows what will happen in the book, and it influences the character of Dorian. Over the course of the book, he will return to this scene to blame it for where his life takes him, yet how his friends downplay who he is in favor of the painting essentially shows its power. Especially as a Narcissus who loves himself, this type of characterization would bother Dorian. He wants to be the center of their attention and craves their love for himself and not his painting.

We also get an important connection to the Narcissus story when Lord Henry finds out Dorian's tragic background. Dorian's father was, for all intents and purposes, murdered by his grandfather, which caused his mother to die of grief. For Lord Henry, "It posed the lad, made him more perfect as it were. Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic" (Wilde 40). This connects with the story of Narcissus in the way that Dorian's mother seems to have a premonition before she dies of what will befall her son over the course of his life. Hence, Narcissus' mother knew that what could happen to her son if she did not protect him from polished glass. As Lord Henry observes it: "There was something fascinating in this son of Love and Death" (Wilde 41). This statement captures Narcissus (self-love) and Faust (coming of death) succinctly.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, how everyone reacts to and treats Dorian places him firmly in the category of Narcissus: "His good looks are really quite remarkable; everybody notices them'" (Wilde 73); "There was something about Dorian that charmed everybody. It was a pleasure even to see him" (Wilde 136); "with a look of shy wonder in his rough, uncomely face. He had never seen anyone so marvelous" (Wilde 139). Each person Dorian comes in contact with is so taken by his beauty that it is seems difficult for anyone to actually get to know him.

The curious deal Dorian makes without seeming to realize it works as the centerpiece of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. When he sees the change of the painting after he breaks it off with Sibyl, he starts to realize what has happened. Once he understands that she killed herself and that there is nothing he can do for her now, he begins to settle into his own fate and destiny without really trying to fight against it. He thinks, "had his choice already been made? Yes, life had decided that for him – life, and his own infinite curiosity about life. Eternal youth, infinite passions, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins – he was to have all these things. The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all" (Wilde 119). Dorian almost immediately resigns himself to living, however he wants and corrupting the painting. In this realization, "A feeling of pain crept over him . . . Once, in boyish mockery of Narcissus, he had kissed or feigned to kiss, those painted lips that now smiled so cruelly at him. Morning after morning he had sat before the portrait, wondering at its beauty, almost enamoured of it, as it seemed to him at times" (Wilde 119). At this point, he is horrified by himself. This image that he fell in love with is his still pond that shows him the perfect youth he just wants to embrace. So he has to ask himself, "Was it to become a monstrous and loathsome thing, to be hidden away in a locked room, to be shut out from the sunlight that had so often touched to brighter gold the waving wonder of its hair? The pity of it! the pity of it!" (Wilde 119). He knows what he is going to do, and he is horrified by it. He does not want to destroy the painting's image because he loves it. However, he decides that he, as the living image, will be enough for him to love. Like Faust, he now wants to drink deeply from life. He wants to do everything and see how much power and control he can exert over everyone he encounters.

The nebulous nature of the pact creates part of what makes *The Picture of Dorian Gray* such a compelling novel. He does not sign his soul away with his own blood. Instead, he states what he wants, and everything unfolds around him. This dealmaking seems to indicate the time in which this story was written. There is no definite God or afterlife or shared understanding of the world, so Dorian seems to take the ambiguous nature of his deal in stride. When he makes his first discovery of the painting, he cannot quite bring himself to believe it: "Finally he came back, went over to the picture and examined it. In the dim arrested light that struggled through the cream-coloured silk blinds, the face appeared to him to be a little changed. The expression looked different. One would have said that there was a touch of cruelty in the mouth. It was certainly strange" (Wilde 101). When he comes back to examine the portrait again, he finds that he does not remember it incorrectly: "But the strange expression that he had noticed in the face of the portrait seemed to linger there, to be more intensified even. The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing" (Wilde 102). The mirror represents another relation between Dorian and Narcissus. Here, Dorian sees that "[t]he whole expression had altered" (Wilde 102). It is only now that he realizes why the expression would change in the painting and not be marked on his face:

> Yes, he remembered it perfectly. He had uttered a mad wish that he himself might remain young, and the portrait grow old; that his own beauty might be untarnished, and the face of the canvas bear the burden of his passions and his sins; that the painted image might be seared with the lines of suffering and thought, and that he might keep all the delicate bloom and loveliness of his then just conscious boyhood. Surely his wish had not

> been fulfilled? Such things were impossible. It seemed monstrous even to think of them.
>
> And, yet, there was the picture before him, with the touch of cruelty in the mouth.
>
> Cruelty! Had he been cruel? It was the girl's fault. (Wilde 102)

Significantly, here he ends by blaming the girl. Dorian always wants to slip out of accepting onus. When he sees the change in his portrait, he does not want to be held accountable for what he sees as Sibyl's misstep.

This aspect of Dorian relates to the vagueness of the deal he makes with the portrait. It is, in part, the ambiguity of the deal that makes it so difficult to really understand. As Dorian tries to think through it, he does not fully comprehend what happened: "It was conscious of the events of life as they occurred . . . Did it merely take cognizance of what passed within the soul?" (Wilde 118). What all does the painting take into account? How does the painting know when to change and in what way? As Dorian tries to figure out these questions, he comes around and will change his mind and decide to try to be better, but his first reaction proves his most honest. Hence, he will not try to be better after Sibyl kills herself. Just because she died does not mean some abstract element forces him to follow a dubious path. He makes it sound like he has no choice and that the choice has been made for him, but he could have taken a different path if he were not a Narcissus-Faust. He feels premonitions for what is to come, just as we sense Dorian's destiny with statements like, "He thought of his friend's young fiery-coloured life, and wondered how it was all going to end" (Wilde 67). This image of fiery-colored life seems to connect Dorian's end with what is expected at the end of any Faustian story: someone getting dragged to hell.

Dorian is a Narcissus because of his selfishness in every action of the book. He decides to reunite with Sibyl, but not out of a desire to be with her or because he is concerned with her. He only wants to reunite for his own peace of mind and to maintain his idea of himself. When he finds out she has killed herself, his response is: "'So I have murdered Sibyl Vane," said Dorian Gray, half to himself – 'murdered her as surely as if I cut her little throat with a knife. Yet the roses are not less lovely for all that. The birds sing just as happily in my garden" (Wilde 111). At the very end of the novel, Dorian believes he does one good deed for Hetty. However, it is not a good deed at all. The deed solely benefits Dorian. Dorian serves as a Narcissus because of the pure selfish focus he shows, and a Faust as well because of his cold, analytical approach.

During the chapter that moves us through many years, Dorian embraces one obsession after the next, from jewels to Catholicism. All of his obsessions seem to spring from the yellow book that Lord Henry sends his way after Sibyl's death. This book not only captures aspects of Dorian's life and story, but also represents Narcissus and Faust. For example, the main character in the book had "[a] somewhat grotesque dread of mirrors, and polished metal surfaces, and still water, which came upon the young Parisian so early in his life, and was occasioned by the sudden decay of beauty that had once, apparently, been so remarkable" (Wilde 143). Also the way in which Dorian engages himself with the book proves Faustian: "It was with an almost cruel joy – and perhaps in nearly every joy, as certainly in every pleasure, cruelty has its place – that he used to read the latter part of the book" (Wilde 143). The poisonous book which becomes the focus almost at the midpoint of the novel calls to mind the Narcissus-Faust characteristics of Dorian.

As the book continues and time passes, the mystery of Dorian Gray begins to swirl around his feet, and everyone he meets becomes interested in understanding his mystery. They would hear horrible rumors for this Narcissus-Faust who only cared for himself, but somehow was able to keep his youth and charm: "Even those who had heard the most evil things against him, and from time to time strange rumours about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs could not believe anything to his dishonour when they saw him. He had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world" (Wilde 144). His appearance protects him from incrimination. The attention to his appearance, how beautiful and young he is, connects him to Narcissus. Even when they know Dorian to be bad, "There was something in the purity of his face that rebuked them. His mere presence seemed to recall to them the memory of the innocence that they had tarnished. They wondered how one so charming and graceful as he was could have escaped the stain of an age that was at once sordid and sensual" (Wilde 144). Beyond the gossip and rumors that circulate around Dorian, people see him as something separate. It seems astonishing to them that he could exist in the same world and still be innocent and spotless.

These mystical aspects highlight the supernatural, which is always a curious aspect of the Faust story. There has to be some sort of supernatural or seemingly-supernatural element hovering on the edge of the story. In *Frankenstein*, the idea that Victor can create life hovers, and in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the nebulous thing that allows Dorian to make his ambiguous deal. As everyone ages around him, Dorian is able to remain looking as if he is on the cusp of coming of age, which makes it hard for anyone to believe ill of him: "his frank debonair manner, his charming boyish smile, and the infinite grace of that wonderful youth that seemed never to

leave him, were in themselves a sufficient answer to the calumnies, for so they termed them, that were circulated about him" (Wilde 160). The book leaves him squarely placed in the frame of the Narcissus-Faust story, which pushes him to the only conclusion the story could have: his destruction by his own hand.

Mirror-Mephistopheles in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Mephistopheles is treated in a way that fits well with the Narcissus-Faust stories from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the start of the novel, it seems pretty clear that Lord Henry is Mephistopheles. Most of the characters in the novel identify him as someone who leads others astray, or who says wild things to confuse and confound others, even if he does not necessarily do anything bad himself. As Basil says at practically the beginning of the novel, "You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing" (Wilde 5). In the first chapter, Lord Henry says a great deal but he does not necessarily follow through or believe what he says to others (Wilde 10). The character seems to cast Lord Henry in the role of Mephistopheles, as the person who corrupts and leads others astray (Wilde 15). Some treat it as an almost adorable quirk of Lord Henry. As Basil warns Dorian, "and don't move about too much, or pay any attention to what Lord Henry says. He has a very bad influence over all his friends" (Wilde 19). Lord Henry's known nature to spout off whatever kind of pithy phrase he can is treated by most characters as his hallmark trait.

The philosophical statements that Lord Henry assertively makes throughout serve as one of the most notable things about *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Something that he establishes early on (and will come back to) is that "[n]othing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can

cure the senses but the soul" (Wilde 23). He says other things as well, calculated to influence and sway others. This leads Dorian to say, when asked if he is glad he met Lord Henry, "Yes, I am glad now. I wonder shall I always be glad?" (Wilde 27). This brief exchange highlights Dorian's perception of Lord Henry's power, which he allowed, and even sought.

When Dorian speaks with Lord Henry, Dorian confesses, "'You filled me with a wild desire to know everything about life" (Wilde 54). Dorian presents as Faust and Lord Henry as Mephistopheles. Dorian, in the same speech, admits that because of Lord Henry, he was filled with a "mad curiosity" (Wilde 54). He wanted to know about others, not because he cared about these humans or wanted to help them, but because he was interested and wanted to know for his own benefit.

However, Lord Henry is not the perfect Mephistopheles because, for all of his influencing, he does seem to back up Basil's good opinion. He does not really expect, or want, people to do horrible things. After Dorian explains that he would confess his crime to Lord Henry, Lord Henry says, "'People like you – the willful sunbeams of life – don't commit crimes'" (Wilde 58). Lord Henry really cannot imagine Dorian being evil or even capable of committing crimes. Later in the novel, he will continually say that he does not understand how everyone can say such horrible things about Dorian ("one only needs to see you to see that it is not true" (Wilde 64)). Even though Lord Henry does seem to shy away from things that would be more obviously seen as evil, he certainly is cold and calculating in his study of Dorian (Wilde 84). This appears as demon-like because he clearly does not care for Dorian. Lord Henry only seems to care about controlling him and studying him in a way that is frightening. For example, the text says that Lord Henry "found an exquisite pleasure in playing on the lad's unconscious

egotism" (Wilde 113-14). Although this aspect of Lord Henry proves distressing, it does not necessarily place him in the role of Mephistopheles.

In the middle of *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* and toward its end, it becomes quite evident that Dorian embodies the true Mephistopheles. First of all, he is the one who leads numerous people away from their good lives into destruction. Thinking back on the horrible night at the theater watching Sibyl with Lord Henry and Basil, "[Dorian] remembered with what callousness he had watched her. Why had he been made like that? Why had such a soul been given to him?" (Wilde 103). He cruelly waited until the end, knowing what he would do, even knowing that he held her soul and possessed her in that way.

However, he does not only lead Sibyl astray. He also destroys many people, as Basil listed when confronting Dorian:

> Why is your friendship so fatal to young men? There was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England, with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton, and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent's only son, and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James's Street. He seemed broken with shame and sorrow. What about the young Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him? (Wilde 170)

Dorian responds by saying he cannot help how other people act because he has no control over them. Yet Basil responds, "One has a right to judge of a man by the effect he has over his friends. Yours seem to lose all sense of honour, of goodness, of purity. You have filled them with a madness for pleasure. They have gone down into the depths. You led them there. Yes: you

led them there, and yet you can smile, as you are smiling now. And there is worse behind" (Wilde 171). This rejoinder is damning, and we see that even with Basil, Dorian gleefully wheedles out Basil's secret when he should be confessing his own (Wilde 128).

The book makes the corruption of Adrian Singleton and Alan Campbell to be a particularly horrifying example of Dorian as Mephistopheles. We do not know what happened with both men completely, but we know that Adrian Singleton has no friends and no family connection anymore. All he has is the opium den in which he hangs out, which is squalid and unappealing. Beyond this, Dorian has something to hold over Alan Campbell. Wilde leaves what that could be up to the reader to decide, but we know it has to be something horrifying enough that Alan decides he must destroy Basil's body rather than letting the letter be sent. This scene is quite disturbing because of how Dorian is controlling and forcing Alan to do this. Alan's response to the letter proves chilling: "As he read it, his face became ghastly pale, and he fell back in his chair. A horrible sense of sickness came over him. He felt as if his heart was beating itself to death in some empty hollow" (Wilde 193). And Dorian knows the power he holds over Alan. "It is impossible for you to refuse now. I tried to spare you. You will do me the justice to admit that. You were stern, harsh, offensive. You treated me as no man has ever dared to treat me – no living man, at any rate. I bore it all. Now it is for me to dictate terms" (Wilde 193). Not only does he know Alan must do what he wants, but he takes his pleasure in it and uses it as a way to feel better about himself, by setting himself on a pedestal. Almost at the end of the novel, we find out, in passing, that Alan killed himself because he could not live with what Dorian tempted him to do.

Yet even more than the way he leads others astray, Dorian proves to be his own Mephistopheles. Throughout the story, Dorian tries to push the onus onto Lord Henry or the yellow book, but the responsibility of his choices and decisions always come back to him. Wilde describes his first experience reading the poisonous book: "After a few minutes he became absorbed. It was the strangest book that he had ever read. It seemed to him that in exquisite raiment, and to the delicate sound of flutes, the sins of the world were passing in dumb show before him. Things that he had dimly dreamed of were suddenly made real to him. Things of which he had never dreamed were gradually revealed" (Wilde 141). However, he sees that "Dorian Gray had been poisoned by a book. There were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realise his conception of the beautiful" (Wilde 165). In contrast, readers see that "[f]or years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he never sought to free himself from it" (Wilde 143). It is not so much the fault of the book as of Dorian himself. And Lord Henry admits toward the end, "'As for being poisoned by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has no influence upon action. It annihilates the desire to act'" (Wilde 248). Dorian as the person reading the book creates the influence from his own desire.

This onus is made explicitly clear in the last chapter of the book when Dorian is forced to take stock of his entire life and of the forces that led him to that moment. He thinks back on the relationships he has had with friends and with lovers. As his thoughts are recounted, "He knew that he had tarnished himself, filled his mind with corruption, and given horror to his fancy; that he had been an evil influence to others, and had experienced a terrible joy in being so" (Wilde

250). He continually seeks to push the responsibility away, but, ultimately, he is left with it because he is the one who tempted himself.

Echo-Gretchen in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

For all of its glorious qualities, much of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is troubling when approached from the standpoint of gender. Lord Henry makes some shocking statements about women throughout the story: "'My dear boy, no woman is a genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals'" (Wilde 53). But it is really the way women are treated overall in the novel that seems problematic. Lord Henry represents a kind of systematic silencing of women throughout the whole story. They are mocked, expected to fit into specific categories of beauty, denied power and agency, and largely ignored. Naturally, Sibyl Vane represents an excellent Echo-Gretchen, but her place is ultimately taken over by Basil Hallward.

Sibyl Vane's importance as a character in the novel largely exists because Dorian discovers the power he has in the painting through her. Sibyl is like Echo because she falls in love with Dorian before she even knows his name (Wilde 76). Wilde also portrays her as the perfect example of a woman. As Dorian attempts to describe her to Lord Henry, he reports, "imagine a girl, hardly seventeen years of age, with a little flower-like face, a small Greek head with plaited coils of dark-brown hair, eyes that were violet wells of passion, lips that were like the petal of a rose . . . And her voice . . . You know how a voice can stir one. Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget" (Wilde 57). All of the male

characters seem to only care about Sibyl because of her beauty. As Lord Henry says, "She is beautiful. What more can you want?" (Wilde 96). Dorian falls in love with Sibyl over the course of a night of watching her act in a Shakespearean play purely based on how she looks and performs.

Beyond that, what really makes Sibyl Vane such a compelling Echo is how she is portrayed as an echo of characters. She is not depicted as a real person. It becomes quite obvious what Dorian likes about her when he talks to Basil and Lord Henry, merely describing her beauty and her exquisite acting. In fact, it is the acting he loves. "I have seen her in every age and in every costume" (Wilde 57). And later, when they are talking about her, Lord Henry asks, "'When is she Sibyl Vane?' 'Never.' 'I congratulate you.' 'How horrid you are! She is all the great heroines of the world in one. She is more than an individual'" (Wilde 61). However, this very pedestal on which Dorian seeks to place Sibyl denies her a true life. She is not allowed to be herself, and Dorian soon learns that he does not like her "real" self at all. When she tries to be her real self, he denies her in a painfully cold manner (Wilde 97). Whenever characters discuss Sibyl or the narrator displays her in the story, Wilde highlights her silence: "After a time she became silent" (Wilde 77) and "She wept silently" (Wilde 100). She is the silent one, which serves as a sharp contrast to her voice. Whenever Wilde mentions her speaking the context shows that she gives voice not to herself but to some character that she portrays. In this way, Dorian forces her to be the characters she plays and does not allow her to have her own voice, just as Narcissus with Echo.

Sibyl shares relationship with Gretchen as well, in part because of her relationship with her mother. Sibyl's relationship with her mother (Wilde 69) and Gretchen's relate. The overall

relationships between the men and women in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* reflect Goethe's *Faust*: "all gender and generational relationships in *Faust* fail: Faust bitterly repudiates his parental tradition; Gretchen and her whole family (father, mother, sister, brother and child) meet untimely, mostly violent, ends" (Anchor 48). This is certainly true for poor Sibyl. She has no clear father in the book, her mother seems to disappear altogether, and her brother gets accidentally shot. Not only that, the mother, in both, is not connected to her family. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* the mother prefers to see them as players in a huge play or pantomime, which makes none of her interactions with James or Sibyl feel genuine or real (Wilde 70). Even when Dorian rejects Sibyl, he sounds like Narcissus rejecting Echo: "you have killed my love. You used to stir my imagination. Now, you don't even stir my curiosity" (Wilde 98). *Metamorphosis* describes Narcissus refusing Echo when she puts her arms around him in the woods: "He runs from her, and running cries 'Away with these encircling hands! May I die before what's mine is yours" (Ovid 60). His abrupt and final statement parallels Dorian's. Neither leaves any space for hope, which builds up the Echo-Gretchen aspect of Sibyl.

Finally, it is her death that makes her an Echo-Gretchen. In reference to Sibyl Vane, just after he learned of her death, Dorian says, 'those white, silent people we call the dead" (Wilde 112). He highlights her silence because she will never be able to speak again, and, just like Echo and Gretchen, she is dead because of the Narcissus-Faust that entered her life. When Dorian is seeking to rethink Sibyl and his treatment of her, Wilde explains that "He thought only of Sibyl. A faint echo of his love came back to him. He repeated her name over and over again" (104). It appears that she is no more than an echo for Dorian. She never really was her own person with him, and the one time she tried to be, he rejected her out of hand. Then, "There was a silence"

(Wilde 117). In one of the more chilling moments in the story, Sibyl is denied the ability to be herself, even in death: “She had often mimicked death on the stage. Then Death himself had touched her, and taken her with him. How had she played that dreadful last scene?” (Wilde 118). Lord Henry and Dorian simply see her as a figure and a character, not as a real human.

This approach to Sibyl merely underscores the way in which women are treated in the text. The final insult is that since Sibyl dies early in the story, her place is largely taken by Basil Hallward. Even from the beginning of the novel, Basil connects to this category. When he is first talking to Lord Henry, before Dorian has even appeared in the story, Basil confesses, “I have put too much of myself into it” (Wilde 3). It is as if he has lost part of himself and he merely echoes what Dorian is. He goes on,

> ‘Harry,’ said Basil Hallward, looking him straight in the face, ‘every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul.’ (Wilde 6)

A further exploration into the dependency he has on Dorian follows this statement. Basil reveals how deeply and quickly he felt connected to Dorian: “When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with someone whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself” (Wilde 7). As Echo depends on Narcissus to continue with life and to have a voice, Basil describes something similar when he admits, “Every day. I couldn’t be happy if I didn’t see him every day. He is absolutely necessary

to me" (Wilde 10). Not only that, Basil's silence is frequently mentioned and connected to his work, especially his work on Dorian (Wilde 19), but Basil seems to respond directly to Dorian, allowing Dorian's presence to give him life and feeling. After Dorian and Basil basically grow apart in the novel, it is as if Basil ceases to exist until he meets Dorian in the street. In the text, it seems he has no being separate from Dorian.

Basil Hallward is, moreover, often depicted in a feminine way: more passive than either Dorian and Lord Henry and far more empathetic. In fact, one of the more moving scenes presents Basil attempting to comfort Dorian over Sibyl's death. Basil shows so much empathy and care for Sibyl shaming Dorian and frustrating him (Wilde 121). Basil talks to Dorian right after he has confronted him for Sibyl's death, and Dorian's callous treatment of the news. He explains, "I was dominated, soul, brain, and power by you" (Wilde 129). Basil was subjugated by Dorian the way Sibyl was as well.

Just as Sibyl was important to Dorian's story because she provided the means of finding out he had this strange and special power, Basil provides Dorian with another realization. At the end of the novel, he would obviously not be dead except for his relationship with Dorian. This time it is even more from Dorian's own hand because he murders him. He gets so mad and inexplicably angry at Basil that Dorian finds that he hates him. Dorian ends up brutally murdering him right after he shows Basil the portrait of his soul. This conclusion for Basil shows that he did allow himself to become merely an echo of Dorian and, when Dorian removed himself, he ceased to have that power and that connection. This idea is made explicitly clear when Lord Henry discusses Basil after he has disappeared. He mentions, "his painting had quite gone off. It seemed to me to have lost something. It had lost an ideal. When you and he ceased to

be great friends, he ceased to be a great artist" (Wilde 243). For Lord Henry, Basil only proved great with Dorian, thus showing both the idea of Basil being Dorian's echo and his Echo.

Wilde allows Basil to take the place of Sibyl, which the book does repeatedly to women. They seem to appear in the story only to be silenced, ignored, or brushed aside. This treatment of women shows, quite clearly, how society in the late 1800s in England treated and thought of women. They should be beautiful, and they represent things men want to attain, but the women should not have any power or voice outside of this small space. In many ways, because of Basil's feminine qualities, it makes sense that he works as a Echo-Gretchen, but it also marginalizes women even more, which exactly reflects the cultural ethos of the time.

Narcissus-Faust at the End of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The end of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* makes the connections to Narcissus-Faust clear. Dorian's love for himself must be punished and his audacity to sell his soul will bring destruction upon him. As is always true with Narcissus-Faust, the body of the character must be destroyed, and the man must cease to exist. For Dorian, this reality is especially difficult because, although his deal exits as unformalized and very ambiguous, it seems as if he has the ability to live forever.

Before we get to the final conclusion of the book, we start to see more and more examples of Narcissus-Faust in this novel. During the recounting of Dorian's obsessions, we are told that he liked to "stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and ageing face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken

his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul" (Wilde 144). This novel example captures the perfect unification of Narcissus with Faust. Dorian is in love with his physical self, but he is also insatiable and cold. He cannot be satiated by his own twisted nature, loving himself even more because of it.

Dorian gets almost gleeful when he considers all the horrible things he has done to others, and himself. He seems to delight in this knowledge: "Now it was to hide something that had corruption of its own, worse than the corruption of death itself - something that would breed horrors and yet would never die. What the worm was to the corpse, his sins would be to the painted image on the canvas. They would mar its beauty, and eat away its grace. They would defile it, and make it shameful. And yet the thing would live on. It would always be alive" (Wilde 134). As he takes the time to stare at and study the painting, it is clear that he does not have any real remorse for any of the acts he has committed. At one point, he is left "wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and failing limbs" (Wilde 145). And even when he decides that he needs to be remorseful, that he is no longer glorying in the destruction of himself, he still indulges in his own self-love: "he would think of the ruin he had brought upon his soul, with a pity that was all the more poignant because it was purely selfish" (Wilde 145). His self-love and demanding nature prove to be the key characteristics of Dorian.

One of the crucial moments in the story is when Dorian kills Basil. It shows not only the aspects of Dorian's soul and the state of his deal, but it also foreshadows how Dorian will find

his own destruction. He feels compelled to show Basil his painting because Basil simply cannot bring himself to imagine Dorian as evil – as everyone says he is: “Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man’s face. It cannot be concealed. People talk sometimes of secret vices. There are no such things. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even” (Wilde 169). As he continues this description, Basil says, “His life is dreadful. But you, Dorian, with your pure, bright, innocent face, and your marvellous untroubled youth – I can’t believe anything against you . . . I hear all these hideous things that people are whispering about you, I don’t know what to say” (Wilde 169). Like everyone else, Basil is sure that Dorian is innocent because of Dorian’s unstained youth.

This willful ignorance on Basil’s part seems to push Dorian into dragging him upstairs to see the real state of his soul. He says it in a way that is almost challenging because Basil explains, “‘I should have to see your soul.’ ‘To see my soul!’ muttered Dorian Gray, starting up from the sofa and turning around white from fear’ . . . ‘to see your soul. But only God can do that.’ A bitter laugh of mockery broke from the lips of the younger man. ‘You shall see it yourself, tonight!’” (Wilde 172). With these bold words, Dorian gets Basil to come upstairs with him. It is here, when he unveils the portrait for Basil that he connects it to the deal he has with some unclear being:

> Years ago, when I was a boy,’ said Dorian Gray, crushing the flower in his hand, “you met me, flattered me, and taught me to be vain of my good looks. One day you introduced me to a friend of yours, who explained to me the wonder of youth, and you finished the portrait of me that revealed to me the wonder of beauty. In a mad moment, that, even now, I don’t know whether I regret or not, I made a wish, perhaps you would

call it a prayer." (Wilde 177)

The whole section that follows, with Dorian's anger at and murder of Basil, sets up what will come at the very end of the novel.

However, before the ending, there occurs an important meeting between Dorian and his past. He goes to an opium den, seemingly seeking to forget the fact that he has brutally murdered a good friend and forced another person to get rid of his body in a pretty gruesome way. Here, he is not only seen by James Vane, but also by a woman he ruined in the past. This unnamed woman calls out to Dorian, "There goes the devil's bargain!" (Wilde 215), and then she tells James that he seems to have made some kind of deal that keeps him young: "Strike me dumb if it ain't so. He is the worst one that comes here. They say he has sold himself to the devil for a pretty face. It's nigh on eighteen years since I met him. He hasn't changed much since then" (Wilde 218). Dorian seems to never age. Instead of any of his friends from aristocratic society, it is the sketchy people in the opium den who have realized this amazing fact.

The final conclusion of the book satisfies and provides exactly what one expects from a Narcissus-Faust. Prior to the last two chapters, it seems as if James Vane is going to be the one to murder Dorian. We get little hints of him closing in on Dorian, and Dorian literally faints in fear of James. But, if James were to kill Dorian, it would not fit as well with Narcissus-Faust. It works much better for Dorian to attempt a good deed, which he completely fails, and goes back to look at his painting, He is hoping that he would be able to change the horrible visage into something better, but when he looks, the painting looks somehow worse:

> A cry of pain and indignation broke from him. He could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning, and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite.

> The thing was still loathsome – more loathsome, if possible, than before – and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilt. Then he trembled. Had it been merely vanity that had made him do his one good deed? (Wilde 252)

This is when he loses his temper with himself. He is frustrated and does not seem to know what to do: “Then he loathed his own beauty, and, flinging the mirror on the floor, crushed it into silver splinters beneath his heel. It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain. His beauty had been to him but a mask, his youth but a mockery” (Wilde 250). In the last chapter, he goes through a whole series of emotions. He finally decides that he does not want the painting as a constant reminder. He feels like he has been blessed with a new lease on life because James did not kill him.

Yet he cannot break free while the painting is there as a reproach against him. It feels beyond frustrating to him because he does not see the painting as a fair judge of himself at all: “For it was an unjust mirror, this mirror of his soul that he was looking at. Vanity? Curiosity? Hypocrisy?” (Wilde 253). Since he feels so pushed by the portrait, and because he does not understand the deal he has made, he thinks to himself, “It had been like a conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it” (Wilde 153). The way he chooses to rid himself of the awful reminder is the way he killed Basil. He picks up the same knife he used to murder his friend, and “seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it. There was a cry heard, and a crash. The cry was so horrible in its agony that the frightened servants woke, and crept out of their rooms” (Wilde 253).

Dorian does not realize it because the deal had been left so abstract and unclear, but when he seeks to destroy the painting, he destroys himself. The narrative leaves Dorian as soon as he plunges his knife into the painting. It returns with this last, tragic paragraph: "When they entered they found, hanging upon the wall, a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognised who it was" (Wilde 254). Only his servants are there to mourn and care that their master has died. And it is in this paragraph that we see how closely Dorian matches up with Narcissus-Faust. He does literally destroy himself as Narcissus does. He commits accidental suicide in the same way. However, he also leaves his body, not as his beautiful self that he loved, but as repulsive as the shape of his soul.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Book *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

In a book clearly concerned with the physical, Dorian's physical beauty is often treated as non-physical. He is termed "a suggestion" (Wilde 12), and many of the characters talk about Dorian as if he is not really a person. Most of the people in the book simple describe him in terms of generalities: "'He is very good-looking,' asserted Lord Henry" (Wilde 38). Yet it is never in doubt that Dorian's body is beautiful. Patricia Pulham discusses the "coded homoeroticism" in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, focusing on the way Dorian's body is described in the text (167). The homosexuality in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* cannot be ignored because it directs much of the story: "it is his worshipping of the young man's physical beauty and his appropriation of his image (as 'art') that calls Dorian's attention to himself" (Oates 421). The

admiration Lord Henry and Basil express to Dorian about his beauty is what helps Dorian to see himself, as if for the first time, when he looks at his portrait. Wilde writes this book to be interested in the visual representation of someone, but it can only be described for us: "In the novel, the representation of the embedded image through ekphrasis – the verbal representation of a visually depicted scene – permits representation of a medium otherwise unavailable in 1891" (Kafalenos 8). The reliance on ekphrasis or "description" gives the book much of its texture.

However, Dorian Gray, at least at the very start of the novel, serves not simply as a painting. He exists in the novel as a real person who would have to have a physical body. The way the body is represented by the other characters and the narrator help to describe more of a feeling than a specific person: "This 'prefiguration' of the I through the visual assimilation of the body's reflection entails many as yet unrealized implications for this vexed subject" (Craft 127). Even so, the way people describe Dorian depicts a concrete person. One of the first descriptions details, "Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world" (Wilde 18). A few pages later, in his long discussion with Dorian, Lord Henry claims, "with your rose-red youth and your rose-white boyhood, you have passions that have made you afraid, thoughts that have filled you with terror, day-dreams and sleeping dreams whose mere memory might stain your cheek with shame –" (Wilde 21). These words work to disturb Dorian and slightly confuse him. He is not altogether sure what to make of all this, but it does start to make him want to understand his own beauty, as any Narcissus would.

One of the Echo-Gretchens in this story is referred to as beautiful repeatedly, but again there are not many specific descriptions about her. Most of the book merely generalizes her beauty or simply says she is beautiful. However, on the night when Lord Henry and Basil come to see Sibyl in her play, Lord Henry's thoughts contain: "Yes, she was certainly lovely to look at – one of the loveliest creatures, Lord Henry thought, that he had ever seen. There was something of the fawn in her shy grace and startled eyes. A faint blush, like the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, came to her cheeks as she glanced at the crowded, enthusiastic house" (Wilde 93). This description, while detailed, does not bring to life what precisely she looks like. In the book, she is treated like Echo, the hidden nymph who cannot talk on her own and cannot be seen by others.

Beyond Sibyl's descriptions, the way people describe the painting holds importance. Since it acts as such a central part of the story, it must be detailed in a way that pulls the reader in and makes the painting feel as if it is physically real in the world of the novel. Right after Dorian has betrayed Sibyl, he sees the painting: "Yet it was watching him, with its beautiful marred face and its cruel smile. Its bright hair gleamed in the early sunlight. Its blue eyes met his own. A sense of infinite pity, not for himself, but for the painted image of himself, came over him. It had altered already, and would alter more" (Wilde 103). He realizes that the painting is not a static image that has forever captured his youthful beauty. Instead, it is a painting that will alter according to how he lives. This realization leads Dorian into questioning what the painting really could mean or how it would function: "that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realised? – that what it dreamed, they made true?" (Wilde 108). Later, when Dorian ventures to look at the painting again to make sure that it has changed, he finds that it really has: "It seemed to him that

it was unchanged; and yet his loathing of it was intensified. Gold hair, blue eyes, and rose-red lips – they all were there. It was simply the expression that had altered. That was horrible in its cruelty" (Wilde 135). The elements of himself remain. These elements make up, at least in part, the Dorian that he loves, but they are now changing and seem to reflect more of his Faust nature.

The painting only grows more and more repulsive. Since the book skips through eighteen years in the span of a chapter, there is no slow corruption of the painting. We leave it having a small twist around the mouth and eye, and skip to Basil seeing the painting when Dorian finally decides to expose himself: "An exclamation of horror broke from the painter's lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing" (Wilde 176). Basil is truly horrified by what he sees. It seems clear that the painting is of Dorian because of the similarities they share, which makes it impossible for Basil to brush aside what he has seen. He knows this painting is the one he did of Dorian because "[t]here was still some gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth. The sodden eyes had kept something of the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet completely passed away from the chiselled nostrils and from plastic throat" (Wilde 176). Basil cannot believe that this is what remains of the painting he created. This is the Faustian corruption of the once beautiful Narcissus as Dorian has allowed his driving need for more to distort and mar himself.

Of course, this is the moment when Dorian can no longer take Basil's disdain. At first, he does not notice how this murderous deed might affect the painting, but when he chances to look at it, a new addition has been made: "What was that loathsome red dew that gleamed, wet and glistening, on one of the hands, as though the canvas had sweated blood? How horrible it was –

more horrible, it seemed to him for the moment, than the silent thing that he knew was stretched across the table" (Wilde 196). Dorian very clearly remains a Narcissus. He does not have any real remorse for the death of Basil. He is far more disturbed by how the act hurt his painting. A few weeks later, Dorian continues with this idea. In his frustration that his good deed was not actually good, Dorian goes to look at his painting. He is hoping that what he did by giving up Hetty has softened the painting, but "[h]e could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning, and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. The thing was still loathsome – more loathsome, if possible, than before – and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilt" (Wilde 252). This is one of the last descriptions provided about the painting, which Dorian will attempt to destroy.

Finally, Dorian can no longer take being constantly haunted by his own image. He must destroy it because it is demanded by his being a Narcissus-Faust. In discussing Wilde, Martin Lockerd describes how the "understanding of the decadent body as a site of aberrant corruption that mirrors the body politic [is] a site that realizes itself through self-destruction" (1-2). It seems as if the body must be destroyed by the Narcissus as he seeks to embrace himself, and the same is true of Dorian: "Wilde's handsome Narcissus destroys his own body in an attempt to surpass its limitations" (Lockerd 4). This action is not merely limited to Dorian, being a quality that all Narcissus figures share: "In the case of the moral narcissist, hell is not other people – narcissism has eliminated them, but rather, the body. The body is the Other, resurrected in spite of attempts to wipe out its traces. The body is limitation, a servitude, a termination" (Green qtd. in Lockerd 4). This connection to hell shows that for a Narcissus, hell is not merely other people. Instead it has to be the body, which must be punished by the Narcissus-Faust unto death.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Film *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Although there are many different film adaptations of *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* Albert Lewin's 1945 film offers a sumptuous and well-crafted look at the story as a movie. This production is an opulent celebration of the beautiful. There is a lot to love about this particular adaptation, not the least of which is the casting with George Sanders, the perennial cad, playing Lord Henry and Angela Lansbury as the innocent Sibyl Vane. However, part of what makes this *The Picture of Dorian Gray* so memorable is the beautiful cinematography, for which it won an Oscar. Throughout the film, the composition of the shots are hard to ignore, setting up the representation of the physical world in a pleasing way. According to both articles by Felleman and Jancovich, some of the response to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were negative. Jancovich says, "Here the markers of quality were not seen as merely a disguise or a distraction, but were claimed to expose its hollow pretentiousness" (60). Although some film critics in the 1940s disliked this film, it makes some choices that make it valuable to investigate.

One of the most important aspects of adapting *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is having to show Dorian and the picture itself. Since Dorian is supposed to be so arrestingly beautiful, it sets up a great deal of pressure on the filmmakers and actors to make sure they prove successful. Lewin decided to integrate the painting of Dorian by using some special colorized shots (see fig. 9). As Shannon Wells-Lassagne observes, "the congruence of technique, story, and style give heightened meaning to the use of colour, whether to show the relation between text and image, to emphasize the materiality and artistic nature of the film genre, or to emphasize the hybridity that is at the heart of *The Pictures of Dorian Gray*, of the medium of film, and of the process of

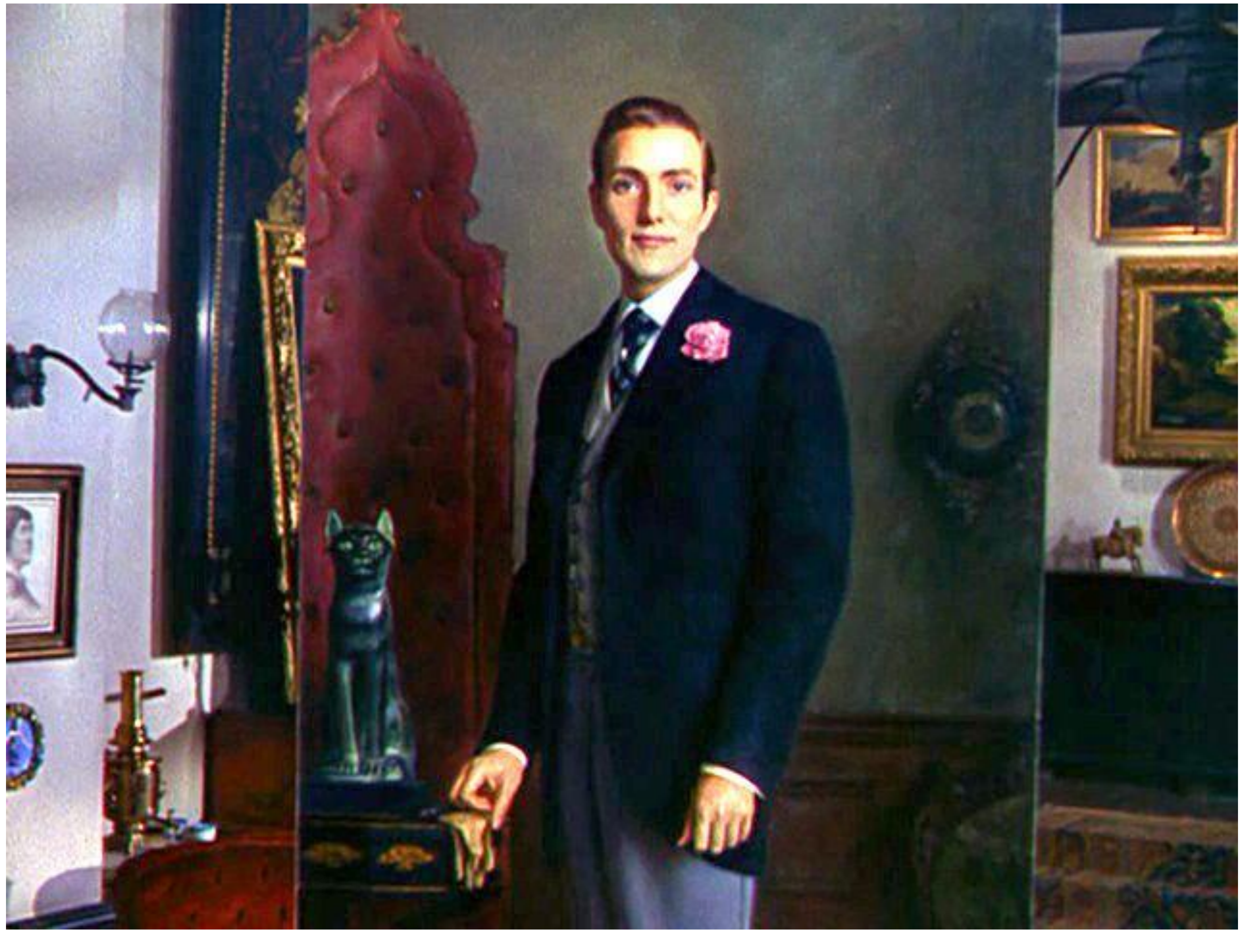

Fig. 9. One of the brief colorized moments in the film from Tashpix; "*The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945)"; *What I Watched Last Night*; wordpress.com, 25 Tues. 2012, https://tashpix.wordpress.com/2012/09/25/the-picture-of-dorian-gray-1945/.

adaptation" (399). The use of color creates a clear focus on the portrait and brings to life this integral part of the story. Lewin chose this method, which allows the whole shot pictured to be colored. This choice sets up the focus on the painting itself, but the surrounding context of the painting also gets colored. The set dressing, from the other paintings hanging on the walls and the lamp all work to push the attention onto the painting. It is an arresting choice that works well with the film each time that the technique is displayed.

At the start of the film, Dorian is supposed to be the most beautiful youth. Hurd Hatfield plays Dorian at the beginning as a shy, unassuming man. He is handsome, but a little too emotionless. His skin is incredibly smooth looking, but it seems as if Hatfield goes out of his way to make sure that the does not ever create a wrinkle on his face, which makes most of his acting wooden or limited. Although Hatfield seems as if he does not want to move his face too much, he does use the rest of his body to portray this shyness. Dorian usually slouches his shoulders and has some nervous ticks. These are all highlighted in the first scene when the viewer is expected to create an understanding of who Dorian is. However, when Basil is finished with the portrait and Dorian goes to look at, his body language changes. The camera cuts to a closeup of the colorized portrait. Lingering on his face, the camera pulls out slightly to show the portrait in its entirety. Dorian is clearly entranced by the painting, and he draw himself up as he looks at it. He describes his desire for the portrait to age in his place. Dorian makes his bold wish, saying "I would give my soul for that," and looks again at the portrait. The viewers are shown the portrait one more time, which now seems a bit creepy. His painted face fills up the screen as the music is intensified, swelling loudly with ominous chords.

After the conclusion of that scene, the camera shows a dirty part of London. Dorian is going there because he is curious, a notable trait for his Faustian nature, and ends up going to the Two Turtles. The moment the manager stops the proceedings to welcome Dorian as a gentleman really underscores Dorian's shy youthfulness. He slouches down more into himself, and his entire body positioning seems to apologize for his existence. He sinks down into the chair offered to him, and stares out awkwardly to the crowd instead of watching the show behind him (see fig. 10).

Fig. 10. Dorian in the seedy club, his clothing contrasting well with the manager's from John Strand; "The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945) Review"; *HorrorFreakNews*; horrorfreaknews.com, 4 May 2015, http://horrorfreaknews.com/picture-dorian-gray-1945-review.

After the rather strange show of the seemingly little people playing the xylophone, Sibyl Vane makes her appearance. In the film, she is not a Shakespearean actress. Instead she sings an old English folk song. This song becomes her persona and her voice. She does not get a chance to speak fully as herself. She merely speaks through the song, like Echo. Sibyl Vane's appearance works well for who she is. She is beautiful, with soft skin, big eyes, and pert, cupid's bow lips. Yet, there is something about Sibyl that does seem to place her in the lower class. It might be her styling, dour dress, ill-cut and strange hat with what looks to be a dead sparrow on

Fig. 11. A close-up of Angela Lansbury as Sibyl Vane from R. Emmet Sweeney; "Final Repose: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945)"; *Stream Line: The FilmStruck Blog*; filmstruck.com, 16 Dec. 2014, http://streamline.filmstruck.com/2014/12/16/final-repose-the-portrait-of-dorian-gray-1945/.

it (see fig. 11). At the Two Turtles, sometimes, we see the creepy painted eye lurking in the background, while in the foreground we see a man leering at Sibyl, while the woman he is with gets jealous. Other times, we get a tighter shot on Sibyl's face, when we can see her mother on one side of the curtain and another entertainer who seems to be sewing.

After Sibyl's death, the film moves forward in time. Most of Dorian does not look any different than when the film began. What is different is the way he holds his body. Now, he portrays more confidence and less shyness. He walks as if he owns the world and never slouches. The opposite of the shy, unobtrusive figure of the first part of the film, this Dorian dominates.

Fig. 12. Basil's aging is clear in the background while Dorian has remained young from "The Haunted Portrait of Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945) Part 2"; *rmarts: Reviews of Contemporary Art, Culture and Agency Theory*; rjamahoney.wordpress.com, 3 Oct. 2015, https://rjamahoney.wordpress.com/2015/10/03/the-haunted-portrait-of-dorian-gray-in-the-picture-of-dorian-gray-1945-part-2/.

As he walks confidently to his house on the eve of his birthday, he reluctantly meets Basil, who looks much older, having aged maybe too much over the course of those eighteen years (see fig. 12). This meeting leads to the tragic death of Basil by Dorian. A significant part of the film, Lewin takes a heavy hand in adapting this scene to screen. During the scene when Basil catalogues the names of the people Dorian has ruined, Dorian comes across as chilly, cold, and with that kind of disturbing calm that some people exude when they prove to be really dangerous.

Dorian finally decides that he is going to show Basil his soul, so he allows Basil to walk before him. This placement feels ominous, underscored by how the camera is moving to reveal both the godcat and the room upstairs. The murder of Basil is far from subtle, but it is still arresting. The room upstairs is lit by a single suspended lamp. Basil brings the lamp closer to see the painting better, and the narrator says, "From within, apparently, that the foulness and horror came." At this moment, we get the shocking, in-color reveal of the extremely grotesque painting (see fig. 13). It has a wild use of color, which looks like it comes from the 1940s style. As in the book, Basil says of the painting, "It has the eyes of a devil," which casts Dorian into that Mephistopheles character. When Dorian stabs Basil, the flailing body causes the lamp to swing like a pendulum. The light moves back and forth over both Dorian's face and his painting. The film shows the painting again. This time with the addition of bright, gross red blood dripping from the hand (see fig. 13).

After Dorian kills Basil, the story unfolds quickly. At the end of the film, we get the final moment with Dorian and his painting. The build-up throughout this scene is very intense: Dorian destroys the painting as he destroyed Basil. He executes his action with a creepy quietness. He

Fig. 13. Colorized shot of the corrupted painting and freshly bleeding hands from "The Haunted Portrait of Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945) Part 2"; *rmarts: Reviews of Contemporary Art, Culture and Agency Theory*; rjamahoney.wordpress.com, 3 Oct. 2015, https://rjamahoney.wordpress.com/2015/10/03/the-haunted-portrait-of-dorian-gray-in-the-picture-of-dorian-gray-1945-part-2/.

picks up the knife with the painting clearly shown in the background. He falls back onto the table and makes the single lamp swing the same way Basil did. The light plays across the portrait yet again. After a strange pseudo-prayer from Dorian, the painting slowly changes back into the beautiful one from the beginning. Since the painting is restored to its former glory, the ugliness and destruction of the body goes into Dorian. His dead body is shown to us as a close-up of an incredibly grotesque face of a man (see fig. 14). His hair looks like wires, and growths and sores cover his face. Everything about him looks disease-ridden and decaying.

Fig. 14. The last look at Dorian Gray's body from "The Haunted Portrait of Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945) Part 2"; *rmarts: Reviews of Contemporary Art, Culture and Agency Theory*; rjamahoney.wordpress.com, 3 Oct. 2015, https://rjamahoney.wordpress.com/2015/10/03/the-haunted-portrait-of-dorian-gray-in-the-picture-of-dorian-gray-1945-part-2/.

Distinct Choices that Influence the Narcissus-Faust Viewing of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

As much as Lewin's adaptation seems to be focused on faithfully following *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, there are some notable choices he makes, which further highlights some of the

Narcissus-Faust characteristics in the film. Indeed, in a review from when the film first came out, the critic notes that "[a]s Hatfield does the Gray part, he's singularly Narcissistic" ("Film Reviews"). The film knowingly pulls in the Narcissus aspect of Dorian's character. In this same way, Robert Keefe focuses on this aspect, noting "The act of recognition will deepen each time it recurs in the novel. More and more, as Dorian's gaze pierces unwillingly to the seeming core of his nature. Tiresia's [*sic*] prophecy will approach fulfillment. But already, like Narcissus, he has seen his reflection; he will never be the same again" (66). The film lingers on this focus, playing into it.

However, the film also highlights the Faustian aspects as well. One of the main additions Lewin makes to the story is a kind of reason for why the bargain was able to be made. Instead of leaving it as abstract and unclear as Wilde writes it in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the film has two key additions. First of all, the film starts with an epigraph from *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*: "I sent my Soul through the Invisible, Some letter of that After-life to spell: and by and by my Soul return'd to me, And answer'd: 'I Myself am Heav'n and Hell'" (see fig. 15). This quote appears a few times in the film and is often captured in the same shot as the next addition. In his studio, Basil has a strange cat figurine that Lord Henry goes out of his way to tell us is a god of Egypt. Again, in the movie this statue is repeatedly referenced and usually kept in the shot when either the painting is being discussed or Dorian is contemplating life. Both of these additions prove overtly Faustian. The former explores heaven and hell and the ultimate realization that it exists inside all of us. This modern idea of heaven and hell that it lies within us and we create what we want, is very much related to the Narcissus-Faust from 1800 to present. These Fausts are not necessarily dragged to hell; instead, they simply cease to exist.

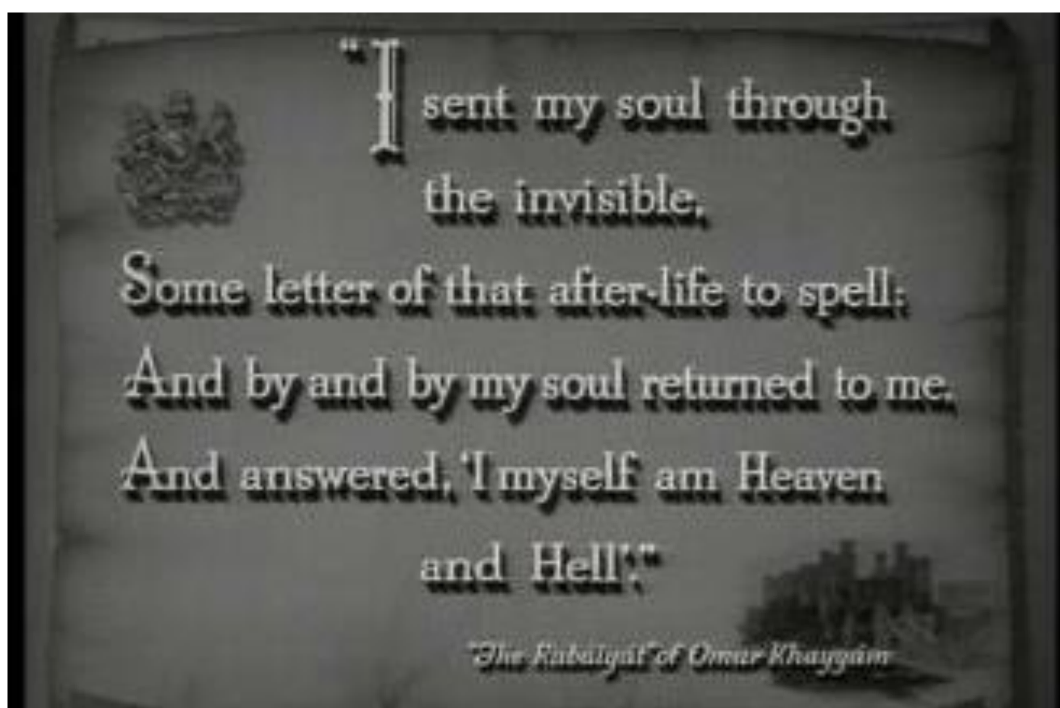

Fig. 15. The title card that opens the film from Darius Kadivar; "Oscar Wilde and Omar Khayyam"; *Persian Realm*; irranian.com, 19 Aug. 2008, https://iranian.com/main/blog/darius-kadivar/oscar-wilde-and-omar-khayyam.html.

Since Lord Henry at the start of the book seems to represent the Mephistopheles, his portrayal in the film proves important. After the epigraph, the film opens with Lord Henry. The film shows him reading in a carriage on the way to Basil's studio. We get an unique shot from the cabbie's perspective when he opens the folding head in the carriage to tell Lord Henry they arrived. This curious shot, with the viewers looking down onto Lord Henry, works to both establish his power in the film and call it into question. He appears as a powerful man who is in control. But, we get to see a perspective of him that is demeaning in many ways. He goes from the cab into Basil's studio, and this scene works to really establish Lord Henry's power and control as a character. Heather Seagroatt discusses how the first scene in the 1945 adaptation "reveals [Lord Henry's] alarming cruelty" with the chilling scene of him capturing and killing a

butterfly (741). He does this while telling Dorian all about the importance of youth and beauty and about Dorian's loss of both (see fig. 16). He then presents the butterfly to Dorian. This metaphor is not too subtle, but it

Fig. 16. Dorian looking at the butterfly Lord Henry just captured and killed for him from John Strand; "The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945) Review"; *HorrorFreakNews*; horrorfreaknews.com, 4 May 2015, http://horrorfreaknews.com/picture-dorian-gray-1945-review.

still works in a rather disturbing way. Lord Henry is careless in his taking of life and causing suffering, which we know will come back to haunt Dorian in too short a time.

This chilling depiction of Lord Henry's Mephistopheles in the film eventually cedes, as it does in the book, to Dorian's Mephistopheles. Dorian becomes his own tempter, but in the film

he is also shown, early on, to tempt others. In this case, it is Sibyl Vane. Rather than her simply losing her ability to act because she finally understands what love is, in the film, Lord Henry suggests that Dorian test her supposed virtue. It is in this sequence that Sibyl comes to his house. Dorian coerces Sibyl to sleep with him, which gives an overt connection to Faust's seduction of Gretchen. Dorian tempts Sibyl in the most calculated of ways. After she seems to be leaving, Dorian sits down at his piano to play their motif (of Chopin's Prelude). As the music swells and becomes more and more intense, Sibyl's shadow appears in the top left corner of the screen. It grows along with the music, and we know that Sibyl has given into Dorian and will give herself to him. Then, she sits next to Dorian as he plays the haunting song, both looking unhappy (see fig. 17). This decision ironically makes her lose Dorian, and he coldly breaks it off with her in a letter because he tells her he cannot believe she was not virtuous, which finally leads to her taking her own life. When she kills herself, it is reminiscent of Gretchen also committing suicide, albeit suicide by execution, because she refuses to be saved by Faust and Mephistopheles.

Just as in the novel, one of the most obvious ways Dorian proves to be a Mephistopheles is his destruction of other people's lives. Alan Campbell serves as one of the best examples, in both the film and book. In the film, Alan Campbell is played in a subdued way by Douglas Walton. He portrays a very relaxed man and plays the role with practically no emotion, until he reads the letter Dorian wrote which threatens him. This reveals the deep destruction Dorian has created in Alan. But it is Adrian Singleton's character that the film changes a little bit, adding to the Narcissus-Faust reading. The scene in the film begins with James Vane arrival from sailing. He decides to go to the bar, not just because he wants to drink, but because he hears the song Dorian played to Sibyl the one time he saw them together, eighteen years before. Dorian finally

Fig. 17. The unhappiness of the two after Sibyl decides to stay overnight from R. Emmet Sweeney; "Final Repose: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945)"; *Stream Line: The FilmStruck Blog*; filmstruck.com, 16 Dec. 2014, http://streamline.filmstruck.com/2014/12/16/final-repose-the-portrait-of-dorian-gray-1945/.

enters the place himself, and this is when we see Adrian. He is clearly disheveled, but he has some chalk that he uses to draw on whatever is at hand. When Dorian talks to him, Adrian draws a quick stylized portrait of Dorian that he literally draws a frame around. Dorian's portrait is like the still pool where Narcissus sees himself. The portrait also connects with Faust, as it features in the pact Dorian made. Adrian also takes a further interest in Dorian than is shown in the book. He follows James outside, along with the women, hoping to see James kill Dorian. When he does not, Adrian chalks a gallows on the wall of the building, adding Dorian's name and residence so that James will be able to follow him and kill him. Even though Adrian is detached, due to the opium, he still hopes for Dorian's death. He wants him to be punished for the evil that he has done. Dorian, like Faust, has been able to live above and separate from what other people have had to endure. He is able to sidestep the nastiness that Adrian has not, which makes Adrian want him to be destroyed. Ultimately, Dorian will be, but not by James's hand.

Maybe the most obvious of differences exists in the sub plotline of Gladys with David Stone, which allows for a slight alteration and addition to the film's conclusion. At the start of the film, Gladys's character is changed: she is a little girl who adds her signature to Basil's portrait of Dorian. This little detail will become key at the very end of the film. When the film skips ahead eighteen years, Lord Henry and Basil have aged noticeably. Dorian still looks the same as he did at the start of the film, but Gladys is now a young woman who is determined to marry Dorian, as she tells different characters repeatedly. In fact, she tells Basil that she wanted to marry Dorian for as long as she can remember. She is so convinced that this is something she needs to do that she decides to ask Dorian to marry her. In contrast, David Stone is the man who loves Gladys and is always at her beck and call. Both of these aspects become key to the

conclusion of the film. Dorian asks Gladys to marry him in the middle of a dinner, after she has asked him and been rejected. She is overjoyed and cannot wait to be wed. When Dorian throws a country party, David decides to find out what is in the locked door at the top of Dorian's staircase. He forces his way in and finds a revolting portrait of someone who looks, according to

Fig. 18. David telling Gladys while Gladys's and Dorian's framed engagement pictures are in the foreground from "*The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945)"; *WatchTCM*; tcm.com, 2018, http://www.tcm.com/watchtcm/movies/2821/Picture-of-Dorian-Gray-The/.

David, like Dorian's depraved uncle. He rushes to the country party to tell Gladys (see fig. 18). Gladys and Lord Henry quickly realize who this is a portrait of, and they all go barreling to London to confront Dorian.

Dorian had already left his party and went to confront his painting himself. One of the notable changes, Dorian believes he has done a good deed. Unlike the book, when his good deed is revealed to be evil because it was rooted in vanity, in the film, Dorian believes that his good

deed has made a difference. As he looks at the painting, he decides to destroy it; if he did not, it might always tempt him to continue doing bad deeds. Just as in the book, Dorian kills himself, but instead of being discovered by his servants, David, Lord Henry, and Gladys are, thanks to David's previous discovery, all on hand to find his revolting body. The film ends with Gladys and David walking down the stairs in the far background. The camera moves into a closeup of the Omar Khayyám quotation with the cat statue behind (see fig. 19). The framing gets such a

Fig. 19. As David and Gladys walk down the stairs, the camera focuses on the godcat and the open pages of Omar Khayyám's book from "The Haunted Portrait of Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945) Part 2"; *rmarts: Reviews of Contemporary Art, Culture and Agency Theory*; rjamahoney.wordpress.com, 3 Oct. 2015, https://rjamahoney.wordpress.com/2015/10/03/the-haunted-portrait-of-dorian-gray-in-the-picture-of-dorian-gray-1945-part-2/.

tight zoom in that it eventually cuts the cat out too. The movie is now over, and an intense rendition of the Prelude begins to play. This conclusion allows for overt closure.

This film overtly creates some of the Narcissus-Faust details of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Hurd Hatfield's Dorian serves as the consummate Narcissus, but, with the addition of the cat and more screen time from Adrian Singleton, he also serves as the consummate Faust. The film's spooky atmosphere works to push the viewer into eagerly anticipating the conclusion. This film does not disappoint us, as we actually get to see the decayed, repulsive body of Dorian after his portrait has been transformed back to its beautiful original. In Lewin's production of *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* the torture and destruction of Dorian's body, by his own hand, is clear, and since this tortured body must actually be shown to the viewer, the production takes on a more visceral quality.

The Picture of Dorian Gray, in either the novel or the film, fits the Narcissus-Faust reading well. Dorian overtly relates to Faust and Narcissus by both the narrator and the characters in the story. He is a figure who encapsulates the idea that Faust necessarily must be a Narcissus character. This idea exists within *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now*, the novel and film that will be the focus of the next chapter. The Narcissus-Faust character in these stories is Kurtz, a man who is very much enamored with himself and consumed with a driving need that can only be satiated with the character's death.

CHAPTER 5

THE FAUSTIAN NATURE OF KURTZ

Along with having a clear Narcissus-Faust character, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has long been a text used to criticize the late 1800s to early 1900s. Cedric Watts discusses the sharpness of the text by Marlow "proceed[ing] to remind [the boatmen] that Britain would once have seemed as a savage wilderness to Roman colonizers as Africa now seems to Europeans. This is a rebuke to empire-builders and to believers in the durability of civilization; it invokes a humiliating chronological perspective; and it may jolt the reader into circumspection" (59). Part of what makes *Heart of Darkness* so effective is Conrad's use of narrative techniques. For example, "Repeatedly, the tale's descriptions gain vividness by Conrad's use of delayed decoding, a technique whereby effect precedes cause. He presents first the impact of an event, and only after a delay does he offer its explanation" (Watts 58). Narcissus-Faust in *Heart of Darkness* also presents in this delayed decoding.

In the novella, Kurtz is repeatedly presented as a figure one (Marlow) *must* meet, yet the story is almost over when we finally get to meet him. However, the impact of this meeting exists at the very start of *Heart of Darkness*. In part, this approach sets up a broader Narcissus-Faust reading. Kurtz becomes the literal representation of Narcissus-Faust in the story, but he also exposes what is soaking in the pages of *Heart of Darkness*, all of European society carries the motive of Narcissus-Fast as well. This leads to the inevitable conclusion of all Narcissus-Faust characters: self-destruction.

In *Heart of Darkness*, the character of Kurtz naturally jumps to the forefront as a Narcissus-Faust. Garrett Stewart associates Kurtz to Faust as a matter of course (325); Gustavo

Pérez Firmat does as well, writing about how people have often described Kurtz as a "Faust-figure" (377), and Peter Firchow creates that connection to Faust, but also to the Germanness of Kurtz (73). As has been established, if Kurtz is a Faust figure, he must also be a Narcissus, which proves as true in *Heart of Darkness* as in the other novels. Kurtz is self-focused and serves only himself. He controls whole groups of people and gets them to do his bidding for no other reason than his desires.

His self-love links Kurtz most overtly with Narcissus. Just as Ovid's Narcissus goes wandering alone in the woods and chances to see himself, so "Kurtz wandered alone, far in the depths of the forest" (Conrad 69). In the forest, Kurtz discovers his own brilliance and falls in love with it. He does not worry about others: he even glories in the fact that those kind of plebian thoughts do not hold him back. He masters and controls others, and celebrates this aspect of himself. His narcissism is less concerned with his own perceived handsomeness, than with his intelligence. Others consider him "a universal genius" (Conrad 90), and he certainly sees himself as one. He loves that aspect of himself more than any other. Because this part of himself proves to be so important, he wants to share his genius with others. As Conrad says, "I suppose Kurtz wanted an audience" (69). But this desires forms not because of his altruism, as if he wants others to gain enlightenment. Rather, he wants more people to influence, control, and manipulate.

Similarly, Kurtz links to Faust in the novel. He is a man driven by his lusts, as is Faust: "They only showed that Mr Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him – some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence" (Conrad 72). In fact, Conrad depicts him as

a lustful man who allows his passions to lead him, which links him to Faust. Faust's insatiable nature makes this quality necessary to the characterization of Faust. He cannot get enough knowledge, experimenting with the devil to gain more. Faust is bored with life, but wants to explore and do more than he naturally can. Near the end of the novella, as Marlow meets with Kurtz's Intended, he observes "the colossal scale of [Kurtz's] vile desires, the meanness, the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul" (Conrad 92). Apparently, Kurtz serves as a man consumed by these classical Faustian traits.

Other places in the novella reveal more about Kurtz. For example, "Everything belonged to him – but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own . . . He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land" (Conrad 60). The narrator describes him as playing with devils and becoming a lord over them. Kurtz proves not afraid to make this type of life his own, as Faust did before him. Beyond that, Kurtz, as a Faustian figure, shows his hubristic expectation of ownership. He treats the world around him as if it were something he can simply claim. If he sees it, it belongs to him.

At one point, Marlow says, "I take it, no fool ever made a bargain for his soul with the devil: the fool is too much of a fool, or the devil too much of a devil – I don't know which . . . Then the earth for you is only a standing place – and whether to be like this is your loss or your gain I won't pretend to say" (Conrad 60). In this brief passage, we explore the nature of Faustian deals. The devil does not want a fool, so of course, a fool would never be offered Faust's deal. Hence, we might say that the people who sell their souls to the devil are not foolish, as maybe society wishes to believe. By the nature of the bargain, the souls have to be desirable. Marlow's quotation could also be saying that only a fool would turn down the Faustian bargain. If such a

thing actually exists -- if the devil really were to appear and offer power or money for a soul -- only an idiot would pass that up. Kurtz is not a great idiot, nor is he a fool. He would absolutely sell his soul because he is the very type that the devil seeks; and the devil would know that his type must sell his soul. Ultimately, Kurtz *has* sold his soul, but there is no devil present. He sells his soul by ceding any concept of morality and creating himself as a demi-god to be worshipped and adored. He will control and grasp anything and everything he can for that exact reason: he can. Only a fool would pass that opportunity up.

Mirror-Mephistopheles in *Heart of Darkness*

Conrad uses water as an important image in *Heart of Darkness*, but it also holds significance in the myth of Narcissus. The beginning of *Heart of Darkness* provides images of water, making it particularly notable in the frame that surrounds Marlow's tale. Not only does this image work to join the novella to the story of Narcissus, but it also continually foreshadows what is to come. When the novella begins with "[t]he sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway" and "[i]n the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without joint" (Conrad 3), we know we are bound on a water voyage. As these men float, and Marlow tells his story, they have the chance of spying their own reflections in the water and becoming arrested by self-love.

The mirror of the water passes to the Narcissus-Faust subject of *Heart of Darkness*. As with most stories, at first it might seem as if a different Mephistopheles exists. Some of Kurtz's descriptions seem to place him in the role of Mephistopheles. For much of the novella, as Marlow travels to meet with Kurtz, he feels a swaying power, which seems to come from Kurtz.

He worries that "'Now I will never hear him'" (Conrad 58), wanting to at least talk with the enigmatic man. Marlow talks himself in and out of meeting with Kurtz: "I wasn't very interested in him. No. Still, I was curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all, and how he would set about his work when there" (Conrad 37). However, Marlow does land on wanting to talk with him, mostly because Kurtz's power seems to be in his words. It "was his ability to talk, his words – the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness" (Conrad 58). Kurtz is the person with the power to talk who manipulates others so effectively.

Depicted in part is Kurtz's uncanny ability to sway individuals over to his own side, as Mephistopheles does. Even the other men surrounding Kurtz connect to Mephistopheles. For example, Marlow says about the clerk who is obsessed with Kurtz, "I let him run on, this papier-mâché Mephistopheles" (Conrad 31). This man serves as the false representation of Mephistopheles, rather than the real presentation that Kurtz seems to be. Those who want to be like Kurtz are not able to succeed as he does. Kurtz changes the lives of others. In the story, near Kurtz's death, Marlow is told "this man has enlarged my mind" (Conrad 67) and "He made me see things – things" (Conrad 69). Later, as Marlow thinks about the influence Kurtz exerted on this man, he says, "I suspect that for him Mr Kurtz was one of the immortals" (Conrad 78). Kurtz presented himself as something more than just a man. He becomes the Mephistopheles, leading others down his path.

Related to this ability to convince individuals, Kurtz also exerts a great deal of influence with whole groups of people. Indeed, Kurtz seems to weave a particular type of magic over

others, getting them to see the world the way he wants them to see it, convincing them to act according to his will: "'Kurtz got the tribe to follow him, did he?' I suggested. He fidgeted a little. 'They adored him,' he said. The tone of these words was so extraordinary that I looked at him searchingly. It was curious to see his mingled eagerness and reluctance to speak of Kurtz. The man filled his life, occupied his thoughts, swayed his emotions" (Conrad 70). Kurtz gets an entire tribe to follow him, but even when Marlow is trying to get information about this, the person providing him with information also shows his devotion to Kurtz. Clearly, Kurtz's power of influence is overwhelming and pervasive.

Kurtz exists as his own Mephistopheles. He allows his desires and lusts to push him into his death and destruction. We have also seen that Kurtz leads others astray with his charisma. As described by Conrad, he seems to be the evil spirit in the book. As Patrick Brantlinger discusses in "'Heart of Darkness': 'Anti-Imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?"" (1985), Kurtz is both "His [own] version of evil" and "the form taken by [his] Satanic behavior" (371). What makes him so dangerous is the way he influences others: "I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind. He lived then before me; he lived as much as he had ever lived – a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities; a shadow darker than the shadow of the night, and draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence" (Conrad 91). From later in the novella, this shows Marlow's vision of Kurtz. However, it also seems like a memory Marlow included earlier, near when he first caught sight of Kurtz. His mouth open, Kurtz seems as if he is going to swallow the world or pour forth all of his poisonous thoughts that will betray whomever they touch. This vision also shows that it is not something that Marlow will ever forget or move past. Marlow sees that "I would have to

keep back alone for the salvation of another soul" (Conrad 91). Even though Marlow says that, he is now sharing this story with a boat of people that will ingest Kurtz's words and Kurtz's life. With Kurtz, we see clearly the insidiousness of his Mephistopheles.

Echo-Gretchen in *Heart of Darkness*

Since *Heart of Darkness* takes place during the late 1800s, the position of the woman proves to be bound very much to that time. According to Cleo McNelly in "Natives, Women and Claude Lévi-Strauss: A Reading of Tristes Tropiques as Myth" (1975), women tend to be a problem in *Heart of Darkness*, which remains true for many tales that are Faustian. They do not seem to have a clear place and are marginalized to the very edges of the story, whereas men present as the main focus (7-9). This precise reason shows the use of approaching a story like *Heart of Darkness* from the Narcissus-Faust perspective. Even as the male figure takes the focus, the Narcissus-Faust still forces that focus to shift at some point to encompass, or allow for, the consideration of Echo-Gretchen as well. This aspect proves necessary because even if few women exist in the text, they still act as key aspects in the story.

As with all considerations of Echo characters, the voice becomes important. This aspect proves especially true with someone like Kurtz because his voice is highlighted throughout the story: "He was very little more than a voice . . . and the memory of that time itself lingers around me, impalpable, like a dying vibration of one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense. Voices, voices – even the girl herself – now" (Conrad 59). His loud words echo in the text and the other characters with whom Kurtz comes in contact.

As Marlow unfolds the narrative, some of the women seem to be submerged beneath the male love for Kurtz, as the Russian's obsession with him. These loves make Marlow want to talk to Kurtz. He observes, "To keep the eyes so long on one thing was too much for human patience. The manager displayed a beautiful resignation. I fretted and fumed and took to arguing with myself whether or no I would talk openly with Kurtz; but before I could come to any conclusion it occurred to me that my speech or my silence, indeed any action of mine, would be a mere futility" (Conrad 47). The Russian seems quite obsessed with Kurtz, which leads Marlow to say, "I did not envy him his devotion to Kurtz" (Conrad 68). And as Marlow continues his story, he sees Kurtz only in terms of this angle. When discussing Kurtz's failing, Marlow notes, "The admirer of Mr Kurtz was a bit crestfallen" (Conrad 72). Then, just a little later in the story, he observes, "'You don't know how such a life tries a man like Kurtz,' cried Kurtz's last disciple" (Conrad 73). Although this man seems to be an Echo-Gretchen, he appears more like a person who has just been led astray by a Mephistopheles. Using *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as an example, he shares kinship more with Alan Campbell or Adrian Singleton rather than Basil Hallward because like Alan and Adrian he merely gets led astray by his Mephistopheles. Unlike Basil, his sole meaning in life does not only exist in Kurtz.

Beyond the men taken with Kurtz, two women, neither of whom are named, become Echo-Gretchens. The first is a woman in Africa: "And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman. She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments" (Conrad 75). She is presented as strong and powerful in some ways. But much of her presence is simply describing her appearance: "She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and

magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul" (Conrad 76).

These few lines bring her to life. She is portrayed as fertile, almost like the earth captured in her body. This, of course, is often the way Europeans would describe the places for potential colonies: beautiful, but savage. In the story, she is never given a voice: "Her face had a tragic and fierce aspect of wild sorrow and of dumb pain mingled with the fear of some struggling, half-shaped resolve . . . she stopped as if her heart had failed her. The young fellow by my side growled" (Conrad 76). Her words seem to have power for those around her, "She put out her hands, shouted something, and all that wild mob took up the shout in a roaring chorus of articulated, rapid, breathless utterance. 'Do you understand this?' I asked" (Conrad 84). Yet her words lack power for Marlow, so when he retells the story, he does not tell what she said. Her voice becomes merely an echo of who Kurtz was. He is a man who lived in Africa and seemed to have a mistress of sorts. Was she powerful? Who is she really? We are not sure. She is just described as "barbarous and superb" (Conrad 84) as she lifts her arms up in benediction: "As with the other reflector-characters, the black woman has an element of synecdoche in her composition, but here the direction of the trope makes for an expansion rather than a diminution, whole for part rather than the other way around. Her mute gesture suggests once again the forces that attend, or have attended, Kurtz" (Galef 130). She is mute, but her gesture seems to have power, even if that power is never made clear to the reader.

The unnamed African woman whose power seems impotent, or perhaps I should say barren, represents an important part of the story. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes in "Echo" (1993),

> The Narcissus-Echo relationship is more complex. The homeopathic double bind of feminism in decolonization, seeking in the new state to cure the poison of patriarchy with the poison of the legacy of colonialism, can read it as an instantiation of an ethical dilemma: choice in no choice, attendant upon particular articulations of narcissism, ready to await the sounds to which she may give back her own words. (37)

This aspect of the Narcissus-Echo relationship proves especially evident in a story like *Heart of Darkness*. The unnamed African woman fights not only against the patriarchal aspect of the west, she also fights against being seen as savage. Ultimately, she cannot be a fierce presence in *Heart of Darkness* because Marlow discusses her in such a limited way. Marlow gives the European Intended, who has been engaged to Kurtz for many years but remained in Europe while he was living in Africa, more pages and space.

Although the Intended has more space, she still fits the Echo-Gretchen character. Marlow has to go to her because, as he claims, "Thus I was left at last with a slim packet of letters and the girl's portrait. She struck me as beautiful – I mean she had a beautiful expression . . . the delicate shade of truthfulness upon those features . . . without thought for herself" (Conrad 90-1). This woman's beautiful exists only as quiet and delicate. Quite clearly, the Intended acts as the foil to the unnamed African woman.

When Marlow goes to visit the European Intended, he seems nervous, aware of the rather ominous feeling of Kurtz's ghost following him. When he first sees her, "She came forward, all

in black, with a pale head, floating towards me in the dusk" (Conrad 92). Over a year after Kurtz's death, the Intended is still in mourning for him. She is bound to Kurtz. Marlow feels overcome with the message he has to tell her: "despair in my heart, but bowing my head before the faith that was in her, before that great and saving illusion that shone with an unearthly glow in the darkness, in the triumphant darkness from which I could not have defended her – from which I could never even defend myself" (Conrad 94). He feels this palpable darkness as he has his long talk with the Intended. She speaks with him, so she does have a voice, but most of her words are not recorded and brushed off as ill-informed or unrealistic. Later, after the Intended has talked a great deal, she says, "Forgive me. I – I – have mourned so long in silence – in silence . . . Perhaps no one to hear" (Conrad 96). For the past year, she has mourned in silence, and even now that she has Marlow to talk to, she seems to comprehend that no one hears or cares about what she has to say, least of all the dead Kurtz.

As a character, the Intended only exists in *Heart of Darkness* because of Kurtz. She is quite literally reduced to being a mere echo of who Kurtz was or who she thought he was. As David Galef notes, "The image of a perverted ideal, however, the darkness creeping into what was once a just set of values, does admirably reflect what has happened to Kurtz. The picture may also portray the Intended: kept in the dark by Kurtz, yet carrying a torch for him" (123). She does not know the "true" Kurtz, if there is one at all. She only has her vague conception of who he is, or who he was, and with whom she spends her days mourning. Over the course of her conversation with Marlow, he shows clearly that she gains her identity from Kurtz. Even in his death, she needs him to know how she sees herself. She relies on the fact that because she knows about Kurtz (or that she thinks she knows) she feels like she has a place. The story ends with

Marlow on the boat, thinking with all the other men about the story he has just told. What happens to the Intended is unclear. She might be able to move on with her life, but after still being in full mourning when Marlow sees her, it seems unlikely that she will be able to do so. Maybe she needed the final meeting with Marlow to give her closure to move on, but, at the very least, her role in the story is complete. She is left in a twilight world where she does not move on, does not create a new life, or have any meaning outside of the man she was intended for -- as her "name" in the book continually underscores.

Narcissus-Faust at the End of *Heart of Darkness*

Shifting away from Echo-Gretchen, as always, the conclusion brings out the power of the Narcissus-Faust story. *Heart of Darkness* is no exception. For Marlow, much of Kurtz proves to be wrapped in the shadow and the shade that comes with his death. Marlow tells this story inside of another story, and he continually wraps the story back upon itself. He will interrupt himself in a part of the tale that is not overtly about Kurtz's death: "Mind, I am not trying to excuse or even explain – I am trying to account to myself for – for – Mr Kurtz – for the shade of Mr Kutz. This initiated wraith from the back of Nowhere honoured me with its amazing confidence before it vanished altogether" (Conrad 61). He gives an accounting for it, but also seems to get lost within it. As Marlow seeks to understand and consider Kurtz, everything gets mixed together. He thinks about who Kurtz was and what was left after he died, and he finds himself cherishing Kurtz's unique darkness: "I was anxious to deal with this Shadow by myself alone – and to this day I don't know why I was so jealous of sharing with any one the peculiar blackness of that experience" (Conrad 80). He holds it to himself as he seeks to understand and make sense of life.

As he talks to Kurtz, he says, "I had to beat that Shadow – this wandering and tormented thing. 'You will be lost,' I said – 'utterly lost'" (Conrad 82). And Kurtz will be lost. There is nothing that can save Kurtz since he has created this death for himself, and, in many ways, he does not want to escape it.

When Marlow just lands and meets Kurtz, he believes Kurtz is insane. He has allowed his mind to go, having been captive too long within himself: "'You can't judge Mr Kurtz as you would an ordinary man . . . I couldn't leave him' . . . 'Why! he's mad,' I said. He protested indignantly. Mr Kurtz couldn't be mad" (Conrad 70). Kurtz's companion denies Kurtz's insanity out of hand. To him, that could never be true. He needs to lean on Kurtz's assurance of his own brilliance and perfection.

At the end, part of Kurtz's power is captured in his ability to speak and give voice to his own thoughts. Out of his weakness, Kurtz is still able to speak, "A voice! a voice! It was grave, profound, vibrating, while the man did not seem capable of a whisper" (Conrad 75). Kurtz is so consumed with himself, he cannot imagine someone does not want to hear and be dominated by him.

After meeting Kurtz, Marlow is consumed with an obsession about him. The profound confidence and love Kurtz has for himself sways Marlow. Although Kurtz's corruption consumes him, he also possesses charisma. As Marlow tries to explain, "'Mr Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company' . . . I turned mentally to Kurtz for relief – positively for relief. 'Nevertheless I think Mr Kurtz *is* a remarkable man,' I said with emphasis" (Conrad 77). And again a bit later, "to invoke him – himself – his own exalted and incredible degradation. There was nothing either above or below him, and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the

earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces" (Conrad 82). Kurtz, as a figure, cannot be ignored or simply passed over. He is like the mythic figures themselves, Narcissus and Faust. One can never just ignore these types of people because they possess natural magnetism. However, as Marlow also notes, "his intelligence was perfectly clear . . . But his soul was mad" (Conrad 83). The madness of the soul will consume Kurtz because he has sold his soul: "I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself" (Conrad 83). Kurtz loses his soul, not to the devil coming to bear him to hell, but within himself, as all Narcissus-Fausts must.

Part of what makes Kurtz an enigma is this darkness he carries within. It seems all consuming, which makes it difficult to ignore, yet it cannot be understood: "His was an impenetrable darkness" (Conrad 86). Kurtz seems to give himself up into this darkness rather than fighting it. As with all Narcissus-Fausts, the destruction must come from one's own self, which is true for Kurtz as well: "One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, 'I am lying here in the dark waiting for death'" (Conrad 86). He does nothing to try to avoid death, letting it simply come to him. Even as he knows it is coming, he seems frightened of it. This becomes most evident in his moment of death. Marlow describes how he sees Kurtz's facial expression "of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision – he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath – 'The horror! The horror!'" (Conrad 86). Kurtz seems consumed with his own terror. He whispers truly

horrifying last words, almost sounding as if he is looking at his own devil-self. The horror of his life is what he cannot escape. It eats him up at the moment of his death.

The idea of this horror repeats throughout the rest of the text. Different interpretations of this horror abound, such as, "In one of its guises 'the horror' was ultimately Kurtz's earlier, deluded, narcissistic self, and the violence it had both succumbed to and wreaked because it itself contained violence" (Ong 156). Ong describes Kurtz as being made of the horror. It is what haunts Marlow as he continues his story, and he thinks about it repeatedly. When Marlow is thinking back on who Kurtz is, even as he is the worst type of man, Marlow still asserts that he is remarkable because "He had something to say. He said it . . . all the hearts that beat in the darkness. He had summed up – he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man" (Conrad 88). Then at the very end of the story, while Marlow is trying to represent Kurtz as better than he was, at least from the perspective of the Intended, he lies about Kurtz's last words. But his lie haunts him as well: "I was on the point of crying at her, 'Don't you hear them?' The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. 'The horror! the horror!'" (Conrad 96). For Marlow, these words are what make up Kurtz. They are his life and his death. Like the Narcissus flower, his words are what blooms after Kurtz dies: "'His words will remain,' I said" (Conrad 95).

Even so, it is not just Kurtz's words that remain at the end of the novella. After Marlow finishes his tale, he leaves and all the men on the boat are thinking about what he has said. The narrator of the frame makes clear the story's impact upon the listeners. The story haunts the listeners, and has them looking at the path they are on, which "seem[s] to lead into the heart of

immense darkness" (Conrad 96). They now see more than just the setting of the story as darkness, which is what Kurtz shows them with his tragic story.

Ultimately, Kurtz's catastrophic end creates some worrisome foreshadowing for the future of these countries. If he must die, eaten up from within by his all-consuming self-love, so must they. Conrad bases this novella on what he saw in the reality of his time. What comes out of the self-love and ever-grasping nature of Kurtz? An answer is suggested in the beginning of the novella: "The fascination of the abomination – you know. Imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate" (Conrad 7). As Kai Wiegandt notes, "This similarity is repressed, for it is a painful one for Modernist writers who fear that literature, like Kurtz, might be a 'hollow sham'" (424). However, if literature can help lead us to a better understanding of the past and, more importantly, what is to come, then surely literature is not just a hollow sham. This idea works especially well when held up against the common, fairly-stated point that Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is racist (Brantlinger 370-75). There are ways to explain this aspect away or to approach the text by situating it in its time, but it is not necessarily about whether Conrad realizes what he is doing, or even if he is offering a critique. The text itself presents a sick man, Kurtz, who is not just sick, as Brantlinger argues, because he has "gone native" (371), but because he is a Narcissus-Faust. He is a character who always prioritizes himself, whether he is in Africa or Europe, and he is never satisfied. Both of these qualities, according to the myths, will lead to self-destruction, which is exactly what happens to Kurtz.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Book *Heart of Darkness*

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a relatively short novella, so there are not many descriptions of the characters' physical bodies. Even so, it is an important part of the work, especially when considering the Narcissus-Faust aspects. The tone of *Heart of Darkness* carries an important weight because it sets the mood of the novella. Several descriptions color the story as it moves forward: "There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of the overshadowed distances" (Conrad 41). Instead of the sun's glinting on the water being a positive, encouraging image, in the novella, it is dark and the sun shines too brightly, bringing about a headache. Later, there is a curious word choice about Kurtz, "You should have heard the disinterred body of Mr Kurtz saying, 'My Intended'" (Conrad 59). This description makes it sound as if Kurtz is already dead -- as if his body has somehow escaped a burial.

The telling of Marlow's story takes place on a river boat in the Thames. The narrator of *Heart of Darkness* describes Marlow's physical self: "He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol" (Conrad 4). Marlow is depicted here in a mock Buddhist pose, as if bringing a type of enlightenment. It is not the promise of the calm, sweet Buddha relaxing in the lotus flower since the adjectives given to Marlow are hardly warm or confidence-inspiring. Rather, the narrator depicts Marlow as someone who is weary, hungry, and imprisoned by life. This description sets up the trajectory of the story as it moves towards its inevitable end.

Before Marlow meets Kurtz, he continually teases his listeners with thoughts and even idle descriptions, as is fitting for Kurtz; and the descriptions take on a more metaphorical aspect.

As Marlow says, relatively early in the novella, "As to me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time. It was a distinct glimpse: the dug-out, four paddling savages, and the lone white man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters, on relief, on thoughts of home – perhaps; setting his face towards the depths of the wilderness, towards his empty and desolate station" (Conrad 39). This brief linking of Kurtz that Marlow creates does connect with who Kurtz is, at least to Marlow. He is a blank, hollow white man, alone, isolated, looking away. Marlow has yet to see Kurtz, but he is already seeing shadows of him in other people and their actions.

For example, the description of the Russian seems to be the opposite of Kurtz, though he would like to be a mirror representation of his idol. The young man is described as having a "beardless, boyish face, very fair, no features to speak of, nose peeling, little blue eyes, smiles and frowns chasing each other over that open countenance like sunshine and shadow on a wind-swept plain" (Conrad 65). He has an open aspect, and the narrator underlines his youth; indeed, he seems to have his whole life ahead of him. However, he is entirely caught up in his obsession for Kurtz, which consumes his life.

Before Marlow meets Kurtz, Marlow is told a few things about Kurtz's physical appearance. Part of what makes these descriptions important is that they contain features that would not seem particularly flattering, but are said in a way that is almost positive. Marlow is told about Kurtz's baldness: "but this – ah – specimen, was impressively bald" (Conrad 59). Another example is an odd word choice in a description that makes Kurtz seem less human. The first full description of Kurtz is linked with the pontification upon his name:

> Kurtz – Kurtz – that means "short" in German – don't it? Well, the name was as true as everything else in his life – and death. He looked at least seven feet long. His covering

> had fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding-sheet. I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze. I saw him open his mouth wide – it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him. (Conrad 74)

This depiction of Kurtz (a kind of insatiable monster who seeks to swallow all of the world) highlights Kurtz's relationship to Faust. He will never be satiated, wanting to consume everything. It also draws attention to the wasting away of Kurtz's body, which would link him to some of the Narcissus myths (the ones in which Narcissus wastes away by the pool, rather than attempting to kiss himself and drowning).

Kurtz's body fails him, and he moves closer and closer to self-destruction, which he brings upon himself. At one point, Marlow says, "I was circumventing Kurtz as though it had been a boyish game . . . He rose, unsteady, long, pale, indistinct, like a vapour exhaled by the earth, and swayed slightly, misty and silent before me; while at my back the fires loomed between the trees, and the murmur of many voices issued from the forest" (Conrad 81). This chilling description seems to capture Kurtz at the end of his life. Backed by fire that burns dangerously, it consumes its own path. Marlow describes Kurtz as something more ephemeral and abstract. He has wasted away so much that now, when Marlow meets him, Kurtz serves as a vapor, something indistinct to be blown away by the wind. At this point, he has also silenced himself, which is, perhaps, the biggest indication that Kurtz's death nears.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Film *Apocalypse Now*

Maybe the most well-known film adaptation of *Heart of Darkness* is Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), which provides vivid, disturbing images of the Vietnam War. As a film focused on war, it presents so many bodies throughout: bodies of young men tanning, baking in the sun, or swimming; and also the bodies of these same young men covered in blood, missing limbs, or slowly dying (see fig. 20). *Apocalypse Now* seems to enjoy the torture

Fig. 20. An example of the different bodies shown, some clothed, some bloody \from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

of the body, and only shows the healthy body as an object to destroy.

However, since it is set in the war, there are not many female characters. The two women in *Heart of Darkness*, the unnamed African woman and the Intended, are mostly absent in *Apocalypse Now*. The African woman in the film is perhaps a native Vietnamese or Cambodian woman. She is perhaps shown two times near the end of the film, but these brief shots do not linger on her or assign her any real importance. In *Apocalypse Now*, the Intended is transformed into an actual wife, who is only shown in one picture. In this version of the story, the women are completely pushed out of the narrative. The only other women are Vietnamese or the three

playboy bunnies. Most of the Vietnamese women in the film either are immediately shot, blown up, or covered in blood after a battle. The three playboy bunnies are shown dancing in a brief scene for a group of soldiers (see fig. 21). The girls are flown in with a helicopter for a big event.

Fig. 21. The woman's body on clear display for the mass of soldiers who are clamoring, squirming, and inevitably rushing to the body from "Macho Military Mentality"; *Blogsofalek*; blogsofalek.wordpress.com, July 2016, https://blogsofalek.wordpress.com/life/macho-military-mentality/.

As the helicopter approaches, the bright light takes on an otherworldly aspect, settling as the three girls get out and begin dancing. They pretend to shoot guns and shimmy around the stage (see fig. 22). However, the show is over almost just as it begins because the men rush the stage, and the girls are immediately flown away again. This incredibly brief appearance is the totality of the women depicted in *Apocalypse Now*. The only other female presence is the disembodied voice of Clean's mother playing on his tape player as he dies. When one Vietnamese woman does throw a bomb into an attacking helicopters under Kilgore's view, he gets disgusted and

talks about how savage and animalistic she is. In this movie, women are not provided a place, and they are silenced even more effectively than Echo because they are not even allowed in the scene. However, their silence makes it all the more notable. The film holds an overwhelming gap and feels heavy with the missing presence of these figures. The few images that tease the viewers underscore their necessity and value. In part, the sole time a woman's voice speaks in the film makes Clean's death especially poignant.

Fig. 22. The heavy use of guns in the offering of skin from "Macho Military Mentality"; *Blogsofalek*; blogsofalek.wordpress.com, July 2016, https://blogsofalek.wordpress.com/life/macho-military-mentality/.

One of the interesting aspects with looking at the body in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is that, in many ways, the movie is very distinctly rooted in Willard's perspective. J. Kerry Grant notes, "A number of other elements of the film's opening have been identified as indicating that what follows should be read in part as an interior journey. Willard is seen waking with a start from what seems to be a bad dream: close-up shots of his face invite us to see the superimposed images as part of his private vision of the war" (214). This, of course, connects with *Heart of Darkness*'s perspective coming from Marlow. However, even though there is some voice-over from Willard, it has to take a different approach to give the film from his point of view. In *Heart of Darkness*, the story seems to be told completely from Marlow's perspective, but his entire story is given to us in quotations, which means the narrator is who really delivers the narrative. One critic writes that "the recording eye of Conrad's anonymous narrator functions much in the same way as the camera functions in film: Both interpose themselves (near-invisibly) between the teller and the listener; both function as narrators who control what we hear and what we see; and both are subtle, ongoing structuring presences which somehow fade from our consciousness" (Cahir 181-82). This idea situates at the beginning of the film when a dissolve shot shows Willard's tortured face along with the destruction of Vietnam (see fig. 23). Since the film basically ties the narrative to Willard's perspective, the images of the bodies are received, in part, from his point of view. The film pays particular attention to Willard's body. In the first shot we see of Willard, he presents as sweaty and unkempt. He has blue eyes. Coppola shows Willard's face upside down while the song "The End" plays, and the jungle of what is presumably Vietnam burns with helicopters flying back and forth. He wears just boxers as he performs odd dance and fight moves. He crashes into a mirror and ends up

cutting himself, seemingly unable to abide seeing himself (the antithesis of Narcissus, and consequently Kurtz). As he sits right in front of the camera, blood streaked across his body, his boxer shorts lost, he cries (see fig. 24). In this way, the film introduces us to Willard and shows his body as naked, vulnerable, and hurt. As the film continues, Willard is only slightly hurt, but in noticeable places, like when he hides a small cut on his face with a conspicuous white Band-Aid.

Fig. 23. Willard's face shown upside down at the beginning of the film from ktomec01; "Apocalypse Then and Now: The Superimposition of Kurtz and Willard"; *The Mind's Eye*: *An Exploration of Psychoanalysis and Cinema*; tufts.edu, 18 Oct. 2017, https://sites.tufts.edu/tomecekenglish181/2017/10/18/apocalypse-then-and-now-the-superimposition-of-kurtz-and-willard/.

In *Apocalypse Now*, Kilgore serves as one of the most fascinating characters. In the brief time we see him, he seems to be a clear Narcissus-Faust. In the middle of these wild battle scenes, Kilgore proves to be always self-possessed (see fig. 25). He notably does not react to any

Fig. 24. Willard's anguished face, nude body, and blood smeared on the pulled off sheets from Swati Srivastava; "*Apocalypse Now…*"; fastenupyourseatbelts.com, http://www.fastenupyourseatbelts.com/apocalyseNow/apocalypseNowAnalysis.html.

bombs or shots that go off, even though everyone else in the frame always takes cover or at least jumps. He also has an individual style, as if he wants to stand out and be distinct. At one point, when they fight a battle, Kilgore wants people to go surfing. He takes off his shirt, as if he will surf. In one of the most classic frames in the film, he crouches down, full of confidence, even though everyone else pictured looks uncomfortable, and speaks to them (see fig. 26). His boldness and security place him in the category of Narcissus-Faust, but since we do not keep on following Kilgore, his self-destructive end is not provided to the viewers.

Over the course of most of the movie, Kurtz presents as a mythic figure that Willard obsesses over. We do not see him until much later in the movie, but we are shown several

Fig. 25. Kilgore's distinct look from Jason Tabrys; "Essential 'Apocalypse Now' Quotes Every Film Buff Should Know"; *Uproxx*; uproxx.com, 23 Apr. 2015, https://uproxx.com/movies/apocalypse-now-quotes/.

Fig. 26. The shot as Kilgore delivers one of his most famous lines from Jason Tabrys; "Essential 'Apocalypse Now' Quotes Every Film Buff Should Know"; *Uproxx*; uproxx.com, 23 Apr. 2015, https://uproxx.com/movies/apocalypse-now-quotes/.

images. Typically, whenever Willard returns to his dossier on Kurtz, as he works on preparing to murder him, the film shows a new image of Kurtz. These images show him young and in his prime. Since Marlon Brando portrays Kurtz in the film, the images show him as a young, very good-looking man. In most of the images, he looks like the quintessential American hero. In one shot, a man decorates Kurtz with a medal. In another, he wears the famous Green Beret uniform. The photo captures his face in an arresting play of shadows, half of it completely obscured and the rest in clear blocks of light and dark (see fig. 27). The shadows of the old world are captured in the photograph with the literal shadows of Willard's world being cast across the picture, further obscuring it. As we move through Vietnam with Chief's PBR, Willard returns to the dossier over and over again, usually while the other boys are doing something else, like playing drums or tanning. The images seem to grow on Willard, as if he is being pulled into Kurtz's web. At one point, we finally see the most recent image of Kurtz, but we cannot see much. The film shows a hulking frame, just shoulders, a head, and an ear.

Fig. 27. The dossier on Kurtz with some of his youthful pictures included from "Le colonel Kurtz: du charisme au chaos"; lemacinema.hypotheses.org, 24 Mar. 2015, https://lemacinema.hypotheses.org/550.

In *Apocalypse Now,* Kurtz's image and body exist shrouded in mystery, and kept carefully from the viewer. Coppola withholds the unveiling of Kurtz's face until a key moment, as shown in the script, "We finally SEE KURTZ'S FACE" (177). This whole scene proves to be a slow tease of this reveal. Kurtz's voice is what we are provided with first. Then we see the body and arms of a man. He leans up, and we catch a glimpse of his head, bald and large, caught in the light to look like a crescent moon. He turns his head and the crescent shrinks, and most of his face catches the shadows in pure black. He stands up, but we see hardly anything in the frame. The camera cuts back and forth from the darkness of Kurtz to Willard's shocked, nervous face, covered in mud and barely lit.

Kurtz has no hair on his face, and we see the expanse of skin. Then when he looks back up he is swallowed by shadow again. When we finally see his face, he pushes it into the light, showing half of the face in clear light and the other half in complete darkness (see fig. 28). This

Fig. 28. The first front shot of Kurtz's face, still half obscured in shadow from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

slow reveal builds the mystery and power behind Kurtz. Also prototypically Narcissus-Faust, Kurtz consumes the focus of those around him. He exudes power, but also self-love and self-obsession.

The children he has created in his own image show, in part, *Apocalypse Now*'s Kurtz as distinctly Narcissus-Faust. These children seem to be a mix of natives, ex-soldiers, and mercenaries (see fig. 29). At Kurtz's compound, dead bodies hang grotesquely from trees, and heads lay on the steps, as if carelessly thrown aside. The death and decay that dominate this setting again point to Kurtz's Narcissus-Faust. It shows not only his power, but also his manic insanity that serves only himself without a thought to others.

One of the most visually arresting moments in the film regarding bodies is the film's climactic moment. Willard prepares himself to kill Kurtz, seemingly by Kurtz's own design.

Fig. 29. Kurtz's compound, some old soldiers but also a mix of women and children who are native to Cambodia (where Kurtz's hideout is located) from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

There is a celebration in the background as the children prepare to sacrifice a water buffalo. The camera cuts back and forth to Kurtz and Willard's interaction and the celebration. As Willard is covering himself in camo and swimming in the water, Kurtz's hulking, shadowed body is shown before he enters his temple dwelling. In one image, we see the jungle on one side of the wall and a hall of light with one man standing (see fig. 30). Willard has a large machete in hand. He

Fig. 30. The silhouette of Kurtz before his death from "Le colonel Kurtz: du charisme au chaos"; lemacinema.hypotheses.org, 24 Mar. 2015, https://lemacinema.hypotheses.org/550.

approaches Kurtz who is surrounded by the brightest of yellow, warm lights. He turns to look at Willard and watches him come to him, seeming to allow Willard to kill him. At Willard's strike, we cut to the natives' sacrificing the water buffalo. The music gets wilder and wilder, and Kurtz goes down just as the water buffalo goes down (see fig. 31). Willard appears covered in blood. We see a close up of Kurtz's head, also bloodied. In his last moments, he just whispers, "The horror . . . the horror" (192) (see fig. 32). A native woman bends down, as if in mourning. This entire sequence serves as the perfect ending for Kurtz's Narcissus-Faust. He chooses how he dies

and brings Marlow to kill him. He exerts control, and, with the juxtaposition between his own death and the water buffalo's, Kurtz gets to feel like an innocent martyr.

Fig. 31. The sacrificing of the water buffalo from "Le colonel Kurtz: du charisme au chaos"; lemacinema.hypotheses.org, 24 Mar. 2015, https://lemacinema.hypotheses.org/550.

Fig. 32. Kurtz's bloody face as he speaks his famous lines from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

Distinct Choices that Influence the Narcissus-Faust Viewing of *Apocalypse Now*

Apocalypse Now represents an unusual approach to adapting literature to film. According to Coppola, it was written while John Milius, the original screenplay writer, was being influenced by a friend's obsession with *Heart of Darkness* and not as a direct adaptation. Yet when Coppola was finally able to make the film, he says, "when I made the film, instead of carrying the script day to day, I had a little green paperback of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in my pocket, filled with notes and markings. I just naturally started referring to it more than the script, and step by step, the film became more surreal and reminiscent of the great Conrad novella" (Coppola vii). Even if it was not the typical adaptation, Coppola heavily relied on the novella to create his film.

He saw *Apocalypse Now* as a representation of reality, even as it is tied up in an adaptation. As Vargas describes it, "*Apocalypse Now* bridges the gap between literature and history by 'transposing' *Heart of Darkness* with the Vietnam War" (100). The way that Coppola captured the Vietnam War feels visceral, capturing an insight of the war. Matthew Ross writes about how realistic *Apocalypse Now* appears. Especially from the perspective of veteran soldiers, the movie captures the experience of fighting in recent American wars (342). However, not everyone agrees the film shows a good representation of war. Just as several critics of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* argue that it is not an adequate critique of imperialism, Keith Solomon argues that *Apocalypse Now* exists not as anti-war because it offers too much a spectacle of war (27). *Apocalypse Now* might glory in the spectacle of war, just as *Heart of Darkness* still falls into some classic pitfalls of imperialistic thought, but it still has something important to say. *Apocalypse Now* and *Heart of Darkness* are closely linked works that share the same theme and

feeling, even in their differences: “Both works lead invariably through the wasteful, nihilistic, and sacrificial extremes represented by the abuse of political and military power in the search for an empire’s well-being and its ignorance and lack of identification with the humanity of cultural others, which lead as both Kurtzes, Marlow, and Willard realize, to individual dehumanization” (Vargas 100). The individual dehumanization comes from a society that has already prioritized itself above all others. We get sweeping shots of the landscape, looking like a patchwork quilt, and calling to mind Hopkins’s “Pied Beauty.” These landscapes are then destroyed by flying helicopters raining down bombs and bullets (see fig. 33 and 34). The film depicts the blue of the

Fig. 33. The swarm of helicopters over the Vietnamese sun from “1979, *Apocalypse Now*”; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

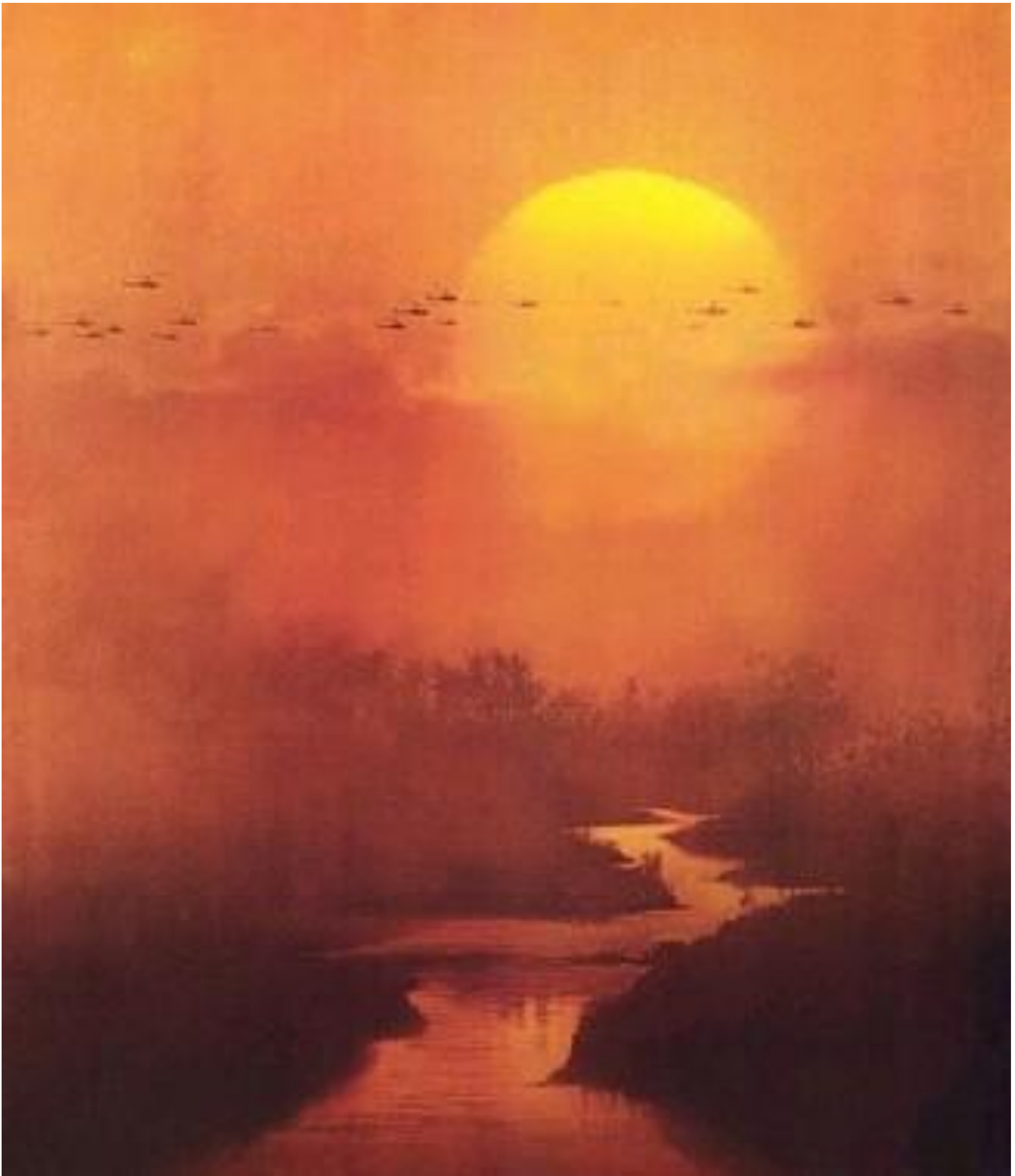

Fig 34. Another shot of the stunning Vietnamese landscape with the helicopters swarming from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

water, the dark green of the trees and the bright orange of the sky. The peaceful school is interrupted, and the children run from the terror that the American soldiers are bringing. This widespread lack of care for others shows how Kurtz, as a Narcissus-Faust, acts.

Apocalypse Now's Kurtz, much like the one in the book, embodies, physically, this toxic culture, which shows the Faustian aspects of Kurtz (see fig. 35). Lilia Khanina writes about

Fig. 35. Kurtz's heavily painted face calls to mind the face painting for certain depictions of Faust, especially in theater and opera from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

Faust in other films, but it fits with *Apocalypse Now* as well when she says, "The profound contradictions in Faust's soul are also reflected in his musical characterization" (11). We see the same type of image-sound counterpoint at certain moments of the film, particularly when Kurtz is involved, capturing the confusion he holds in himself. This confusion that leads him to act capriciously and childlike is what makes him a Narcissus, so focused on his self, he does not realize how childishly he is acting. Why Kurtz is like this seems to be an important question in the film: "Kurtz's tale [about the inoculation gone awry] is also *Apocalypse Now*'s conclusive

statement of political meaning. Both Conrad's and Coppola's Kurtz, as he experienced his epiphany of horror, was an officer – a sane, successful, brilliant leader. All America contributed to the making of Colonel Kurtz, just as all Europe produced Mr. Kurtz" (Worthy). Worthy holds society accountable for the creation of the man. If he is sick, which he is, then society must be sick as well.

Part of what builds the unusual feeling of the movie is its use of the gaze. In *Apocalypse Now*, gaze is used in a surprising way: "It's fascinating – Francis' use of actors looking directly into the camera" (Much and Ondaatje 45). This idea is probably at its most obvious when Willard is just about to kill Kurtz. He has painted his face, and we see a shot of him coming out of the water with his eyes open, locked with the camera (see fig. 36). This moment is chilling for

Fig. 36. Willard with the painted face as he looks directly into the camera from "Le colonel Kurtz: du charisme au chaos"; lemacinema.hypotheses.org, 24 Mar. 2015, https://lemacinema.hypotheses.org/550.

the viewer who knows what Willard is about to do. Just as Willard is conflicted about this mission, so is the viewer. Kurtz does seem to deserve death, considering just his callous treatment of Chef, but Willard's approach seems so lifeless, as if he has simply allowed himself to be taken over by some forces (e.g. this is simply the job he must do) rather than having any true agency. The typical gaze breaks the fourth wall and engages the viewer, usually to humorous effect; the gaze here is unusual, as it seems to implicate us in what Willard is about to do, perhaps pulling all of us in to the murder because of our culpability in creating a Narcissus-Faust society.

As the film builds to its end, some important images conclude it. Right before they reach Kurtz's compound, Lance takes Chief's body and slowly moves it through the water, almost as if he is baptizing it. Then he gently lets him go. Chief's head floats for a bit and, finally, slowly sinks into the water. This is followed by an equally arresting image of all Kurtz's natives painted in white, standing in boats (see fig. 37). They allow the three men to pass, but it feels eerie,

Fig. 37. The painted natives parting their boats from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

especially when, after the boat passes through, the natives close them in. It is beautiful and haunting, with swirling yellow and orange smoke.

It is here, "At the bitter end of *Apocalypse Now*, matters are clearly reversed. Men like Chief and Chef may be deep and solid within, yet this affords them no outward shield against destruction. Hollow shells like Kilgore and Lance, on the other hand, are not ultimately crushed flat like Kurtz. They continue to live and to flourish – apparently forever" (Grieff 197). Willard pulls Lance as Willard is leaving Kurtz's compound. With his job now accomplished, he is ready to go (see fig. 38), and he takes Lance with him, for unclear reasons. Kurtz, of course, had scribbled on one of his manifestos "Drop the Bomb, Exterminate them all" (Milius and Coppola

Fig. 38. Willard looking at the mass of Kurtz's children right before he grabs Lance to leave from "1979, *Apocalypse Now*"; *The Red List*; theredlist.com, 2018, https://theredlist.com/wiki-2-20-777-800-view-1970-1980-profile-1979-bapocalypse-now-b.html.

193). Since he knew he was going to die, and, indeed, chose to die, it seems as if he expects all of his children to die too. Willard does not call this in, so Kurtz's children continue to live after Kurtz--whether they flourish or not is unclear.

Apocalypse Now contains a vivid, imposing Kurtz. He does not have the most screen-time nor the most active scenes. Even so, just as in the novella, Kurtz's power permeates the entire movie. It consumes Willard and exists as the focus even when Kurtz is not on screen. Brando's Kurtz effectively shows him as Narcissus-Faust. His deep self-love and dominating personality directs the film towards Willard's assassination.

Ultimately, *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* capture the Narcissus-Faust character and how he leads to his own destruction. Kurtz's last words haunt the last century and seem to echo over culture. The horror of life's inescapable conclusion and people's powerlessness to stop it seem even more exaggerated in Narcissus-Faust characters because so much of their stories seem dictated for them. They have certain characteristics and characters that seem to be required within their stories, which give a sense of inexorableness to them that is not always present in other stories. It is something that Kurtz shares with the next chapter's Narcissus-Faust. I focus on *Mephisto* as the last novel and film. In this story, Hendrik Höfgen is the Narcissus-Faust who sets himself on a path that leads to a hauntingly inevitable conclusion.

CHAPTER 6

THE FAUSTIAN NATURE OF HENDRIK HÖFGEN

Just as imperialism marks the nineteenth century, the twentieth century will always be marked by the rise of National Socialism. During its reign of power, the German state theatre put on a production of *Faust*, which was an important part of its cultural identity of the time. It led Thomas Mann, Klaus Mann's father, to explore his own version of Faust. As Alfred Hoelzel remarks, "Perhaps nothing gave this issue wider exposure than did Thomas Mann's profound portrait of the Faust-Nazi link in his *Doktor Faustus*, 1947" (3). The Nazis represented a real evil that many people approved, which seemed to sign away their own souls. Klaus Mann used this idea and made it into a novel. One man, an actor, Gustaf Gründgens in reality, does so. Mann said he wrote *Mephisto* to "analyze the abject type of treacherous intellectual who prostitutes his talent for the sake of some tawdry fame and transitory wealth" (Publisher's Note). The readers of this novel clearly see this type of prostitution in the actions of Hendrik Höfgen in *Mephisto*. However, I believe that it is important to approach Klaus Mann from other than from a distinctly political viewpoint (Keller 1-5). His works are more than just political writings, and one of the ways to approach them is from the perspective of Narcissus-Faust. This approach proves particularly valuable since this story clearly aligns with the Faust legend, indicating the close connections between Narcissus and Faust and demonstrating the importance of the Echo-Gretchen connection.

Even at the start of the book, set in 1936, we understand the Narcissus aspects of Hendrik quite clearly. People see Hendrik as a handsome and appealing man, who is described at the birthday party in the Prologue when many different people talk about how good he looks. The

narrator notes, “Most men and women considered Hendrik Höfgen to be not only distinguished and gifted but also strikingly handsome” (Mann 14); “Everyone admired him” (Mann 18). Narcissus usually begins by being uniformly adored, with most people thinking that the Narcissus figure is alluring in some ways. In the novel, the people of Germany certainly feel this way about Hendrik. Indeed, in this character, as Vernon Young describes, “The duplicity of the actor with no character of his own – almost a condition of his art – is thus united with the compulsion to reenact exposure and humiliation – and both are nourished by a political contingency, the infamous hour of Hitler’s National Socialism” (450). For Hendrik, this is the worst or the best time to be born and live, depending on how the reader approaches this question. He turns from his morality to pursue fame and money, but he is unusually successful.

Hendrik is conscientious about his own appearance, always wanting to present himself in the very best light. He reveals he does not like to smile with his teeth because it “made him look common” (Mann 34), and he often worries about how he looks and how that affects those around him. Yet, he does have a magnetic appeal because he seems able to talk anyone into anything. People are incredibly charmed by him. But even while he gets people to do what he wants, Hendrik is self-focused and cold, like Faust. He only wants to please himself, and not be forced to help others at all (Mann 27; 36-7). Then, like Narcissus, he is noted as being very vain (Mann 44). For example, only his mistress Juliette is allowed to call him Heinz, which is his given name: “The name Heinz made him wince as if he has been struck. He allowed no on else, not even his mother, to call him by that name; only Juliette could use it . . . Only when it became clear to him that he wanted to be an actor and become famous did he substitute the more aristocratic-sounding ‘Hendrik’” (Mann 47). He masquerades with a different name as a way to

hide his true self, of which he is ashamed. This idea becomes even clearer when the novel recounts how he changed his name: “Links were severed with childhood friends who stubbornly clung to ‘Heinz.’ Besides, there would have been no point in continuing to see friends who liked to guffaw over painful memories from a colorless past. Heinz was dead; Hendrik was on the road to greatness” (Mann 47). Whenever a character brings up Hendrik’s true name, as when Marder mocks him for trying to stand out, Hendrik grows mad and frustrated. It is important for him to always appear in the best way.

Perhaps his seeming inability to love others links him most tragically to both Narcissus and Faust. Hendrik does seem scared that he is not really capable of love. He likes to repeat to Juliette that he loves her, but when he does so he thinks, “Why lie to yourself? But he managed to smother this inner voice: he had to believe he was capable of love” (Mann 59). He lies precisely because he needs to believe this. He can love, but he only loves himself. This connects him with both Narcissus and Faust because neither was able to love anyone but themselves.

Hendrik is intensely aware of other people, but not because he cares for them. He is only aware of them only in relation to himself. At one point, when in bed with Barbara, he recounts a story from when he was a show-off choirboy. He says, “But I was possessed by the devil” (Mann 97). He felt as if he had to show off that he had the best voice, and so ended up screeching and being yelled at by his teacher. He ends the story by saying, “Such memories are like little hells into which we must descend from time to time . . . So often I’ve had to be so horribly ashamed – have had to descend into the hell of shame” (Mann 97). Here, Hendrik sets up that his hell is not necessarily literal. For him, hell is shame, rejection, and embarrassment -- an object of others’ laughter, a status, in which his talent is dismissed. This idea of Hendrik’s version of hell always

bubbles underneath the surface of his story, especially when he signs the proverbial pact with the devil. When he gets dragged to hell, surely it will not be to a physical place, but to something more abstract and horrifying in this respect (as Szabó's *Mephisto*, 1981, shows exceptionally well).

Like Faust, Hendrik is insatiable. His insatiability connects with a sharp desire for fame and notoriety as an actor. Hendrik has to start his acting career in Hamburg, but "[t]he desire for fame – the real fame that was to be found only in the capital – nagged at him like a physical pain" (Mann 127). Hendrik could not ignore it or let it pass from his grasp. He desperately needed to make it in Berlin. The novel moves through the great lengths Hendrik goes to attain his desire. He ends up harming, neglecting, and ignoring many people on his way. This callous treatment of others makes him a Narcissus-Faust. Narcissus largely exists alone in the story, and the only time he encounters another, Echo, he completely ignores her, or, in some versions of the story, dismisses her coldly. Faust, on the other hand, treats those around him in a shockingly cavalier manner. He never seems to worry about other people's feelings, or the effect he has on them. Hendrik proves to be cut out of the same cloth. He cannot be bothered about Hedda's infatuation with him, except when he finds it useful.

At one point, Barbara introduces Hendrik to her family and friends. One of Barbara's friends, Sebastian, says of Hendrik, "He's always lying and he never lies. His falseness is his truth – it sounds complicated, but actually it's quite simple. He believes everything and he believes nothing. He is an actor. And you haven't seen the last of him. He still obsesses you. You still expect something from him. You can't leave him yet, Barbara" (Mann 130). Sebastian rightly notes that Hendrik is simply an actor. From Hendrik's perspective, this is the defining

element of his life. He yearns to succeed as an actor, which makes most of his characteristics (like his propensity to have nervous breakdowns) seem affected. For the first half of the novel, Hendrik wants validation most deeply from Dora Martin because she, herself, is a great actor. She describes him by highlighting his bad nature: "Dora Martin became suddenly serious. Her eyes clouded. 'He interests me,' she said softly. 'He is completely unscrupulous' – she smiled tenderly – 'an utterly bad human being'" (Mann 133). Dora reads Hendrik effectively. She knows that he will stop at nothing to get what he wants because he is entirely self-focused. Indeed, for Hendrik nothing else exists outside of himself. In many ways, he seems exactly like a solipsist (what could be more Narcissus-Faust?).

This solipsism becomes evidenced in the roles that he starts playing and the effective way he portrays them. Prior to Hendrik tackling the role of Mephistopheles, after a different play he is described as "the most depraved of the depraved . . . which was why he won the greatest applause. With a demonic expression, and lifeless voice, he left no doubt he was evil . . . The audience shuddered – this was the incarnation of evil" (Mann 136-7). People respond to his acting in a positive manner, even as they are mainly responding to the naughtiness of the characters he depicts. They think, "Oh, how wonderfully wicked he is" (Mann 137). This distinctly positive response to his darker, more villainous roles leads him to start playing increasing evil roles, and even has one as the "Black Devil" (Mann 139). Hendrik is an exceptional actor. He is able to manipulate people into believing what he wants. For example, "The director was handsome. Only people who looked very closely, like the general's wife through her lorgnette, thought they could detect that his handsomeness was not quite genuine,

that it was more an illusion that was willed than a gift of nature" (Mann 225). Even his handsomeness is more artificial than natural.

Mirror-Mephistopheles in *Mephisto*

Following from the overt use of Faust as a metaphor in Hendrik's life, both the Nazi party and the Narcissus-Faust character of Hendrik Höfgen present as the Mirror-Mephistopheles in *Mephisto*. Hendrik is his own biggest tempter, giving in to his desire to be a famous, well-known actor. His desire is what leads and guides him through the distinct change of government in Germany. Yet in many ways, it is the Nazi party that gives Hendrik the power to achieve his lifelong dream of being an actor of great fame. As the manager of the state theater, he is young to achieve such an august position. The text seems to question whether or not Hendrik would have been able to achieve this feat without the Nazi party's aid.

The book starts at the prime minister's birthday party in Berlin. During this opening scene, a great deal is revealed about the Nazi party's close relationship to Mephistopheles. While observing the party, the Scandinavian attaché thinks, "They move like marionettes" (Mann 4). These figures attending a birthday party are intrinsically linked with the Nazi party. The party itself is literally draped in Nazi flags and decorations. To an outside observer, they look like the partygoers are being controlled by something other than themselves. A little later on at the party, the narrator observes, "They admired themselves. They admired one another. Most of all, they admired the power, the power which could give such a party" (Mann 9). This group of people represents a Narcissus-Faust culture where an idea infects everyone and brings them to marvel at their own power. The entire party becomes a bit chilling as the people are often described in

terrifying ways. The minister of propaganda's arrival is detailed in a disturbing way as "[a]n icy wind seemed to blow as he passed. It was as though an evil, solitary and cruel god had clambered down among the everyday bustle of pleasure-seeking, cowardly, pitiful mortals" (Mann 11). Each person infected with the poisonous idea of Nazism becomes a Mephistopheles, able to tempt and lead others astray. They are controlled by a force outside themselves, which, in turn, gives them the power to control others.

However, Hendrik is clearly his own Mephistopheles, while he also exerts a great deal of influence and control over others. In the Prologue, he is depicted as slippery and slimy. "Or was Hendrik Höfgen – one of the most talked-about figures in the city – so supremely cunning as to have managed to establish as close a relationship with the minister of propaganda as he had with the prime minister? Was he playing one power center against the other, while enjoying the protection of both?" (Mann 12). The narrator repeatedly connects Hendrik to a fish, making him seem cold and lifeless. Even in his lifelessness or emptiness, Hendrik is to be able to influence others. Everyone seems to be in Hendrik's thrall, "all hung on Hendrik's words. Even Miklas felt compelled to listen, and he chuckled reluctantly at the polished jokes of the man he hated" (Mann 37). Hendrik possesses this power over his fellow actors. He gets what he wants, while ensuring they do not take too much from him.

Beyond this, the narrator, when discussing Hendrik, often refers to him as otherworldly and demonic. He exists as supposedly a handsome actor, or at the very least charismatic. Yet the narrator describes him in this way: "his face looked more than usually sallow. One eye gazed out scornfully and malevolently from under a half-closed lid; the monocle glittered in the other" (Mann 42). Also, the narrator portrays him as always talking. "Hendrik was glad to be able to

monopolize the conversation again" (Mann 82). He wants to be the one glowing and noticed by others. He wants to be the one controlling them. He proves successful with this in his private life, but he is, unsurprisingly, most convincing when onstage. When Hendrik acts onstage, people say, "There he begins to shine. There he becomes irresistible" (Mann 90). As an actor, Hendrik convinces anyone who watches him of anything he wants. He does this time and time again. From his manager in Hamburg to his enemy at the birthday party, Hendrik's ability to manipulate and control terrifies in its effectiveness.

It is clear that Hendrik exists as his own Mephistopheles because of his skill at convincing himself of whatever he wants to think. Even when he knows something to be true, Hendrik changes his own mind so that he can do precisely what he most wants. He obviously does this on a large scale by supporting the Nazi party and denying what he valued early in the novel. However, he also does this in other areas and aspects of his life. He feels guilty because he is having a hard time performing with Barbara in their marriage bed. He longs for Juliette, but then he gets angry at himself for thinking about her instead of his wife. Yet instead of embracing his inner conscience, he begins to excuse himself because "self-accusation – however sincere and bitter it may be – turns after a certain point into self-justification" (Mann 106). Whenever Hendrik dares to reproach himself, he quickly talks himself out of it. He explains away his bad behavior and shores up exactly what he wants to do. He represents his own Mephistopheles by always tempting himself. Ultimately, he also leads himself into signing his pact with the Nazis. They are not actively talking him into leaving Paris. He does that to himself.

In the book, the narrator shows the connection between Hendrik and Mephistopheles most when Hendrik plays the character of Mephisto. After this hallmark role, he is often greeted

by someone calling him thus: “How’s it going, Mephisto?” (Mann 17). Not only do the characters start to call him this, the text starts referring to him as “Hendrik/Mephisto” (Mann 152) or “Höfgen / Mephisto” (Mann 201). This happens repeatedly through the second half of the book, and really underscores the connection between Hendrik and Mephistopheles.

When Henrik thinks about himself, he makes the extension even in his own mind. The way he sees Mephistopheles is tied to how he sees himself: “Hendrik made the Prince of Darkness into a ‘rascal’ – precisely the rascal that the Lord of Heaven in His infinite goodness sees in him and honors him from time to time with His company – for Mephisto is, of all the spirits that deny Him, the least troublesome to the Almighty” (Mann 152). He serves as a puckish figure that gets to play with God, and Hendrik captures a jovial representation of this concept. Beyond this idea, Mephistopheles also receives elevation because of his connection and understanding of humanity: “Let the angels shout for joy around God’s throne: they know nothing of human nature. The Devil knows mankind: he has been initiated into its wicked secrets” (Mann 153). For Hendrik, Mephistopheles has this connection because it is he, himself, who created it. Perhaps most convincing of all exists when Dora comes to congratulate him on his portrayal. In the past, she has teased Hendrik for different performances because he was not always particularly effective. When she sees his Mephistopheles, she gives him an unguarded compliment, which he challenges (probably hoping for more compliments and adoration from Dora). She simply responds, “I never take it amiss that someone is what he is” (Mann 153). For Dora, Hendrik plays Mephistopheles so effectively because he *is* Mephistopheles. He is his own tempter, and he also tempts others.

Echo-Gretchen in *Mephisto*

The two Echo-Gretchens presented in *Mephisto* are Hendrik's mistress, Juliette Martens, and his first wife Barbara. However, throughout the book, Hendrik silences all the women around him. He is focused on himself, so he demands that women be quiet at times: "The girls tittered softly like little silver bells stirred by the wind. Hendrik swung round and with a fierce look reduced this delicate peal to dead silence" (Mann 125). His other interactions with women, from Angelika to Nicoletta, are equally about establishing who he is at their expense.

Considering Hendrik's interaction with, and treatment of, his first wife shows this idea's truth. At their first meeting, he completely ignores her for almost the entire night. Finally, after she has sat quietly at his side for the meal, he decides to pay her some attention (mainly because Nicoletta and Marder are flirting the whole night, excluding Hendrik). As the text states, "He noticed her gaze was fixed searchingly on him" (Mann 66). She had just sat, silently, waiting for him to notice her. And only once she has secured his attention does she speak, as a person Henrik gives value and worth to. Even when she asks him why he is staring at her his response proves telling: "'Shouldn't I?' he answered softly. With a boyish flirtatiousness mixed with timidity she said, 'If it gives you pleasure . . .'" (Mann 68). She sets herself up as an object for Hendrik's pleasure. Throughout the rest of the dinner, everyone seems to speak but Barbara. Hendrik makes certain assumptions, and quite clearly creates an idealized version of her (Mann 72). But no one actually converses with Barbara. Even his proposal and her acceptance center around him. After he asks, she says, "If you really want it so badly, Hendrik . . . we could certainly try . . . we could try . . ." (Mann 75). At the start of the next chapter, Barbara is already rethinking her decision, worried that she does not want to be with Hendrik at all, but that he somehow

enchanted her (à la Narcissus). Hendrik just rarely allows her to *be*. He undercuts and berates her, implying that Barbara is nothing apart from her family: “She would be astounded by the hardness of the life I have known. What I shall achieve, and what I have already achieved, I owe completely to my own strength” (Mann 88).

Not long after their marriage, Barbara finds herself wondering if Hendrik had ever loved her. She decides, “Probably he is incapable of love” (Mann 105). He cheats on her almost immediately after the marriage, and he seeks to destroy her good moods as well as the life she tries to create outside of him (Mann 107). He denies her a true self, and thinks of her in terms of abstract things that only have worth when he is present to bestow them. Describing him, she says, “But his good angel had become his bad conscience” (Mann 123). By forcing her into these roles, he takes away her own self. The idea of good angel and bad conscience reflect the relationship Gretchen has to Faust.

In some ways, Hendrik does the same to Juliette. He does not allow her to be just herself; he manipulates her into what he wants her to be. This can most clearly be seen in his sexual relationship with Juliette. The exploration into unusual (at this time, seen as deviant) sexual relationships helps to make Klaus Mann’s works insightful. As James Robert Keller writes, “The interrelatedness of sexual and political identities in Klaus Mann’s works shows how he can be viewed from a post-1980s perspective” (165). Juliette and Hendrik’s relationship is full of tension between real power and impotent performance of power. First and foremost, he pays her (Mann 43), which is significant because she must echo his desires and subvert her own to make sure she gets his money, yet he acts as if he wants to be submissive with her. Consequently, as soon as he comes to her, he assumes a submissive presence (Mann 46).

She might seem to be the one with the power, humiliating and whipping him, but anyone with even a cursory knowledge of BDSM, supported by Danielle Lindemann's article, knows one who it is the submissive that has the true power, not the dominant one. The latter must understand what the submissive needs. She is expected to give what the submissive craves. This expectation is even more present when a person is getting paid to fulfill this role (600-01). This payment for humiliation and sex exists in *Mephisto.* Hendrik always decides when to end the game: "She understood the game was over" (Mann 53). When she notes that he is done, she stops, but we do not see the same exchange or interaction if and when she wants the game to be over. It seems almost entirely in Hendrik's hands.

Also, he does not respect Juliette as a real person to live a life outside of his. He has imaginary conversations with her in his mind and does not allow her to be her own self. He always carefully curates her for himself (Mann 45). He does not call her by name, in his mind or out loud, referring to her as "Princess Tebab, his black Venus" (Mann 48). Even more than this, she is literally not allowed in the same space he is. Even after he declares his undying love for her, she says, "But even so, I can't go to the theater when you are playing" (Mann 54), and when she pretends that she will really go to the theater to watch him, Hendrik overreacts because he knows this would make his life harder (Mann 54). She is just a tool for him to alleviate some stress and nerves (Mann 58-59). Nonetheless, she is a tool with an expiration date.

Because of his pact with the Nazis, Hendrik feels as if he has to break from Juliette. He does not really want to lose the sex and game, but she is too much of a liability for him (Mann 192-93). In a chilling moment, he sells her out to the fat man, as the prime minister is often called (Mann 195). It is quite clear, at least at this point in the story, that she would not have

been arrested if it were not for Hendrik. The book notes that, when she is sent away from Hendrik, "What followed were long days of silence. Was it ten days, or fourteen, or only six? She had been locked into a half-dark cell" (Mann 196). She is silenced by Hendrik's choices. He actually goes to see her, after having her arrested. "'Are you happy to see me?' he asked softly. Princess Tebab gave no answer. She stared at him. 'You are silent'" (Mann 196). For such a seemingly powerful woman, Juliette is silenced by Hendrik's actions, which follow her. Marc Weiner writes about how even she, and especially her Jazz music, is missing from many critics' writings about *Mephisto*, which pushes the aspect of Echo-Gretchen beyond just Hendrik because many critics silence Juliette (485). She is a character often forgotten about, or only discussed to show how controlled Henrik is by Nazism.

Juliette's relationship with Hendrik provides her with value and worth in the text, which makes her an Echo-Gretchen. Hendrik gives her life meaning. When he gets her arrested and sent away, she has to try to figure out what she is going to do with her life in Paris. Juliette manages to eke out a living of sorts, and Hendrik sends her a small allowance. The narrator says, "She spoke to nobody about her Berlin adventure, partly from fear of losing her life – or at least her small monthly allowance – and party from an unwillingness to create difficulties for Hendrik. Her heart was faithful to him" (Mann 216). She remains fixated on Hendrik, even hundreds of miles away. She defines herself through Hendrik and seems untethered without him. Ultimately Hendrik says about his women, "Juliette had disappeared from his life. Barbara had disappeared from his life. To both he had sworn eternal love" (Mann 197). For Hendrik, when the women no longer are clearly connected to him, he allows them to fade.

Narcissus-Faust at the End of *Mephisto*

As always with Narcissus-Faust, it is toward the book's end that the inevitable conclusion becomes more and more obvious. As Hendrik creeps toward this development for himself, he is able to secure "*his great role in the 1932-33 season*[. It] *is to be Mephisto in a new production of* Faust *with which the State Theater will celebrate the centenary of Goethe's death*. Mephistopheles – 'The strange son of Chaos' – [is] the great role of Hendrik Höfgen" (Mann 151-52). His acting of Mephistopheles for the State Theater locks him into the pact he makes with his own nebulous devil.

Hendrik is seduced with the government's power: "How strong evil is, thought Hendrik with an awestruck shudder. How it seizes on everything it wants and escapes unscathed! Things really happen in the world as they do in the films and plays of which I have so often been the hero" (Mann 159). We see him sign the proverbial contract when he starts back in Berlin and wants to endear himself to Lotte -- Lotte, whom he had mocked and derided as a terrible actress. She is in sharp contrast to the truly talented Dora. Dora helped Hendrik start his career, even forgiving him for his gauche and awkward first meeting. But Dora is a Jew, which means that now she has no power. Hendrik allows her to pass out of his life. He even goes so far as to mock Dora's so-called "Yiddish jabbering" to Lotte (Mann 166). It is chilling and disturbing the way he says it with such calculation.

As Hendrik works to secure his position back in Berlin, he begins to distance himself from those he was once close to, and works to get what he wants. When he first gets back to Berlin, he feels like his place is precarious, so he blatantly abandons one of his kindest friends, Otto Ulrichs (Mann 170). This abandonment foreshadows Otto's tragic end and Hendrik's

response. During this time, Hendrik also realizes that to make sure his position in Berlin is secure, therefore, he needs to get the Mephisto role again (Mann 172). He works to ensure this happens, focusing on a small role that solely benefits him and ignoring what happens to other people throughout all of Germany.

As he serves and loves himself, he also engages in his definite Faustian bargain. By the end of Chapter 7 (notably called "The Pact with the Devil"), Hendrik secures his position. He plays Mephisto again to much acclaim. He ends the play by making "great friends" with Göring, the prime minister of Germany: "The conversation between the man of power and the entertainer became increasingly animated . . . Everyone in the orchestra tried to glean the words that Hendrik's blood-red lips were forming. But Mephisto spoke softly; only the potentate caught his delectable jokes" (Mann 180). However, right in his moment of triumph, when everyone is envious of his ability to win over this man of power, he feels, inside of himself, how wrong it is to make this pact: "In fact what he felt was something close to nausea. Now I have contaminated myself, thought Hendrik. Now there is a stain on my hand that I can never wash off . . . Now I have sold myself . . . Now I am marked for life" (Mann 180). He is appalled at himself and what he has chosen to do, but he does nothing to change the path he has set for himself. Hendrik embraces his Narcissism and Faustian nature, loving himself and enjoying his own beauty and power, and accepting the evil pact with the devilish government.

From this point on, as the story moves quickly through the next several years, we see the pact play out. Everything seems to come easily to him; yet everything is tainted as well (Mann 186). He enjoys the power of being a more and more beloved actor, even as his guilt eats at him: "'He walks on corpses – he'd stop at nothing' happened to be one of the phrases used by Hans

Miklas to describe his celebrated colleague Hendrik Höfgen" (Mann 198). He has chosen a path for himself and will not back down from it. The poet Pelz, who also associates with the Nazis for his art, makes this chilling and keen observation to Hendrik, "Our beloved Führer is dragging us toward the shades of darkness and everlasting nothingness. How can we poets, we who have a special affinity for darkness and the lower depths, not admire him? It is absolutely no exaggeration to call our Führer godlike. He is the god of the Underworld, who has always been the most sacred of all those initiated in black magic" (Mann 203). If Hitler is the god of the Underworld, what has Germany become, if not hell? In this Germany, Hendrik is living large and being self-indulgent. He has grown fat after a decade and has a double chin (Mann 225-7). The reality of the government does not bother him as he becomes a clear, active, and more and more powerful member of one of its branches.

In the book, everything comes to a head for Hendrik when Otto goes missing. It comes out that Otto has been murdered because, while he, too, worked for the state theater, he always attempted to subvert and speak out against the Nazis. His death shocks Hendrik (Mann 251-3), yet he does not do anything in response. Toward the end of the book, a man comes to Hendrik in his garden, talking to Hendrik through his open window. He essentially reprimands him for Otto's death, Hendrik's treatment of Otto, and Hendrik's failure to deliver on the revolutionary front (Mann 259-61). This man foreshadows what will happen to Hendrik because he has sold himself to the Nazis. He has chosen to be fat and safe rather than to do the right thing and help protect others. It is at this moment that Hendrik realizes, "I have lost them all, he whispered. Barbara, my good angel. And Princess Tebab, the dark source of my strength. And Hedda von Herzfeld, my faithful friend. And even little Angelika. I have lost them all. The dead Otto

Ulrichs was to be envied – there was no more anguish left for him to bear" (Mann 261). He lists the people the novel has introduced to us, but whom we have left behind because Hendrik has left them behind. Again, he turns his pontifications upon himself. He thinks, "All of them were to be envied – all who could believe in something, and doubly to be envied were those who in the sweep and thunder of faith had give their lives . . . " (Mann 261). Because he loves himself too much to be bold, the strength these other people have shown when he has been such a failure haunts him. He follows what he said he believed at the book's very beginning that his principles are nothing because he ostensibly wants to separate himself from politics and merely be an actor. The entire novel ends with these words: "Minutes passed before he slowly raised himself. Tilting back his exhausted tear-stained face, he extended his arms in a fine grieving gesture and cried, 'What do men want from me? Why do they pursue me? Why are they so hard? All I am is a perfectly ordinary actor . . .'" (Mann 263). He only wants to be an actor, but he knows that he cannot merely act in the Nazi government without becoming at least somewhat complicit in what the Nazi's are working for.

After Hendrik's horrifying meeting with the man in the garden, he breaks down. This moment is when the story ends, leaving Hendrik Höfgen in 1936 Nazi Germany working as the manager for the state theater. However, the ending is somewhat ambiguous. What will happen to Hendrik? What has already happened to him? He has lost his youth, and as a man in his thirties who looks like he is in his fifties, his charm will not last much longer. He is being consumed with his guilt and hatred. We, of course, know that the Nazis have lost power, so he will lose power as well. He is getting fatter and fatter and will lose his job under a new regime, and what

will he be left with? Hendrik, in his own desire to endure and his rather disturbing devotion to himself, will be destroyed.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Book *Mephisto*

Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* possesses varied representations. Mann writes about both the actor who represents the Bolsheviks and then the Nazis and the powerful totem of the whip and boots that represent Hendrik's sexual release. He also writes about the affected meltdowns and nervous breakdowns of Hendrik that represent his delicate artistic nature. Along with those types of representation, this book is full of insightful, detailed accounts of how the bodies of the non-physical characters appear to viewers.

The book begins with a Prologue entitled "1936" that is full of weighted descriptions. Hendrik's is particularly notable because, of course, when the novel moves back to 1926, he will look slightly different from how he looks at this swanky party. He is at a birthday party, and when the minister of propaganda smiles at him: "The theater director responded with a smile that stopped well short of his ears and gave him a pinched look, almost as if he were in pain" (Mann 12). His smile is not sincere as he is not really happy to welcome this man. This leads to the first clear description of Hendrik's physical self: "Hendrik Höfgen could easily have been taken for a man of fifty. He was in fact thirty-eight – remarkably young for his exalted post. The sallow face with the horn-rimmed spectacles gave the impression of unruffled composure, which very nervous and very vain men can force themselves to assume when they have a large audience" (Mann 14). Hendrik is a man who has aged too quickly. The pressure of the society, especially for the past decade, has led him to ageing prematurely, a very bad thing for an actor, one would

think. But Hendrik is also a man haunted by his own nerves and vanity. He forces himself to be something he is not because he feels he must do so in this terrifying setting. The description continues with a detailed observation of Hendrik's looks:

> His balding skull was nobly proportioned. What was immediately striking about his puffy gray-white face was the band of strain around his high blonde eyebrows and recessed temples – a tense, vulnerable, suffering area that contrasted strangely with the strongly chiseled chin. He jutted his chin upwards to show off the graceful jaw line with its suggestion of resolution and manliness. His broad pale lips were set in an ambiguous smile; it seemed at once disdainful and pleading. His eyes were only occasionally visible behind the large shining lenses of his glasses. It was then one saw with a shock that at moments of tenderness they remained ice-cold despite their sad expression. Their grey-green iridescence made one think of precious but cursed stones or of the greedy eyes of some evil and menacing fish. (Mann 14)

He is described in a way that most closely aligns him with a fish. He is a sickly man in some ways, but there is something magnetic about him. However, he has reached this exalted position not entirely upon his own merit, and his body seems to be aware of this, which makes it constantly seek to overcompensate.

Since Hendrik has aged prematurely, what is wrong with his physical self comes to the fore and seems to haunt him. He is noted as being "too heavy, particularly around the thighs and buttocks" (Mann 14). The weight and fleshiness of Hendrik seems to be a flaw for him, a potentially gluttonous lust that he cannot always control. The narrator is always slyly undercutting Hendrik: "Above the gleaming white collar a number of wrinkles showed in his

neck" (Mann 14). A little later, still at the party, the narrator damns Hendrik with faint praise: "Aesthetically, Höfgen showed to great advantage. Next to the far too well fleshed couple he looked slim, and in contrast to the deformed propaganda dwarf he appeared tall and comely. His face, too, however pale and gaunt it might appear, contrasted agreeably with the three faces around him. With the sensitive temples and strong outline of the chin" (Mann 17). He shines when he is positioned next to people who are fatter or less appealing than he is. For a "Narcissus," this would be difficult and mildly crushing.

When the novel moves back ten years, Hendrik is less fat, but he is still not described in wholly glowing terms. The narrator says, "Hendrik's face with its strained temples and noble chin, pale and strongly outlined against the shadows" (Mann 38). One of his worst qualities, according to the narrator, are his hands: "It was the gesture of a man showing off his particularly beautiful, narrow hands. But there was nothing Gothic about Höfgen's hands; in fact, they were unattractively blunt. The backs were very broad and covered with red hairs. The fairly long but thick fingers ended in narrow (and not too clean) nails, which made the hands look almost disgusting" (Mann 38). These grotesque aspects of Hendrik seem to connect with the destruction of himself, which will come, even just as the ballooning of his body. He is an actor, which would typically mean he is handsome and his body reflects that. However, as he gets older his excessive lifestyle starts to adversely affect his body.

In the text, two of the most important figures in relation to Hendrik are his Echo-Gretchens, Juliette and Barbara. At the first meeting between Hendrik and Juliette, Hendrik changes around Juliette: "In his sallow face his gray-blue eyes widened, either from joy or fear, and the line of tautness in his temples grew more marked" (Mann 48). He has a strange

relationship with this woman. He feels drawn to her, as we see over and over again in the course of the novel. A very real part of this appeal is how Juliette humiliates Hendrik, making him a grotesque figure. He had "to display his pale, rather too fleshy body covered with reddish hairs, before slipping into the undignified attire he called his 'track suit' – a childish and ridiculous getup consisting of black sneakers, short white socks coquettishly turned down above the ankle, shorts of shiny black satin such as little boys were to at gym classes and a striped sweatshirt that left arms and neck bare" (Mann 51-2). Juliette seems to enjoy exposing Hendrik's vulnerability by mocking. This punishment of the body only happens for Juliette's eyes. Whenever she threatens to expose him, he loses his humor and enjoyment and makes sure she is incapable of doing so. At this point, he only wants Juliette to see him as ridiculous.

Juliette, herself, represents a wholly individualistic vision, especially compared to the other German women who surround Hendrik. She is the product of a German father and an African mother, but "[s]he looked not like a half-caste, but like a pure-blooded black. Her somewhat cracked skin was dark brown; in some areas, such as her low, domed forehead and the backs of her small, sinewy hands, it was almost black. Apart from the natural paleness of her palms, only her starkly angular cheekbones were of a contrasting hue: she had heightened them with bright red rouge" (Mann 48). Her sharp cheekbones, and even her extra-reddened lips, work to give her the power Hendrik craves from her. She keeps herself carefully: "Her eyes were carefully made up, with shaved, penciled eyebrows and false eyelashes; the upper lids were painted a bold dark purple" (Mann 48). Her lips are of special interest: "The thick pouting lips had been left their natural color. Against the blazing-white even teeth, which she bared in laughter and in rage, the lips appeared as rough as the skin of her hands and neck; they were dark

violet, in marked contrast to the red of her gums and tongue" (Mann 48-9). Her face is described as a mask of a real woman's face. And the narrator details her looks in ways that call to mind a lion or other jungle animals. The one aspect of her that seems to undercut her power is as follows: "In a face so dominated by mobile, fiercely intelligent eyes and flashing teeth, one hardly noticed the nose. Only at second glance did one see how flat it was. In fact, it seemed as good as nonexistent: it was a hollow, rather than an eminence, in the middle of this evilly attractive face" (Mann 49). Her beauty is needed both to keep Hendrik and to pull others into her web, as she does later, when she performs in Paris.

Most obviously, Juliette contrasts with Barbara, her counterpart in Hendrik's life. Barbara is described in much gentler terms: "The sensitive and graceful oval of her face was pale; her lightly bronzed neck and arms had the golden bloom of fine apples ripened through a long summer" (Mann 67). She is someone who belongs outside the world; and she is very different from Juliette, who is only found in smoky clubs or in private rooms. Barbara is tanned by the sun, and she spends time riding horses in the morning. She really seems to fit the stereotype of beauty of the 1920s as well as the Renaissance: "This beautiful slenderness of limb recalled ideally formed boys. But her face was that of a Madonna, as was the way in which Barbara now opened her dark blue eyes, which looked almost black under long, full and completely natural lashes. Their gravely searching expression was touched with a friendly curiosity that seemed almost mischievous" (Mann 67-8). Everything about Barbara seems to connect to the more comfortable type of woman. She engages and appeals. She represents the type of woman who works hard, not merely content to just abide. Barbara proves to be different from Juliette because she both fits more into the expected idea of beauty and she ends up having more power. Juliette

will be the true Echo-Gretchen, although because of how the character of Barbara is treated, she will also fit into this category.

After the middle of the novel, Hendrik appears as sparkling as Mephisto in *Faust.* The way he decides to play this role is noticeable, in part, because of his appearance:

> His shaved head was powdered as white as his face, his eyebrows painted grotesquely high, his blood-red mouth stretched into a fixed smile. The wide space between his eyes and the brows shimmered in a hundred different hues. All colors of the rainbow mingled on Mephisto's eyelids and under the arc of his black brows: red merged into orange, then into violet and blue; silver dots glistened in between, and a little gold was lightly spread throughout. The result was a shimmering landscape that set off the hypnotic jewel-like eyes of this Satan. (Mann 152)

This is the image that captures Hendrik's version of Mephistopheles. A blood red mouth might open to consume the soul of Faust or the soul of Hendrik. A ghastly white skin tone foreshadows death. His eyes are off-set by creepy thin eyebrows and rainbow eyelids, calling to mind the moment Saruman reveals himself to be the many-colored. In the novel, at this moment in the play, Hendrik has become Satan.

Toward the end of the novel, Hendrik's body is shown to have changed, at least to some extent. The book ends in 1936, well before the Nazis' fall, so Hendrik's ending is not quite clear. Even so, now, "The director was bald – he had shaved off the last silken strands of hair that nature had left him. He felt no need to be ashamed of his nobly shaped skull. It was with dignity and self-confidence that he displayed the Mephistophelean head that had so taken the fancy of the prime minister. The cold jewel-eyes shimmered as irresistibly as ever in the sallow, slightly

bloated face" (Mann 226). Ostensibly proud of his bald head, this pride connects with the corruption of Göring. The last line of the description proves particularly haunting for Hendrik. The spark remains in his eyes, but the narrator describes the rest of his face in a more off-putting way. Because he has suckled at the teat of the Nazis, his skin does not possess a healthy color. The use of the word "sallow" makes him sound almost diseased. Not only is his skin color unhealthy, his face has become "bloated" over the years, which would puff out any expression he would attempt to make in his profession as an actor. He has destroyed some of himself, which will only get worse with time, and each moment he allows more of his convictions to die, like poor Otto.

Representations of the Physical Body in the Film *Mephisto*

István Szabó's *Mephisto* (1981) is a film that is practically defined by its set design, costuming, and bold look. It is "stunningly lit by little more than a lightbulb" with a "unified visual tone, sharply rendered in dark, rich colors which create a deceptively warm look" (Kloman 66). The deceptively warm nature of some aspects, like Göring's office that Hendrik visits, plays against the fear that dominates the film. The characters never fully know if they have security, or if they are about to be exiled, shot, or made to commit suicide. In the movie, Szabó creates Hendrik into a clearer Narcissus: "The film-poet draws an even clearer bead on the Gestapo of suspicion in *Mephisto*. Szabó's Faust is an actor, a narcissist Everyman" (Szabó and Hughes 13). Most obviously, Szabó achieves this in the film through the number of mirrors, and time Hendrik spends looking into them. The use of mirrors proves to be noticeable from the beginning, but is perhaps most apparent during the scene when Hendrik tells Juliette he has

fallen in love with another woman. Hendrik thinks he is ending it with Juliette -- which we will see does not actually happen the way he thinks it will. However, instead of looking at her and treating her as a person, Hendrik speaks as he looks in a mirror. He stares at himself, messing with his hair and adjusting small things while he ends a relationship with a woman.

Throughout the film, Hendrik's Mephisto, even as a symbol, comes up repeatedly. The first representation of Mephisto has Hendrik's face painted a matte white, with thin drawn eyebrows, smoky eyes, painted bright red lips and ears, and a black skull cap (see fig. 39).

Fig. 39. Hendrik's first Mephistopheles from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

When he reprises the role of Mephisto for the Nazis, Hendrik must change certain aspects of it to make sure it does not call to mind his Communist background. Hughes describes this production in his interview with Szabó: "When Szabó's ex-leftist, Goering-loving actor-machiavel performs in a massive, Nazi-produced *Faust* – one of the most brilliant dramatic film sequences since

Orson Welles, the Olivier of *Richard III* and Kurosawa – we can feel the heat of what George Steiner has shown to be an unholy fusion between Kultur and barbarism in the idealizing Reich of *Blut und Boden*" (14). As far as the opulent setting is concerned, the film's portrayal of the Nazi production holds nothing back. Here, his face is painted a shiny white that catches the light a great deal more (see fig. 40, 41). He no longer wears a skull cap, as his entire head is

Fig. 40. Hendrik's reworked Mephistopheles under the Nazi regime from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

Fig. 41. Another look at the shiny white paint and the arrestingly bright lips from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

Fig. 42. Hendrik going to see the prime minister dressed as Mephistopheles from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

Fig. 43. He is playing with the prime minister and his wife from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

painted white. He also has his ears painted white, meaning he looks more arresting. It is in this production that he comes to see the prime minister. At first, the viewer is privy to their conversation, but as people begin to gather and watch the prime minister and the actor, we merely watch as well (see fig. 42, 43).

Hendrik gestures in a way that looks like a scene from *Faust* that we have just watched, but what he says is unclear. We just watch him interact with the terrifyingly powerful man. Later in the film, the imagery of Mephisto, especially as it relates to Hendrik, becomes more and more evident. During his wedding reception to his second wife, after the prime minister has made his creepy visit, a group of young men dressed in different stages or aspects of Mephisto start to circle Hendrik. Some have just a white mask on, others have just their face painted white with

the black eyebrows and red lips, still others have the exact look of his first Mephisto, and finally some have the exact look of his last Mephisto. It becomes a mad frenzy of dancing around Hendrik and all of the guests end up joining. The circling of Hendrik starts to look like some moments, seen in Faust stories from the opera, when the demons come to drag Faust's soul to hell. Finally, right before the chilling conclusion of *Mephisto*, Hendrik goes to hug his wife. He has just found out that Otto is dead, and he is seeking some comfort. But she is wearing a masque and has her lips painted red (see fig. 44), which is a chilling callback to Mephisto, and foreshadows the somewhat shocking conclusion.

One of the most notable scenes of the body in *Mephisto*, however, proves to be the final scene. The prime minister has Hendrik come to an empty arena and starts to yell his name over

Fig. 44. Her face mask and red lips a connection to the mask Hendrik so often wore from "Mephisto – Film (Movie) Plot and Review"; *Film Refernece*; filmreference.com, 2018, http://www.filmreference.com/Films-Ma-Me/Mephisto.html.

and over again. He then pushes Hendrik out, and several spot lights start to surround him. At first, as he seeks to run away from the light, which simply follows him. He appears tiny (see fig. 45). He looks like the little beetle the prime minister warned him he could become. He really is, at least for the prime minister, something insignificant that can easily be crushed. Then, the camera moves into a close-up, throwing his face into sharp relief with too much light (see fig. 46). At this point, he looks crazed and beset: "But Szabó has found an objective correlative for this sound and fury: the Nazi spotlights that stun his actor-hero in the truly great scene at the end of *Mephisto*. Perhaps this searing light is related to the blinding of Faust at the end of Goethe's play . . . These terrifying spotlights represent the psychotic violence hidden within the seductive

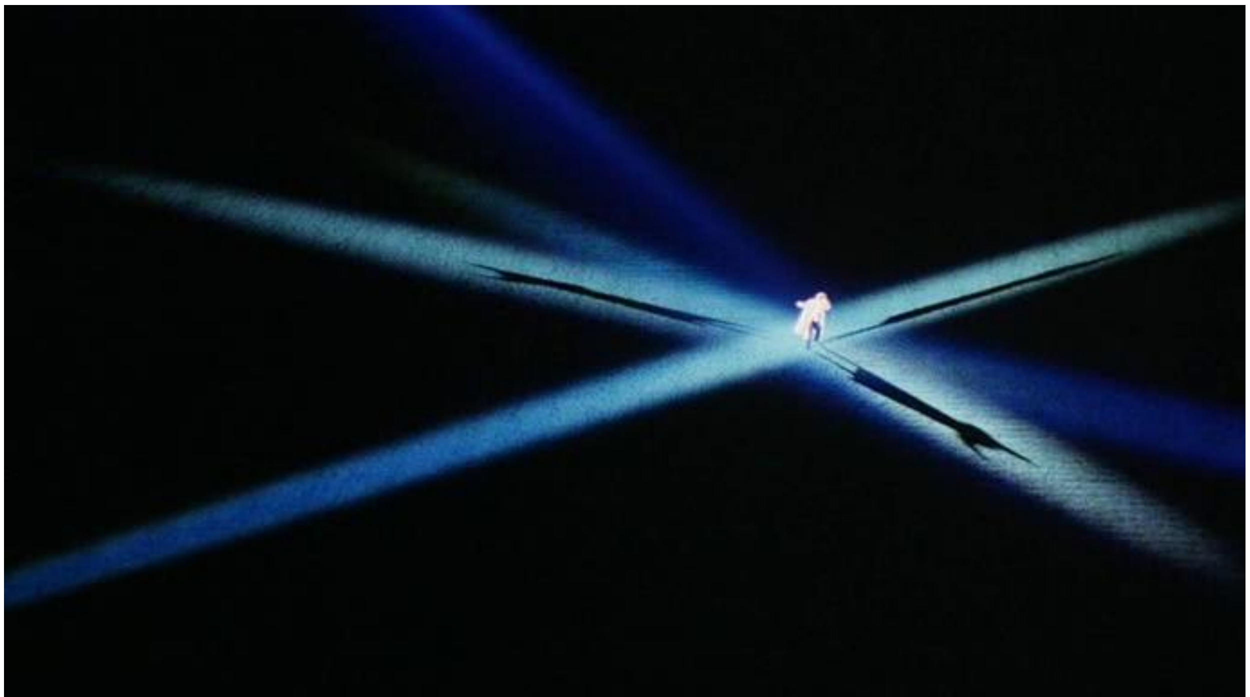

Fig. 45. Hendrik attempting to run from the light, but it is solely focused on him from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

Fig. 46. A close up of Hendrik's harried face caught by the light from "*Mephisto* (1981)"; *Scribblings of a Cinema-obsessed Mind*; gokhaleditya.blogspot.com, 5 Oct. 2015, http://gokhaleaditya.blogspot.com/2015/10/mephisto-1981.html.

surface" of Mephistopheles (Szabó and Hughes 14). The final scene underscores the confusion and frustration that Hendrik feels. However, he, as a Narcissus-Faust, only cares about himself and his needs and desires. This ending fits because, even with its ambiguous nature, he clearly brings the bodily destruction on himself.

Distinct Choices that Influence the Narcissus-Faust Viewing of *Mephisto*

István Szabó's *Mephisto* was not beloved by all critics when it premiered in 1981. Several people had problems with the numerous changes Szabó made to the story in Klaus Mann's novel. For example, Lundstrom argues that the film fails in its attempt to use "theater as a metaphor for moral bankruptcy" (163). The fact that Hendrik is treated less as a satirical

caricature and more as a sympathetic figure frustrated many. Since film forces the body of the character to always be represented for the audience, Szabó chose not to replicate some of Mann's descriptions. For example, Hendrik in the film is not as bloated or fat. He is portrayed as the type of classic man from the Rhineland (see fig. 47). Furthermore, over the course of the film, Hendrik does not really age or change as far as his physical representation. Klaus Maria Brandauer changes the way Hendrik carries himself and some of his resting facial expressions, but, with the exception of the last scene, the Hendrik shown at the beginning is the Hendrik at the end.

Fig. 47. Klaus Maria Brandauer playing Hendrik Höfgen from Pollard; "Alternate Best Actor 1981: Klaus Maria Brandauer in Mephisto"; *Actor os car*; actoroscars.blogspot.com, 2 May 2016, http://actoroscars.blogspot.com/2013/11/alternate-best-actor-1981-klaus-maria.html.

Peter G. Christensen makes an interesting claim about the film, especially in comparison to the novel, however. He claims, "as Mephisto, Höfgen turns his audience from spectators into Nazi collaborators" (20). Several moments in the film show the actors looking directly at the

camera. However, the actors do not break the fourth wall. They receive this point of view when talking to other characters (usually across great distances). Szabó employs this technique when Angelika welcomes Hendrik back to Berlin with a letter (see fig. 48). Yet times also exist when the character, especially Hendrik, looks into the camera as if he is looking at and addressing the film's viewers. This approach allows "the film [to go] farther in asking us to think about collaboration in the theatrical life of the nation" (Christensen 22). How culpable are the people who view Hendrik's Mephisto and Hamlet? Do people who ingest and accept art, from literature to film, also bear responsibility? These types of questions help to elevate the film. It exists not as an exact replica of the novel, but then it should not.

Fig. 48. The character looking into and addressing the camera from "Mephisto 1981 Film"; *PopFlock*; popflock.com, 2018, http://www.popflock.com/learn?s=Mephisto_(1981_film).

One of the main differences that change some aspects of the portrayal of Narcissus-Faust and, more important, Echo-Gretchen is how Szabó alters Hendrik and Juliette's relationship. She serves no longer as a bold, powerful woman who Hendrik pays to punish and humiliate him. She

still teaches him to dance, and he still ends up looking pretty ridiculous (see fig. 49), which leads to her raucous laughter. Yet when she starts giggling uncontrollably and mocking him for his truly ridiculous clothes, and the way he lacks stamina and quickly becomes tired, Hendrik launches himself at her on the bed. He shoves his fingers into her mouth, forcing her to nibble and suck them. Then he begins to manipulate her body, peeling off her clothing in a frenzy. He ultimately strips himself of his shirt as well, but he leaves his underwear / shorts and his black leg warmers on. Then, the way he controls and dictates how Juliette gets naked clearly shows who has the power in the relationship. This is made even clearer by the way he throws her around and exerts complete control of her body before they have sex (see fig. 50, 51). This is

Fig. 49. Hendrik wearing painfully short black shorts to learn to dance from “Mephisto”; *Follow Me Now*; follow-me-now.de, 2018, http://www.follow-me-now.de/html/body_mephisto.html.

Fig. 50. Hendrik throwing Juliette around while she is naked from “Mephisto”; *Follow Me Now*; follow-me-now.de, 2018, http://www.follow-me-now.de/html/body_mephisto.html.

Fig. 51. Another shot of Hendrik throwing Juliette around before having sex with her from “Mephisto”; *Follow Me Now*; follow-me-now.de, 2018, http://www.follow-me-now.de/html/body_mephisto.html.

vastly different than the performative power Juliette has in the novel. Here, Szabó brings to the fore the undertones of Hendrik's control over Juliette. The complete, forced vulnerability she experiences and the way the film displays her body for both Hendrik and the viewers places her in the role of Echo-Gretchen. Juliette does not have a voice in the movie, and Hendrik ultimately destroys her. The viewers see Juliette one last time when Hendrik comes to see her in Paris. She is overjoyed, jumping into his arms, clearly showing her pleasure and enthusiasm. After the greeting, the film cuts to them naked in bed, where the viewers are supposed to assume they had sex. She starts to encourage Hendrik to leave Berlin, to allow her to support him, which he disregards out of hand. Finally, he completely rejects her by telling her to stop writing to him because it could cause trouble. Her horrified and shocked face serves as our last glimpse of Juliette.

Fig. 52. Hendrik as Mephistopheles swirling his blood red cape from "Stranger than Real"; *The Calvert Journal*; calvertjournal.com, 2018, https://www.calvertjournal.com/features/show/5687/budapest-city-report-film-hungarian-cinema.

Fig. 53. Hendrik's Mephistopheles exuberantly dances as he tempts Faust to sell his soul from "Stranger than Real"; *The Calvert Journal*; calvertjournal.com, 2018, https://www.calvertjournal.com/features/show/5687/budapest-city-report-film-hungarian-cinema.

Beyond the change to Juliette, Szabó wants to make the point that the story in *Mephisto* proves to be not unique to that moment in German history. It represents something that always hangs before us. All of us have the somewhat terrifying vision of Hendrik's Mephisto, dancing around in his cape (see fig. 52, 53) as he conjures and tempts on stage inside of us. As he says in an interview with Lenny Rubenstein, "*Mephisto* is a story that could happen even here in this country" (36). And surely, this is the point. Hendrik Höfgen could be any one of us: "It is a human story about a kind of character which exists all over – whether doctors, professors, journalists, or filmmakers" (36). Yet, in the film, Hendrik is not allowed to simply remain acting and performing as he wants. He attends the birthday party of the prime minister, an opulent party where the main decorations are Nazi symbols (see fig. 54). However, it is after attending this

Fig. 54. The opulent party where the main decoration is the swastika from “Mephisto”; *Sky Cinema*; sky.com, 2018, http://www.sky.com/tv/movie/mephisto-1981/gallery/gallery-mephisto-1981.

party, already a compromise of what Hendrik says he believes and supports, that the prime minister takes Hendrik to the arena. At the end, it is implied that he will be killed: “The film’s climax is terrifying: placed in an arena by a vindictive Nazi chief. Höfgen shouts from behind the blinding white spotlight, ‘What do you want of me? I’m only an actor!’ Of course, they want his soul, his spirit, his pride” (Kloman 66). He is left begging to understand what he can do differently after he has already compromised his morals, his friends, and his lovers.

As the last novel and film, I use the story of Hendrik Höfgen as the last specific Narcissus-Faust. He shows us that we all have the propensity to be a Narcissus-Faust. This is

what could happen to us all, but it is important to not allow ourselves to fall into this trap because the Narcissus-Faust will always be self-destructive.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Taking together the literary works and films described in the previous chapters, we can see the warning implicit in all of them. Since they show that a Faust in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century characterizations will also be a Narcissus, they make clear the danger present within these characters: the Narcissus-Faust is always his own Mirror-Mephistopheles. His desires lead to self-destruction, and the Narcissus-Faust as Mirror-Mephistopheles leads others astray, and most often, to their deaths as well. Each Narcissus-Faust reading creates space and demands consideration for female characters and their positions in the novels, films, and societies. The Narcissus-Faust's body is punished and destroyed, just as it receives in both myths. This facet leads to the inherent warning of any Narcissus-Faust story, but especially one in the philosophical novel. These characters also epitomize ideas and cultures, which prove to be Narcissus-Fausts themselves. Looking at the characters in relationship to their Narcissus-Faust cultures provides a dire warning. What happens to a Narcissus-Faust? He destroys himself. What will happen to a Narcissus-Faust society? It, too, leads to its own destruction.

The investigation of these narratives show precisely that. In both Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Branagh, 1994), Victor exists as a Narcissus-Faust. His love for himself dominates most of the story, and he has a desperate need to pursue knowledge. He forfeits his care for those he supposedly loves to create a Creature that he immediately leaves. Because he leaves him, the Creature, hideous and hated, must attempt to figure everything out on his own. When the Creature ends up killing -- first Victor's brother, then, his best friend, and then, his bride – we are horrified. However, it proves hard, if not

impossible, to place all of that at the Creature's feet. Obsessed with himself, Victor does not try to protect his family or friends, nor does he attempt to bond with the Creature and teach him right from wrong, or simply accept him. Elizabeth is Victor's supposed beloved, but we see how little he actually acts in order to protect her. She represents most women at this time. All aspects of her only serve to flesh out her relationship with Victor. Her necessity merely facilitates Victor and the story. No space for her to have her own opinion or to talk about other subjects than Victor exist. She is silenced, like Echo, with no other ability to repeat Victor's words. She is killed, like Gretchen, because of her relationship with Victor. She provides the tragic representation that women receive in Narcissus-Faust stories. Because Victor exists as a Narcissus-Faust character, the story ends with his destruction and death. The cliché of scientists needing to be careful with what they create remains true. They do not want to neglect others for their own benefit because, at the end, it will not benefit them at all. A group of people, like scientists, who build themselves into Narcissus-Faust characters, who love themselves and greedily pursue knowledge without considering who might get hurt, will only find their own self-destruction. Victor shows this outcome.

Dorian Gray fits the more literal aspects of the myth especially well. Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* captures the essence of the Narcissus-Faust figure. Dorian stands as beautiful, and an abundance of characters love him after simply seeing his beauty. He, too, falls for himself when he sees Basil's portrait. Dorian then creates a more literal pact with an abstract devil to sell his soul for evergreen youth and beauty. He also represents Mirror-Mephistopheles. Throughout the text a push-pull of whom to blame for this strange reality exists, as does trying to pin point the true Mephistopheles. From Dorian's perspective, of course, responsibility lies with

Lord Henry, blaming him again and again, until the last chapter. However, the sly narrator of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* leaves the onus strictly in Dorian's hands. He has led himself astray – and not only that: he has led numerous others into destruction as well. Alan Campbell and Adrian Singleton are just a few of the lives he has destroyed. Perhaps the first life he destroyed proves the most important: Sibyl Vane. She presents as an innocent girl when she first met Dorian, beautiful and naïve. She proves to be Dorian's Echo-Gretchen, which the film *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Lewin, 1945) captures particularly well. In the film, she merely can sing a song and is not given a true chance to ever speak. She ends up taking her life because of Dorian's cruelty toward her. However, the book, which is deeply concerned with men and has little good to say or show about women, reveals one of the main issues of culture in the late1800s. The women are often excluded by society. In this case, they are pushed out of the story. Although Sibyl embodies a very compelling Echo-Gretchen, Wilde presents Basil as an almost more compelling version. What could be more silencing to women then cutting them out completely? *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also has one of the most satisfying conclusions for the Narcissus-Faust story: the revenge motif. But the audience itself receives the revenge. Faust must be punished. Dorian's perfect beauty is destroyed when he takes a knife to his painting. All the damage of sin, vice, deterioration, and age of the past eighteen years is restored to Dorian's body. The arresting image of his dead, corrupted corpse stays with both the reader and the viewer of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Dorian represents a very specific type of person in this culture, a person who reveals that the upper-class in England were not long for this world. In the coming decades, they would slowly lose power and decay from the inside, much like Dorian himself.

Kurtz, in both *Heart of Darkness* and *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979), captures particularly well the Narcissus-Faust character as representation for a whole society and culture. Kurtz loves himself and has a controlling nature. His legendary charisma, as Marlow travels closer and closer to where Kurtz has set up his domain and keeps hearing hints, pulls on him as well. When Marlow finally arrives, he sees how Kurtz's character is a Mirror-Mephistopheles. In Conrad's novella, he has taken over an entire tribe of people, who seem ready to do whatever he wants. In Coppola's film, Kurtz has a tribe as well as a rag-tag group of miscellaneous misfits and ex-military people. Kurtz does not care about any of these people, even writing out the order to exterminate them all. They seem simply to desire to be led by Kurtz. The Echo-Gretchens in *Heart of Darkness* prove to be particularly important. He has a beautifully strong woman in Africa, who, according to Marlow, is nevertheless silent and powerless. Ultimately, Kurtz's fiancé back home subverts her. The Intended also epitomizes Echo-Gretchen. To Marlow, who echoes Kurtz, what matters is the ways in which he wanted to be seen. Hence, when Marlow leaves her, she is left to continue mourning a reality she never possessed. In *Apocalypse Now*, denied any sort of real existence, the Echo-Gretchen shows true silence. All that Coppola shows of these women in war are a few shots of the African woman, this time presumably Cambodian, and one picture of Kurtz's wife in the dossier. Unsurprisingly, a society that shuts out an entire half of the population proves very unhealthy.

In Klaus Mann's *Mephisto* and *Mephisto (Szabó,* 1981), Hendrik Höfgen loves himself and his acting abilities. He will stop at nothing to get what he wants. He is, of course, his own Mirror-Mephistopheles. In this book and film, Hendrik, playing both Narcissus-Faust and Mirror-Mephistopheles, proves to be particularly evident because that is his most famous role as

an actor. The narrator frequently refers to him as Mephisto or Mephistopheles, as do the other characters. In the film, we see repeated representations of Hendrik as Mephistopheles. He allows his own desire for fame to control and lead him to his “pact with the devil.” But he also leads others astray along the way, one of the most evident examples being Otto Ulrichs. Hendrik’s treatment of the two Echo-Gretchens most harms Hendrik’s soul. When she first appears in the novel, his first wife is not allowed her own perspective and opinion. The narrator portrays her as always echoing Hendrik until he wants to ignore the drastic issue of the Nazis taking over Germany. She disappears from the story after that. His other Echo-Gretchen exists as Juliette, his dark mistress. His treatment of her proves to be particularly telling. At the end of the story, Hendrik has lost much of his good looks, becoming bald and fatter. He has also lost himself in what he has done. In the film, Szabó heavily implies that the prime minister will very shortly kill Hendrik. The book does not have that scene, but the readers are still left thinking he has destroyed himself. Because this story possesses a Narcissus-Faust ideology, it will lead to its own destruction, which, of course, had been played out by history.

Considering these four narratives, I see that reading a philosophical novel with the Narcissus-Faust lens encourages some injunctions. First of all, looking at a character and seeing its literary ancestors, always provides vital interpretations. The four characters Victor, Dorian, Kurtz, and Hendrik are often described or linked with Faust; but realizing that Faust must be Narcissus helps elucidate certain aspects of the characters. This approach directs part of the focus to be on how the physical bodies of the characters are represented, which leads to discussions and ways of approaching the texts that prove necessary. Since the self-love and obsession, for Narcissus, mean abuse of the body and death, this reading helps add a layer to these stories.

Considering a text from the Narcissus-Faust angle also allows two important considerations. For the nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts, these Narcissus-Fausts present as their own tempters, which allows for seeing this aspect in these stories. Even more important, if a story exists as Narcissus-Faust, there must be Echo-Gretchens, which means that a space for women will always be provided. Especially important, many of the texts and narratives from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have a heavy male focus.

The irony that the female Faust seems so impossible to imagine appears almost absurd because in society women have often been tied to Narcissus. Frequently depicted as vain and obsessed with their own beauty, stories cast women in the Narcissus role. Snow White's mother (or step-mother, depending on the telling) comes to mind. In this tale, a woman serves as incredibly beautiful –for much of her life she existed as the most beautiful woman alive. Yet, she only reaches satisfaction as long as that remains true. What could seem more like Narcissus than someone obsessed with staring at her own reflection and hearing that she is the most beautiful in all the land over and over again? Even so, the wicked queen is not a Faust even though she seems to be slotted into the role of Narcissus. She is a character that is able to be satiated. As long as she was proclaimed as the most beautiful in the land, she was happy to abide in her own life. In this way, she lacked the driving force to be Faust. Although most Fausts are Narcissuses, it does not follow that most Narcissuses are Fausts. These Narcissuses seem to be a broader swath of people than those that are Fausts. Up to this point, well known literature regulates women to the role of Narcissuses, not Fausts.

With this in mind, this study focused on texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During those two hundred years, it does not seem that people widely shared a compelling female

Faust. Perhaps in the twenty-first century, a distaff Narcissus-Faust will be created that will reinvent the old myth, giving a new place for the character to grow. Would a female Narcissus-Faust end the same way that the male versions seem compelled to do? Or would she find a way to maintain her life even as she is consumed by self-love and dissatisfaction? It does not seem likely that she would escape what all other Narcissus-Fausts have not been able to. However, since we do not have a story to look at for an example yet, we are left to wonder and, possibly, create for ourselves the twenty-first century Narcissus-Faust story.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jill Johnson was born in Longview, Texas. After completing her schoolwork at Grace Community High School in 2006, Jill entered Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. She received a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English from Liberty University in May 2009. During the following two years, she worked on her Master of Arts from Liberty University while working as a Graduate Student Assistant to Mrs. Carolyn Towles. She wrote her thesis on graphic novels and the concept of the grotesque. She received her Master of Arts in May 2011. In August of 2012, she entered the humanities studies in literature program at The University of Texas at Dallas.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

Ph. D. **Current Doctoral candidate for Ph.D. in Humanities: Studies in Literature**
University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas, Continuing
GPA 3.9

M.A. **Master of Arts Degree in English**
Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, May 2011
GPA 4.0
High Distinction
Thesis: "Controlling *The Sandman*: The Function of the Grotesque in the Ninth Art." http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/masters/176/

B. A. **Bachelor of Arts Degree in English**
Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, May 2009
GPA 3.8, GPA in Major 3.9
Summa Cum Laude
Honors Program
Graduated in Three Years
President's List and Dean's List, All Three Years
Inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, English Honor Society
Sigma Tau Delta Officer, Senior Year

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

August 2017 – Present
Professor of English **Tyler Junior College**

Responsible for planning, grading, creating my own syllabus and curriculum, tests, assignments, and all things needed for ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302, ENGL 2332, ENGL 2333. Responsible for about 150 students each year

August 2013 – May 2017
Senior English Teacher **Grace Community School**

Responsible for planning, grading, creating my own syllabus and curriculum, tests, assignments, and all things needed for dual-credit (through Tyler Junior College) senior English (the first semester is English 1301 and the second was English 2323 British Literature the first year and English 2333 World Literature all years after the first). Responsible for about 85 students each year.

August 2012 – May 2013
Teaching Assistant **University of Texas at Dallas**

Responsible for teaching two sections of Rhetoric 1301 each semester. This position required planning, teaching, and conducting the classroom and grading all work written and completed by thirty students per semester.

August 2011 – December 2013
Adjunct Professor **Tyler Junior College**

Responsible for planning, grading, creating my own syllabus, tests, assignments and all things needed for the English composition classes I conducted. Taught multiple sections of English 1301, each with twenty-eight students per class.

September 2011 – May 2012
Writing Tutor **Tyler Junior College**

Responsible for a variety of students who came to the Writing Lab seeking tutoring for their writing. This included reviewing papers, helping them understand the mechanics of writing, the requirements for an academic paper, how best to approach organization, and other various writing oriented tasks.

August 2009 – May 2011
Graduate Student Assistant **Liberty University**

Responsible for teaching two sections of English 101 each semester for two years. This position required planning, teaching, and conducting the classroom and grading all work written and completed by fifty students per semester.

May 2009 – September 2011
Lead Teacher **Grace Community School – Early Education Center**

Taught five-year-olds for three summers and part of each school year in a highly disciplined, academic kindergarten. Was responsible for classroom management of eighteen students, helping them learn and review the alphabet, numbers, and colors. Organized field trips, reading, and play time and interacted with parents and staff.

PUBLICATIONS

"The Grand Armée's Retreat out of Russia in 1812"
LAMP, Liberty University Literary Publication, Fall 2011

"Sebastian's Night"
LAMP, Liberty University Literary Publication, Spring 2010 issue 1

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

RAW: Graduate Student Conference
Presenter
March 2013
Richardson, Texas
Presented "Babylon and Zion: The Intersection between Two Cities"

Southwest Texas Popular Culture and American Culture Association
Presenter
April 2011
San Antonio, Texas
Presented "Controlling *The Sandman*: The Function of the Grotesque in the Ninth Art"

Graphic Engagement: The Politics of Comics and Animation
Presenter
September 2010
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Presented "The Transience of Batman and the Corrosion of the American Dream"

LANGUAGES

English
French