

**TURKISH REPUBLIC**  
**BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**ANALYSIS OF NARCISSISTIC CHARACTERS AND  
FATAL FACE-OFF SITUATIONS IN HOLLYWOOD  
FILMS**

**Master Degree Thesis**

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**İSTANBUL, 2011**

**TURKISH REPUBLIC  
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**SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE  
CINEMA AND TELEVISION**

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**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
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## ABSTRACT

### ANALYSIS OF NARCISSISTIC CHARACTERS AND FATAL FACE-OFF SITUATIONS IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS

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Cinema and Television

Thesis Supervisor: Assistant Prof. Dr. Kaya Özkaracalar

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The aim of this thesis is to analyze three representatives of the narcissistic Hollywood characters, their confrontations with themselves and their consequent evolution into a newstate. Accordingly, the state of nihilism the narcissist protagonists of the films American Psycho, Dorian Gray and The Talented Mr. Ripley reach at the end of each film is examined in this thesis, with the primary emphasis being on American Psycho.

**Keywords:** Narcissism, Nihilism, Face-off

## ÖZET

### HOLLYWOOD FİLMLERİNDE NARSİSİSTİK KARAKTER İNCELEMELERİ VE ÖLÜMCÜL YÜZLEŞME HALLERİ

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Bu tezin amacı Hollywood sinemasından üç narsisist karakter örneğini, bu karakterlerin kendileri ile yüzleşme hallerini ve bu yüzleşme neticesinde evrildikleri yeni ruh halini incelemektir. Başta American Psycho ve daha ikincil düzeyde incelenen Dorian Gray ve Talented Mr. Ripley filmlerindeki narsisist protagonistlerin filmlerin sonunda ulaştıkları nihilist haller incelenir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Narsisizm, Nihilizm, Yüzleşme

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to analyze three representatives of the narcissistic Hollywood characters their confrontations with themselves and their consequent evolution into a new state. Accordingly, the state of nihilism the narcissist protagonists of the films American Psycho, Dorian Gray and The Talented Mr. Ripley reach at the end of each film is examined in this thesis, with the primary emphasis being on American Psycho.

What is more an experimental short film was made within the framework of this thesis. In this short film, the periods of narcissism, the collapse of narcissism and nihilism which was also experienced by the narcissist characters who were chosen from Hollywood cinema, are told with a symbolic way.

In first chapter, the narcissism term is defined, normal narcissism and pathological narcissism are examined in details.

In the chapter named narcissism focused movie analyses, the films American Psycho, Talented Mr. Ripley and Dorian Gray are analysed. In this chapter, the narcissism pathology of characters and their face off situations are examined.

In nihilism chapter, the definition of nihilism is made and the key scenes of the movies which tells the nihilist mood of the characters are examined.

In the last chapter, the experimental short film of me, the period of its scenario writing, the main character and his similarities with the protagonist of the movies, which were discussed as a part of my thesis, are examined. Each scene and the key points are analysed.

## 2. NARCISSISM

The term narcissism has been defined in 1899 as the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated—who looks at it, that is to say, strokes it and fondles it till he obtains complete satisfaction through these activities (Freud 1914, p. 73).

The notion of narcissism is fundamentally related to the experience of worldly existence. Man is the only one amongst the creatures of the Universe that lives with the awareness that his existence is due to end sometime in the future. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang/> 2009) This heavy consciousness of future evanescence leads him to produce various strategies for immortality. In other words, man constantly yearns to attain cosmic significance. Deep down one always aspires to be ‘someone’ others would exchange places with, ‘someone’ envied, loved, prized, praised, admired, acclaimed, noticed in crowds, talked about, even jealoused by others, furthermore, forever remembered after he’s gone. That is, each person seeks affirmation in one way or another. This desire manifests in the early ages of childhood and is carried over when the infant socializes, only the practices pertaining to achieving this quest have transformed. And in the case of feeling of a lack of affirmation he begins to feel no pleasure in existence, eventually his experience of existence becomes a painful one. This situation points to a conflict with his true self and the world he lives and breathes in. In narcissistic psychopathology, thus, the person associates himself with an idealized figure to form a sheltered area against the painful relationship between his self and the World. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang/>, 2009)

The essential clinical characteristics of the narcissistic person manifest as grandiosity or self-conceit and displaying excessive indifference and lack of empathy despite requiring others’ existence for appreciation and affirmation. The narcissistic person concentrates all his efforts in life into maintaining the confirmation of those around him that he is a worthy, respectable, admirable being who others attach significance to. The narcissistic person, in appearance, harbours feelings of superiority, is self-sufficient and engages in



fantasies of success; in the secret realm, though, he harbours feelings of self-doubt and unworthiness, is vulnerable and over-sensitive to criticism. (Şahin, [http://www.tavsiyedyorum.com/makale\\_3941.htm](http://www.tavsiyedyorum.com/makale_3941.htm), 2009) That means, under this self-aggrandizing and defensive stance lies a strong feeling of emptiness; he can feel safe and good only and only in the event that he maintains others' confirmation of his perfection, admiration and affirmation. In order to keep this projected-image alive and to mask his internal emptiness he creates a false self. In his book *The Narcissistic and Borderline Disorders: An Integrated Developmental Approach* Masterson provides for analysis a set of summarised accounts of patient interviews in the section titled "The Beginning of the Working-through Phase: 'The missing piece' and 'The Golden Thread.'" The patient's comments in interview 3 exemplify quite nicely the narcissistic person's need for others' affirmation, in other words, external mirroring. The comment Masterson relates as an example for the patient's need to investigate perfect mirroring is as follows: "For me criticism means nobody cares. It means not being acknowledged, alone, helpless, inadequate. It makes me angry, and I want to get back." (Masterson 1981, p.66)

According to Meissner there are 4 clinical types of narcissistic personality disorder: phallic-narcissistic; Nobel-prize narcissistic; manipulatory or psychopathic narcissistic; needy, clinging and demanding narcissistic. (Masterson 1981, p. 20) While he agrees with this classification, Masterson brings forward another type he calls "the closet narcissist" to be added to the list. The closet narcissist conceals his narcissistic personality; he cannot openly exhibit his self-centeredness and conceit, he avoids being the center of attention. Therefore he has to find individuals through whom he can satisfy his narcissistic needs. In other words, in order to be able to mask his internal emptiness and weakness and achieve narcissistic mirroring, the closet narcissist has to work himself up into a part of an idealized external object. This way he maintains his grandiose self inflated by means of residing under the shadow of the supreme other. Gabbard breaks down narcissistic personality disorder into two main types: the oblivious narcissist and the hypervigilant narcissist. The oblivious narcissist displays a personality profile opposite to that of the hypervigilant narcissist. He presents a personality always self-occupied, conceited, aggressive, envious, constantly in need of

being the center of attention, with no empathy for others, indifferent to others' needs and invulnerable in appearance. Contrary to the oblivious narcissist's self-orientation and tendency to mingle with others, the hypervigilant narcissist is constantly faced towards the others. The main motive of both the hypervigilant and the oblivious narcissist is to maintain their self value high; they struggle in order to do so, but in different ways. The oblivious narcissist, while he tries to impress the other and earn his admiration with his talents, beauty or achievements, doesn't pay attention to any external negative response, thereby protecting himself from harm. Whereas the hypervigilant narcissist tries to preserve his self value by always keeping himself under control and staying away from potentially harmful places. Rosenfeld labelled these two narcissistic disorders as 'thick-skinned' and 'thin-skinned.' Similarly Hibbard also divided the narcissistic personality disorder into two types as 'vulnerable' and 'phallic.' According to him the distinguishing factor between the two is the feeling of shame. Shame correlates positively with the vulnerable type and negatively with the phallic type. In summary, the narcissistic personality disorder have been observed to have two main types. These types are rarely observed in pure form. Many narcissists host a mixture of the characteristics of both types.

DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) published by the American Psychiatric Association is acknowledged in many countries in the World as the manual of diagnostic criteria for narcissism. The diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality disorder (which manifests with symptoms such as demand for others' admiration, lack of empathy, fantasies of grandiosity from the early ages of adolescence and grandiose attitude) [as explained in the manual can be summarized as follows:

1. "Individuals with this disorder have a grandiose sense of self-importance[...] They routinely overestimate their abilities and inflate their accomplishments;" they would like be acknowledged as a person of superior qualities despite being unqualified.
2. "They are often preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love."

3. They “believe that they are superior, special, or unique[...] They may feel that they can only be understood by, and should only associate with, other people who are special or of high status[...]
4. They “generally require excessive admiration.”
5. “A sense of entitlement is evident in these individuals’ unreasonable expectation of especially favorable treatment.”
6. They tend to be quite abusive in their relationships “which may result in the conscious or unwitting exploitation of others” in the course of realizing their goals.
7. “They generally have a lack of empathy and have difficulty recognizing the desires, subjective experiences, and feelings of others.”
8. “These individuals are often envious of others or believe that others are envious of them.”
9. “They often display snobbish, disdainful, or patronizing attitudes.” (<http://books.google.com/books?id=3SQrtpnHb9MC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=true> 2000,p. 714-715).

These criteria published by the American Psychiatric Association have been acknowledged to be distinguishing in diagnosing narcissistic personality disorder. However it is important to note these criteria fail to help in recognizing the closet narcissist type.

According to Mahler’s theory of development, first six months of life is comprised of the Normal Autistic and the Normal Symbiotic Phases respectively. The infant, in his Normal Autism phase during which he is detached from the world, is in a state of

total narcissism because his libido is not directed towards the outside world. To the infant, everything is himself and he is everything. In other words, for the infant, there's no difference between external objects -that is, objects that are not himself- and himself. For him, himself is the only reality; apart from getting hungry and sleeping, nothing else constitutes his reality; he lives in total isolation from the outside world. As the infant grows he starts to make contact with the objects of the outside world. Thus starts the infant's Normal Symbiotic Phase. In this era the infant establishes bonds with external objects through affections. He starts to feel a necessity -though vaguely- for the 'other' that lives outside of his world. That is to say, the infant's libido previously directed towards himself has now begun to tend towards other objects. In the following times, for the infant, the differentiation between the self and the other and the realization of the outside world is observed to begin taking place. The Normal Autism and the Normal Symbiotic Phases are the precursors of the Separation-Individuation Phase which sets in around the infant's sixth month. This phase is divided into four subphases. In the subphase titled 'Practicing' in which autonomic functioning arises, the infant first starts crawling and then walking by which exploration of the world becomes possible. In this phase the infant experiences a love affair with the world. He is able to move away from and get close to the mother again at will. This era is one during which narcissistic personality of the infant is inflated. The third subphase, 'rapprochement' is the most important era of the Separation-Individuation Phase. In this era the infant stays as close to the mother as her shadow with a desire to share his discoveries with her, while on the other hand he runs away from her fearing she would not let him go again. This situation constitutes the dilemma of the rapprochement subphase. In this era which covers the period between the infant's fifteenth and twenty fourth months the infant's emotional life starts to develop. The infant's previous inattention to his mother's presence has now decreased and his obliviousness to external obstructions has softened. As the infant gradually starts to realize his limitations and helplessness, his narcissism that inflated in the previous subphases and his love affair with the world are replaced by feelings of disappointment. According to Masterson, emergence of the narcissistic personality disorder corresponds to the period before the rapprochement subphase -the crisis of getting back together with the mother. Because in this subphase the childish grandiosity and all the fantasies of power dim down. Masterson relates childish grandiosity with

narcissistic personality disorder. Mahler considers the rapprochement subphase to be an important era of the Separation-Individuation Phase. A person individualizes healthily only if he gets through this era successfully. In the event that the infant wobbles between getting away from the mother and sharing his discoveries with her, this crisis will reappear in various forms in adolescence and adulthood. This crisis experienced in the infancy and its tendency to recur in later periods in life is suggestive about its relation with the narcissistic personality disorder and about why its roots should be sought in the early eras of childhood. (<http://www.psikoterapistim.net/yazi/425/insan-yavrusunun-psikolojik-dogumu>, 2009)

According to Kernberg (2006, p. 205) a very common trait is recognised in the pasts of his narcissistic patients: existence of a parent who, despite being cold, insensitive and dispassionate, appears to leave good impression. (This parent is usually the mother). This parent uses the infant as an object for satisfying his/her own emotional needs and tries to put the infant into an idealized form which, as a result, prevents the child from individualizing healthily. Another observation is that these patients are usually only children who have been attributed with genius by their parents. Thus the superior and distinctive qualities the infant is attributed to possess form the core of his grandiose false self. The true individualization of the child clashes with the idealized individual of the mother; as a result, the child experiences what is called the abandonment depression. Deep down –subconsciously– the child concludes that he can be loved by his mother if and only if he displays the distinctive qualities attributed to him. He resorts to the way of narcissism to save his mother and himself from this abandonment depression. Thereby he gradually loses his spontaneity and associates with an ideal self accommodated with superior qualities.

*After this point, the child internalizes the message that he will be loved, recognized and shown sensitivity to his needs as long as he bears these distinctive qualities, performs actions displaying them and acts according to the other's narcissistic expectations; as a result is formed a self alienated to his own in pursuit of earning other's admiration<sup>1</sup>. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang/>, 2009)*

In other words, the inflated, grandiose false self forms a protective shield in the person's relationship with external objects. Simultaneously, this shield functions to suppress the patient's true self that is associated with feelings such as worthlessness, insignificance, inadequacy and shame.

*"Thus, the intrapsychic world of these patients is populated only by their own grandiose self, by devaluated, shadowy images of self and others, and by potential persecutors representing the nonintegrated sadistic superego forerunners, as well as primitive, distorted object images onto whom intense oral sadism has been projected."<sup>2</sup> (Kernberg 2004, p. 282).*

A true self encoded in such a way cannot manifest due to its suppression as long as the patient's identification with the grandiose self prevails. However, in the event of an outage of external mirrorings which are, in a sense, the life essence of the narcissistic person, the loss of altitude of the grandiose self leaves the person feeling worthless. That is to say, the inflated, grandiose self can stay alive only and if only it's feeded externally which, for the narcissist, translates solely as earning the other's admiration, love and even passion. In his *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* Kernberg (2004, p. 227) comments:

*"These patients present an unusual degree of self-reference in their interactions with other people, a great need to be loved and admired by others, and a curious apparent contradiction between a very inflated concept of themselves and an inordinate need for tribute from others"*

And what awaits him when these conditions are not realized is a state of great distress and depression. Therefore, how they appear to be is more important to them than what they really are; the mind of the narcissistic person is constantly occupied with the impression he leaves on others, thus his projected image he struggles to perfect shadows his true self. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang,/>, 2009)

The narcissistic person cannot stand the presence of a superior person around him. In times like these he is inclined to develop strong feelings of jealousy towards the object who receives more recognition and acclaim than himself. To avoid this he resorts to devaluation of the object in question –perhaps as a defense mechanism that automatically steps in. Also, devaluating objects and object images constantly renders

an emptiness in the social lives of patients with pathological narcissism and enhances their experience of internal emptiness. “They need to devalue whatever they receive in order to prevent themselves from experiencing envy. This is the tragedy of these patients[.]” ( Kernberg 2004, p. 237). They tend to devalue those people from whom they have no expectations, just as they devalue people they consider to be superior to them. These people are virtually shadows or puppets in the life of narcissists.

The narcissistic person’s relationship with those around him is completely based on exploitation. Discarding a person like trash after getting what he needs from him is a habit of the narcissist. He tends to manipulate those around him to get their approval and use them for his own ends. After feeding off someone narcissistically he displays his lack of affection for him in a humiliating and depreciatory manner. Behind this behaviour lies two reasons, the first of which is getting what he needs renders that person empty and worthless for the narcissist; the other one is, his deep fear of others. And this fear is based on a self image so fearful of the world and other people; the constant risk of being harmed or hurt by others leads him to develop some sort of a ‘use and dispose’ principle.

The emotional life of narcissistic people are quite shallow. Their ability to show empathy towards others is almost non-existent; they cannot understand other people’s feelings. Despite the fact that earning others’ approval and admiration is their primary requirement, when it comes to show concern and empathy for others, they fail to do so; moreover they usually don’t even attempt to. Regarding this Kernberg states that besides feelings of distress, emptiness and constant quest for the pleasure of struggling for grandeur, wealth, power and beauty, narcissists lack seriously in capacity to love and care for others. Considering their apparent coherence with society, narcissists’ lack of capacity to empathize with and understand others is shocking. Chronic self-doubt and dissatisfaction, inclination to exploitation -whether consciously or subconsciously- and mercilessness towards others are also among the characteristics of these patients.(Gabbard 2001,p. 362) Additionally, there are times they idealize and

feel great admiration for certain individuals. It's usually a successful, respectable, charismatic person and the narcissist may seemingly develop a dependence to him. "[I]t regularly emerges in treatment that the admired individual is merely an extension of themselves."(Kernberg 2004, p. 236) Thus there's no real relationship between the narcissist and the person he admires; indeed, the person admired exists only to feed the patient's narcissism. During the treatment the relationship between the doctor and the patient may display a similar form: such that the patient idealizes the doctor, starts to believe he is the best analyst in the World, what's more, he may see himself as the doctor's only patient. The truth is the idealized doctor is merely an extension of the patient. In other words, "the idealized people, on whom these patients' seem to 'depend,' regularly turn out to be projections of their own aggrandized self concepts."(Kernberg 2004, p. 233)

According to Kernberg, some patients with narcissistic personality disorder divide people into two groups: those who are ordinary, weak, worthless and those who are unique, rich, great, powerful. In their categorization there's no third class of average people. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang,/> 2009) Average is a synonym of miserable and pathetic; being unique is above everything. The narcissist always desires to be in the first class -the class of great people- and strives to achieve it. That's why he constantly suffers from performance compulsion (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang,/> 2009) He strives to be perfect and desires to experience mirrorings in return; that's the only way he can feel significant. And when this scenario fails, that is to say when the conditions that feed his narcissism are not met, his grandiosity starts to deflate making the patient feel insignificant and dissatisfied. That's the complaint many narcissists resort to medical treatment with: a great sense of insignificance and dissatisfaction.

In his essay titled "*On Narcissism*" Freud discussed another type of narcissism: parental narcissism. According to him unconditional love the parents feel for their child is related to the notion of narcissism: that is, via their children the parents begin to re-experience their own narcissism abandoned long ago. (Freud, 1914, p. 7) For them the



child deserves to be loved despite all his imperfections. The child's mistakes are excused, his faults get covered up. The child would "surpass his elders" anyway. The child would realize everything his parents wanted to, but couldn't. The daughter or the son would grow up to be a very important person. There's nothing more natural than a mother who didn't manage to become a doctor to want her child to become one; and it's only natural for a retired father to dedicate himself to finding a job for his child and strive to achieve it. The child mustn't go through the troubles the parents did and lead a much more comfortable life than theirs. In short, the parents subconsciously desire all the dreams once they failed to realize for themselves to be realized by their children and this desire becomes the center of the parents' lives. This behaviour could be considered as some sort of taking refuge in the child. Their egos suppressed by the hardships of life and reality come back alive with the child and immortalize. Thus, what lies behind the parents' excessive love for their children, their tendency to attribute perfection to them and their great expectations of them is completely related to parental narcissism.

According to Kernberg normal narcissism is defined in many sources as the libidinal investment of the self. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissism>, 2011) Leading a life in harmony with the superego's demands, in other words, harmony between superego and the self; realizing the ideal self one associates himself with; satisfaction of the ego through achieving success in real life; the satisfaction that comes along with experiencing mutual love with external objects; and a rich world of internal objects it helps to build; these are what increase the libidinal investment of the self. Increase in the libidinal investment of the self increases a person's feeling of satisfaction with himself. Increase in the libidinal investment of the self renders a person affectionate, caring not only for himself, but also for others, with capacity to appreciate other people, creative and thankful. On the other hand, decrease in the sources of external love; unrequited love, in other words, not getting the object of desire; failure to somehow realize the expectations of the ego; feeling of being generally unsuccessful; and chronic physical illnesses cause to decrease the libidinal investment of the self, thereby draining the feeling of satisfaction with oneself and curtailing the self value, which results in pathological narcissism. Naturally the libidinal investment to the self is not always possible, but in healthy narcissism the libidinal investment to the self is more compared

to aggressive investment. Thus normal narcissism is related to the balance between the self and the internal psychic structures described above.

Since narcissism is directly related with the self, in situations where the self value is under threat, healthy people who don't have narcissistic personality disorder may also be observed to react narcissistically. In fact, occasionally every individual may display narcissistic behaviour.

*“Whether we be actors or spectators, we all live with mirrors surrounding us. In these mirrors we pursue ways to regain our ability to impress and capture other people and meanwhile we rush to find and remove instantly the imperfections unsuitable to the image of ourselves we would like to project on these mirrors.”*  
(Gabbard 2001)

Displaying of such reactions or behaviour conjuncturally, that is, under certain conditions and in connection with temporary factors, distinguish between a normal person reacting narcissistically and a pathological narcissist. That they seem to love themselves excessively is not the only difference between people with narcissistic personality disorder and hysterical, depressive or obsessive people; it's the terrible way they execute this excessive love for themselves. Since they cannot be spontaneous due to the suppression of their true selves and since they seem to be how they want to seem to be and not how they really are, deep down and very strongly they feel non-genuine. (Kızıltan <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang,/> 2009). Therefore, it wouldn't be wrong to say narcissists treat badly not only those around them, but themselves, too. What sets a good example for the narcissistic state of lack of spontaneity is a comment by one of Masterson's patients related by him in the 19th interview in the section titled “The Beginning of the Working-through Phase: ‘The missing piece’ and ‘The Golden Thread’ ” in his *The Narcissistic and Borderline Disorders: An Integrated Developmental Approach*: “I thought to make a joke about the room being warm, and I said to myself, ‘No, I have to stick to my guns.’” (Masterson 1981, s. 74).

### 3. NARCISSISM FOCUSED MOVIE ANALYSESSES

#### 3.1 AMERICAN PSYCHO

American Psycho (2000), based on the eponymous novel by Bret Easton Ellis, directed by Mary Harron, is a successful depiction of malignant narcissism. Harron's films transfer the classical American myth of individualism and self-sufficiency- so often depicted in Westerns- to urban landscape... the conquest of the West is now the conquest of the Metropolis, and the brave and lone ranger of yesterday has been replaced by the greedy and lone narcissist of today. (Tylim 2001, s. 737)

The story takes place in the New York of 1980s. The life of Patrick Bateman, a high level executive, young, rich and handsome, is perfect in appearance. Every morning, before starting the day, in order to look good he spends hours before the mirror with his personal care and beauty products, exercises regularly, eats at the most luxurious restaurants and dresses classy. Even in the first half hour of the film Patrick Bateman's narcissistic personality reveals itself. To the narcissistic person, how he looks, his image, is of vital importance. Patrick Bateman, too, is extremely pleased with his looks and his body. In the first minutes of the film we witness one of his daily self-care rituals. In the beginning of this scene, following a scan of Bateman's all-white apartment, the character's morning routine is displayed. The character tells in order what he does each morning for self-care as he's seen performing them. First he introduces himself presenting information as to where he lives, then he tells of the importance he gives to balanced diet and exercising regularly and his belief in the necessity of taking care of himself and then he goes on to elaborate on these: we learn that if he wakes up to find his eyes are swollen he uses ice packs for them, followed by a pore-cleanser lotion, then in the shower he scrubs his body with a honey-almond body lotion after using a gel cleanser.

This morning ritual made up of massages, cosmetics and aerobics programs depict Patrick Bateman's world of fetishes very nicely. "Life is to him a supermarket of

desires packaged with designer labels.” (Tylim 2001, p. 739). Here the manipulative effect of the consumer culture on the character is evident. It wouldn’t be wrong to call him a characteristic representative or a prototype of 1980s yuppie cultural environment. As a matter of fact, he is such a typical representative of the yuppie image which is quite popular among his acquaintances that his friend Paul Allen mistakes him for somebody else. This doesn’t surprise Bateman; he even thinks it’s logical for him to mistake him for this other person since he works at the same place with Bateman and does the same thing he does. He also mentions that Marcus, too, like himself, prefers Valentino suits and Oliver Peoples glasses and goes to the same barber as him, though, Bateman doesn’t hesitate to add, he has a better haircut than Marcus.

It’s evident how the character is oppressed by the consumer culture in the course of his effort to become a part of a specific group and in order to achieve that, to maintain a desired appearance: his identity is observed to be virtually comprised of and dominated by pop culture and fashion. Therefore, to Bateman, labels and brands are of great importance in means of fitting into the society he’s a member of. According to him one who cannot adapt to society and the environment is the one rejected and cast out. Thus, the basis of such an identity formation is not spontaneity, but other people’s opinions. This principle reminds us of the character identity found in liberal capitalism which corresponds to the common character type in today’s consumer culture. This character type of liberal capitalism is named as other-directed type. Individuals who fall into this category shape their lives according to other people’s expectations of them. Bateman, with his compulsive obsession with conformity and latest trends, fits exactly into the other-directed type. And according to Slater this other directedness carries within it narcissism, too. (Schiel 2005, p. 43) In the famous business card scene of the film, the intensity of jealousy Bateman feels due to Paul Allen’s business card being liked by others more than his almost gives him a panic attack. So much so that he is taken aback the moment he sees Paul Allen’s card and when he holds it in his hand, his hands start shaking, he swallows and sweats. Knowing and feeling he is perfect is so important to him that he cannot deal with the fact that somebody else’s business card is better than his. Otto Kernberg states that “These patients experience a remarkably intense envy of other people who seem to have things they do not have or who simply seem to enjoy

their lives.” (Kernberg 2004, p.228). Paul Allen, both with his possession of the most beautiful business card and his privileges such as being able to make a reservation easily at Dorsia Restaurant, is superior and this is unbearable for Bateman. The ultimate resolution would be reached by the extermination of the superior external object. Since eating at Dorsia is an exceptional thing, even that alone is enough to cause a very touchy situation for Bateman. Because all through the film, Bateman doesn't manage to make a reservation at Dorsia despite all his efforts. Dorsia is mentioned even in the opening scene of the film: Bateman and his friends are sitting at a dinner table when one of them says he hates that restaurant and complains about not being at Dorsia. His question mixed with complaint Another person at the table replies his question mixed with complaint “Why aren't we at Dorsia?” by implying that Bateman didn't -and probably never will- manage to make a reservation there. In fact, eating at Dorsia is an obsession not only for Bateman, but for everybody else, as well. Despite he's engaged, Bateman has a secret affair with a woman named Courtney who is also engaged with somebody else. Even Courtney who turns down Bateman's dinner offer on the phone indifferently cannot say no to a dinner at Dorsia. Following this conversation Bateman calls the restaurant to make a reservation, but fails. He has to make one at the Bacardia instead. Similarly, one day he offers his secretary whose interest in him is obvious to go to dinner with him and asks her to decide where to go. She thinks for a while and then her reply is “what about Dorsia?” But Bateman fails to make a reservation there that day, too. Indeed, Bateman doesn't eat because he is hungry: food and restaurants also signify what group one belongs, they are quite like stages one acts upon. And eating at a cheap restaurant means not fitting in. Due to this and similar other reasons eating at Dorsia and this being known by others serve as a sign of fitting in with society and prestige. Thus, not being able to eat at Dorsia causes Bateman to feel empty and insignificant.

Just as Bateman's yuppie identity constructed by pop culture and trends, his serial killer identity bears influences from the day's pop culture as well as it's fed by horror and porno film cliches. This is confirmed by the lecture like philosophical speeches on the times' pop songs he makes before his acts of sex and murder. His pre-murder lectures are first witnessed in the scene Bateman kills his colleague Paul Allen. Bateman starts his lecture by showing Huey Lewis and the News CD followed by his comments on the

group. In the meantime Paul Allen, drowsy with alcohol, sunken in his seat, helplessly listens to him. Just as a cook putting on an apron before cooking, before the act of killing, Bateman puts on a transparent raincoat while continuing his comments about the group. Now he's almost ready for the killing, he takes his axe and moves to the living room and buttons up his raincoat. Paul Allen asks Bateman why the floor is covered with newspaper and if he has a dog. Bateman dodges his colleague's questions and continues his lecture in the accompaniment of what he calls the group's masterpiece Hip To Be Square. He complains that people don't listen to the lyrics of this catchy song, yet, according to him, the lyrics of the song are "Not just about the pleasures of conformity and the importance of trends. It's also a personal statement about the band itself." Following these comments Bateman kills his colleague and rival Paul Allen and puts his body in a sleeping bag we later learn to be Jean Paul Gaultier brand. Bateman prefers Phil Collins the night he spends with two prostitutes. The course is similar to Paul Allen's murder scene: this time Bateman starts his lecture by showing a Phil Collins CD. After commenting on the musician, as in the first incident, he talks about his masterpiece album and then gushes over the track playing while at the same time ordering the women what to do. This time he doesn't have murder in mind, but sex; instead of picking a murder weapon, he's seen adjusting the viewfinder of his camera for the self-porn film he is about to shoot. In this scene Bateman plays the role of a pornstar. He looks at his reflection on the mirror while at the same time he poses for the camera. In a murder scene towards the end of the film Bateman is at Paul Allen's apartment with the prostitute from the earlier scene whom he had given the name Christie and another woman named Elizabeth. (In this scene, it doesn't go unnoticed that Bateman is offended when Christie, as he fills her glass, says "This is nicer than your other apartment" and he replies "It's not that nice.") In the next sequence the two women start making out while Bateman talks about Whitney Houston this time. He is ready to perform his acts of sex and murder and he is already into his customary prelude. Paying no attention to Elizabeth making fun of him for listening to Whitney Houston, he states with a quite serious expression that The Greatest Love of All is one of the most powerful songs ever written. The spectator listens to the song while hearing Bateman's comments he makes in a philosophical manner:

*“Its universal message crosses all boundaries and instills one with the hope that it’s not too late to better ourselves, to act kinder. Since, Elizabeth, it’s impossible in the world we live in to empathize with others, we can always empathize with ourselves. It’s an important message, crucial, really, and it’s beautifully stated on the album.”*

Here, Bateman actually speaks about himself when he states that it’s impossible to empathize with others. As a matter of fact, all through the film, numerous between-the-lines clues reveal, item by item, the building blocks of Bateman’s narcissistic personality. Getting back to the scene, in the next sequence following Bateman’s comments, he is seen having sex with the two women, but after a time their sounds turn into screams. Bateman is witnessed killing one of the women in a cannibalistic style evocative of the film *Trouble Everyday* and right after that, the other woman, with a chainsaw, this time reminding us of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. In conclusion, these routine philosophical analyses of pop music prior to all these acts of sex and murder and all the manners and behavior associated with pornstars and serial killers he displays lay bare to what extent Bateman’s identity has been constructed by the consumer culture. (KooijmanLaine<http://michaelmiller.wiki.uml.edu/file/view/A+double+portrait+of+a+serial+killer.pdf>, 2003)

All these; Bateman’s sex life and murder fantasies, morning rituals, relationships with his friends, colleagues and fiancée lay before the eyes the hardcore consumerism in his life. “Anyone attuned to the ‘aesthetics of consumerism’ must become an ‘indifferent narcissist.’ As soon as one’s life is dominated by the search for pleasure and self-fulfillment through goods by consumer culture, narcissism is the only logical conclusion.” (Schial 2005, p.44) This statement by Blazer puts forth the bond between Bateman’s narcissism and his consumerism; indeed, it is impossible to think of his narcissism separately from the notion of consumerism probed in the film: for the character, they are intertwined notions. As a matter of fact, consumerism is inherently a part of the nature of narcissism. “Consumerism dictates us, Slater asserts... if you do not look your best, it is your fault: you could have chosen a different self, this is one of the many choices open to the self in consumer society.” (Schial 2005, p. 44)

As stated here, when one's life is dominated by the consumer culture, that is, when one pursues satisfaction and contentment amidst the offerings of the consumer culture, narcissism will be inevitable. And just as in *American Psycho* and in *Dorian Gray* (2009) I will examine in the next section, the coupling of narcissism and consumerism causes deadly consequences.

In 1987 Rosenfeld classified narcissism into two types as thin-skinned narcissism and thick-skinned narcissism. (Kızıltan, [http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang\\_/](http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang_/) 2009). In Rosenfeld's classification, thin skinned narcissists, similar to what Gabbard calls hypervigilant narcissists, display traits such as vulnerability, oversensitiveness to rejection, continuously taking pains to keep oneself under control in order to conform to society, accompanied usually by feelings of inferiority. Thick-skinned narcissists, on the other hand, in line with Gabbard's definition of oblivious narcissism, have a shield of feelings of superiority against the outside world. Thick-skinned narcissists are over-reactive to weakness. Bateman could be considered as swinging between the two types. For thick-skinned narcissists, feeling the need for or depending on others is unacceptable. Narcissists can never depend on others anyway, due to their deep distrust of and disdain for others. It is evident to what extent sense of control functions as an impelling and driving force for Bateman; it is virtually one of his vital missions; he desires to have control in all realms of his life and this aim can be observed numerous times throughout the film. He tells his secretary what to wear; he dictates her to wear high heels in addition to skirts and dresses instead of pants. He doesn't ask the names of the prostitutes he sleeps with, calling them by names that suit his desire instead. He directs them by giving them clear orders as to what to do when and how. However, Bateman keeps under control not only those around him, but also himself. For him, fitting in is above everything else. When his fiancée tells him they should get married, he turns her down on the excuse that he can't take the time off work and when she asks him why he doesn't quit since he doesn't like his job anyway, he turns to her and says "Because I want to fit in" which confirms he holds fitting in above all else.) We encounter another trait of Bateman's narcissism that stands out in the film in the beggar scene. In this scene we see him act as if he's about to help a beggar he comes upon on the street and then kill him brutally after humiliating him. The fact that he says to the



beggar right before the murder “I don’t have anything in common with you... you are a fucking loser” shows how he rationalizes his action.

As a matter of fact, the origin of especially Bateman’s yuppie identity fed by popular culture and fashion trends which he prefers to present to others, desired by everyone - including even homosexuals- and liked by those around him, always in pursuit of perfection, taking great care of his body and looks, in perfect conformity with society; and also the origin of his serial killer identity he created in his fantasy world is his narcissism. While he lives his yuppie identity in the open, he lives his pornstar and serial killer identities in a realm hidden from people. The words Patrick Bateman speaks in the first scene of the film while he puts on his face mask at the end of his morning ritual are significant in understanding the character. The state he’s in becomes clearer when these sentences are resolved. Indeed, here, the character himself performs a significant analysis of his yuppie identity:

*“There is an idea of Patrick Bateman, some kind of abstraction. But there is no real me, only an entity, something illusory. Although I can hide my cold gaze and you can shake my hand and feel flesh gripping yours, and maybe you can even sense our lifestyles are probably comparable—I simple am not there.”*

He accepts Patrick Bateman as an idea and describes it as an abstraction in addition to saying it doesn’t exist and calling it illusory. Some of the foremost lexical meanings of the word illusory are empty, deceiving, imaginary and misleading. And sure enough, everything about him that is on display is imaginary and deceiving. Indeed Bateman’s passion for the newest, the shiniest and the most fashionable, in other words, his identity feeding off popular culture, is a manifestation of the grandiose self he constructed in order to veil his feelings of insignificance and inadequacy. However his feeling of insignificance is so strong that consequently he constructs additionally a serial killer identity. When we consider the murder scenes in the film, we realize how well planned each murder is and how perfectly executed they are in an unrealistic way, and so absurd, so much so to imply they might be mere fantasies. With this identity he can exterminate those who pose a threat to his yuppie identity, in a way, killing two birds with one stone. As a matter of fact, the soul purpose of existence of his serial killer identity, just as his yuppie identity, is that through it Bateman aims to add meaning to his life: each

of his identities are a grandiose self that serves to fill the emptiness within him. In other words, all of Bateman's identities are products of his narcissism.

At the end of the film all of Patrick Bateman's identities tumble down one by one. Everything is merely an illusion as expressed in the words that come out of his mouth as he applies self care in the bathroom in the beginning of the film, "There is no real me, only an entity, something illusory..." And all of Bateman's grandiose selves, his yuppie, serial killer and pornstar identities, they all serve the same purpose as the mask he applies to his face: the purpose of veiling his true self marked by a deep emptiness and a feeling of worthlessness that he tries to hide from the outside world and indeed, especially from himself. But now that the veiling ground collapses, he is face to face with his true self. In Harry's bar he realizes all of this; he understands the truth after talking to his lawyer. He is taken aback by the shock of suddenly facing the truth that he didn't really kill Paul Allen and the prostitutes and that the murders he believed he committed are in fact merely games his mind played with him. In shock, he returns to the table where his friends are, listening to President Reagan's speech. The speech is about the Iran-Contra scandal and at some point in the speech Reagan mentions seeing Iran's true face. In response, one of Bateman's friends complains that Reagan's blatantly lying and talking nonsense and a while later he asks how he can be so cool about what he did after all, adding finally that he "presents himself as a harmless old codger." But inside... At that moment Bateman's voice-over steps in: "But inside doesn't matter..."

Indeed, this statement completely describes Bateman's situation. Just as Reagan who is said to have covered up his inside with a false external appearance, Bateman's life is also built upon identities he created to mask some things about himself. Soon his voice-over takes over again and starts another self-analysis similar to the one he makes during the morning ritual in beginning of the film while he peels off the mask applied to his face:

*“There are no more barriers to cross. All I have in common with the uncontrollable and the insane, the vicious and the evil, all the mayhem I have caused and my utter indifference toward it, I have now surpassed. My pain is constant and sharp and I do not hope for a better world for anyone, in fact, I want my pain to be inflicted on others. I want no one to escape. But even after admitting this, there is no catharsis. My punishment continues to elude me and I gain no deeper knowledge of myself, no new knowledge can be extracted from my feeling. This confession has meant nothing.*”

These words describe his situation quite nicely. Bateman’s young, handsome and rich urban businessman identity, desired and envied by everyone, or even his serial killer and pornstar identities that make him feel like a movie star will not be able to save him. He indicates the closing of an era for him by saying “All the mayhem I have caused and my utter indifference toward it, I have now surpassed.” He mentions the sharpness of his pain due to all the evil and damage he caused. The painful emptiness he is sucked into strengthens the hatred he feels for himself and others. He wishes for everyone to have their share of this pain. Even though he is aware of all this, he states that no catharsis takes place, in other words, he doesn’t manage to be cleansed. He is now aware of his mental illness, his malignance and the illusions his narcissism creates, which means he can now see into himself completely.

Fundamentally two identities comprise Bateman’s grandiose self: the rich, handsome, urban businessman and the serial killer. Bateman’s yuppie identity through which his narcissism makes itself felt strongly, who is rich and successful, always eats at the most expensive restaurants, drinks the highest-priced wine, makes love with the most beautiful women, is engaged to one of the most hard-body women in his community, dresses in the classiest style and follows fashion and trends closely continues to exist, however it is evident that this identity no more enables Bateman to experience perfect mirroring. As it is known, the grandiose self in the case of pathological narcissism is bound to deflate like a balloon that loses air unless it is continuously filled back. That’s exactly why the narcissist has to keep his grandiose self inflated by means of grandiose performances. Most narcissists seek treatment due to the feelings of insignificance, boredom and emptiness they experience as a consequence of the failure of their grandiose selves. When this is considered, Bateman’s case stands out as an extreme one. Because in his case, he doesn’t even have enough grip of reality for his serial killer identity to fail.

His grandiose self suddenly vanishes. More precisely it turns out it has never been nothing, but mere fantasy. In other words, this exciting identity Bateman desperately created to add meaning to his life is now identical with emptiness for him. Besides his yuppie identity, Bateman creates, in order to add meaning to his life, a serial killer identity that he lives in the secret realm and shares only with his victims.

This psychopathic identity keeps his yuppie image alive by means of putting away his rivals such as Paul Allen who damages and weakens it, while at the same time it enables him to play the leading character in his own horror movie. Throughout the film this character sometimes becomes a raving lunatic out of Texas Chainsaw Massacre with his chainsaw, sometimes a cannibal reaching orgasm by eating human flesh and other times, a psychopath, axe in hand, spreading terror.

The grandiose selves of Bateman -created by him to amend his strong feelings of shame, humiliation and abasement his true self harbours- all collapse. As it is known, the grandiose self functions to suppress -by means of acquiring admiration from external objects- the true self lying deep within which is encoded with attributes such as insignificance, meekness, loneliness, humiliation, imperfection and ineptness. Such a person can cover up his negative feelings towards his life only as long as he can identify himself with the grandiose self. And when such an identification doesn't take place, he may be driven to a big breakdown, like the one Bateman is driven to at the end of American Psycho. He ends both his self-analysis and the film with the line "This confession has meant nothing." This final statement makes it clear that Bateman's understanding of what he is and even his confession of it to himself or, in other words, his face-off with himself, means nothing. The only thing that is different between his current state and the former one is that he would henceforth carry on with the awareness of what and who he is and the acknowledgement of his true self. He no longer can escape his reality having seen into himself completely. But even that has no meaning to add to his life. He is sucked into the deep emptiness lying within after the ground covering it collapses together with all his narcissistic identities. Bateman now with all his consciousness keeps turning and turning within the emptiness and the nihilistic

feeling that surrounds him. He senses a lack in his being and doubts his own existence. All his identities he believed to add meaning to his life and his values and acceptances are lost for him, all devoid of meaning. That's why for him "Inside does not matter." Thus, his narcissism abandons him, his new station is to be nihilism.

### **3.2 DORIAN GRAY AND TALENTED MR.RIPLEY**

In addition to American Psycho which I analysed in details, I will also analyse Talented Mr. Ripley and Dorian Gray at a secondary level.

The Picture of Dorian Gray first adapted in 1945 by Albert Lewin from the eponymous novel by Oscar Wilde. After 1945 the film has been remade numerous times by various directors and finally by Oliver Parker, this time under the title Dorian Gray (2009). In general terms Parker's version is almost the same as the 1945 version. Dorian Gray, a naive young man, moves into his grandfather's mansion following his death. In time, with his looks he captures the attention of those around him. One of them is Basil Howard, an artist. Basil Howard, impressed with Dorian Gray's beauty, makes a portrait of him. Taken with his image in the portrait, Dorian wishes to keep forever his beauty that is reflected in the portrait. Beautiful and young, he starts living a life of narcissism solely based on pleasure. His self-centeredness is so extreme that it brings the women who fall in love with him and those who rest under his aura in adoration only disappointment and death. The corrosion in his soul gradually begins to manifest on the portrait, too. He lets down Sybil Vane whom he had promised to marry. Sybil Vane, desperate, has no choice but to commit suicide in the conditions of the times. Dorian is greatly affected by Sybil Vane's suicide, but recovers soon with the help of his close friend Lord Henry's suggestions. That night would mark the onset of both the corrosion in Dorian Gray's soul and the physical corrosion of his portrait. That night he suddenly recognizes odd changes in the picture. The innocent and naive face Basil had portrayed has noticeably changed: a cunning smile has settled on the face, and to the eyes, an expression that evokes slyness and treachery. His hands in the picture are stained with

blood. Right then a worm falls from the portrait down on the polished floor. After this instant Dorian Gray moves his portrait away. Following Sybil Vane's death he completely lets himself go, hedonism becoming the main principle of his life.

According to Otto Kernberg a narcissistic patient experiences his relationships with other people as being purely exploitative, as if he were 'squeezing a lemon and then dropping the remains.' People may appear to him either to have some potential food inside, which the patient has to extract, or to be already emptied and therefore valueless. (Kernberg 2004, p. 233). These statements quite nicely describe Dorian Gray's position in his relationships in the film. His relationship with women, what's more, with all humanity, is based completely on exploitation. He takes what he will from people and then casts them aside. His relationship with Basil in particular is totally founded on the principle that underlies Kernberg's metaphor. At the party held in honour of his birthday, Dorian Gray has sex with Basil of whose adoration for himself he had long been aware. Then he shows his portrait to Basil. Basil is appalled by what he sees. The change in the portrait in which he had depicted with his own hand the most naive person he had seen makes his blood run cold. A feeling of fear blended with disgust gets mixed with his love for Dorian Gray. With a last-ditch effort he attempts to stop and help him cleanse himself. But Dorian Gray has no intention to do so. Jean M. Twenge and Keith Campbell describe narcissists' relationships in *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement* as follows: "Narcissists' approach to relationships is simple: they are always self-oriented in their relations: they always desire to look and feel good and if a relation doesn't serve the fulfilment of this desire, it's time to find another one." (Twenge and Keith 2005, p. 296)

In line with Twenge and Campbell's description of the narcissistic relationship, Dorian's relationship with Basil no more feeds him, what's more, instead of answering the needs of his self, it poses a threat to it. Therefore Basil who has witnessed the incomprehensible change and corrosion in the picture has to be eliminated. And the only way to do this is to kill him. Dorian Gray kills his lover Basil Howard, cuts his

body into pieces and throws the chest he fills with these pieces in one of London's dark rivers.

Following the murder of Basil, Dorian Gray leaves London and doesn't return for long years. In both films (1945 and 2009 versions) no detail is shown as to what Dorian Gray does and where he lives during the long years he is away from London. All the spectators of both films know is that he continues his life away from London. However, in the 2009 version is included an important clue as to what kind of a life Dorian Gray leads in the years he is away: we hear a letter written by him during those years to his friend Lord Henry being read by Dorian Gray with a grotesque voice over the image of Lord Henry's horrified facial expression on the screen.

*"I've entered the tombs of dead nations, ridden with our last savage tribes. I feel the brilliance of every moment, the splendor of existence and its awful... keen as the edge of a blade, this desperate will to see, touch and... Dearest Harry, you taught me that life must burn with a hard flame. Its light does not blind me, nor its heat sear me. I am the flame, Harry. I am the flame."*

Dorian Gray investigates the truth of what appears on the surface. Dorian's true personality manifests not in his body, but on the portrait he keeps hidden behind closed doors. The portrait is virtually the materialized state of what Dorian Gray conceals both physically and spiritually: his oldness, his moral and psychological corruption; in short, his true self he hides from himself and the whole humanity. The film lays bare how elusory the appearance can be and the fact that what's in view and on the surface is not the entire whole. Just as the inflated grandiose pseudo self is at issue in the psychopathology of narcissism, in the film is at issue a man (Dorian Gray) who in appearance is an admirably beautiful man and a portrait which is the manifestation of this man's true self. The manifestation commences with Sybil Vane's suicide: as the years pass his youth and beauty is preserved, while his picture changes constantly with his evil deeds. It has previously been mentioned that patients of narcissism suppress their true selves which cause them to feel worthless and to undervalue themselves and that instead they develop a grandiose pseudo self which they continuously try to feed and keep inflated. While Dorian Gray keeps the portrait which displays his true self

hidden behind closed doors, all the external objects surrounding him continuously feed his narcissism. Just as the narcissist bases all his life on avoiding confronting his true self marked with feelings of insignificance, emptiness, worthlessness and anxiety of being under threat, Dorian Gray's single goal is to keep the portrait that displays his true self hidden from people. Sheldon Bach states that narcissism is the splitting of the self with vulnerability and weakness on the one side, and grandiosity on the other. (Kızıltan <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang,/> 2009) As a matter of fact, using the scales metaphor in Bach's definition, infinite beauty and youth which form the outlook of Dorian Gray, that is, his inflated pseudo self that people are familiar with, goes on the pan of the scales labeled as 'grandiosity;' his true self, which manifests on the portrait that shames him and that he strives at the cost of his life to hide from people, goes on the other pan of the scales which is associated with shame, humiliation, abasement, weakness and worthlessness.

The last film I will examine in my thesis is *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1998) adapted by Anthony Minghella from the eponymous novel by Patricia Highsmith. The film starts in New York in late fifties. The young and talented Tom Ripley makes his living by doing various jobs under various identities. He hits the jackpot the day he replaces a pianist whose leg is injured. Herbert Greenleaf, a very rich and powerful man, offers Tom Ripley a considerable amount of money to bring his son back to New York. Ripley doesn't miss the opportunity and accepting the offer, heads to Italy. When he arrives in Italy, it's not hard to find Dickie Greenleaf and his fiancée. In a short while he makes acquaintances with them and infiltrates their life. He tells Dickie of how he met his father and the deal they made, thereby he earns their trust. He moves in to the house Dickie and his fiancée lives and they start spending all their time together: Ripley becomes the best friend of Dickie who is rich, handsome and very popular. Dickie's very glad to have this naive, talented and jazz-loving new friend. As for Ripley, he merely adores Dickie to the core; Dickie's respectability, life style and taste in music leads Ripley to idealize him. (Prior to appearing before him, in order to earn Dickie's friendship, Ripley studies extensively jazz music which he is quite unfamiliar with,



examines jazz musicians he predicts Dickie likes and listens to their songs, even memorizes them.)

At this point, it would be beneficial to discuss the distinct qualities of Ripley's narcissistic personality. Tom Ripley profiles as a different narcissist compared to Patrick Bateman (*American Psycho*) and Dorian Gray. Unlike the other two characters, Tom is not someone who earns the admiration of those around him with his looks and his poise, conceited and in need of being the center attention. Contrarily, especially in the beginning of the film, he seems to be shy, bashful, diffident and introverted, avoiding being the center of attention. So it's best to set Tom Ripley's narcissism apart from that of the other two characters. In literature, this type is termed as hypervigilant narcissism. (Gabbard divided narcissistic personality disorder into two types in 1989: the oblivious narcissist and the hypervigilant narcissist.) According to Masterson, these individuals, closet narcissists in his terms, do not express their grandiose selves directly and openly, unlike oblivious narcissists. Contrary to the oblivious narcissist who veils his internal weakness with his grandiose pseudo self kept inflated via the received admiration from external objects, the hypervigilant narcissist tries to eliminate his internal weakness by making it a part of an idealized figure. Thus, these individuals do not actively pursue the mirroring of the grandiose self, rather they idealize the other. They inflate their grandiose selves by means of sheltering in the other's supremacy. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang/> 2009)

Befitting the hypervigilant narcissist definition, Ripley's attachment to Dickie strengthens increasingly as Dickie begins to get bored with this friendship. Moreover he is aware of Ripley's romantic involvement with himself, too. Around these times, on a boat trip, Ripley tells Dickie of his dreams: he tells Dickie in the coming year he would like to move to Italy permanently to join his life with Dickie's and offers him to live together. Dickie makes clear from the first moment he hears this offer that he is not willing to accept it: "Oh God, I don't think so." Ripley thinks Marge, his fiancée, is the reason why Dickie acts this way; he even mentions "The Marge problem." But when Dickie says he loves Marge and he will marry her, Tom responds by saying "You love

me and you're not marrying me." Then comes Dickie's first blow to Ripley: "Tom, I don't love you." Although Ripley doesn't take Dickie's comment seriously, right after that he gets all het up, when Dickie throws at him one after the other remarks such as "You can be a leech," "I'm actually a little relieved you're going" and "you can be quite boring."

As explained by Jean M. Twenge and Keith Campbell in *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement* any criticism directed at a narcissist may cause him to respond hostilely. Threat to ego and rejection are among causes that trigger aggression in a narcissistic person and they render one's relationship with a narcissist a tiptoeing through a mine field similar to the relationship between Dickie and Ripley. (2010, p.300) Dickie was unaware that he was on a boat full of mines that wasn't far from exploding as a result of his humiliation and rejection of Ripley.

In line with Kızıltan's definition of hypervigilant narcissist who "tries to eliminate his internal weakness by making it a part of an idealized figure (Kızıltan <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang/> 2009) Ripley tries to eliminate the negative feelings about his true self by means of trying to stay close to Dickie, his idealized figure, up until he kills him; following the murder, that is, the removal of the ideal figure, he goes further and decides to take his place, to become the ideal figure himself. Following the murder, for Ripley, a new era begins; now, having replaced Dickie; he dresses and combs his hair like him, spends his money and uses his credit cards. In this way, by introducing himself as Dickie Greenleaf, he gains the respectability he never had as Tom Ripley, but always desired to have.

Now all he has to do in this game is not to play into the hands of those who know him as Tom Ripley and Dickie's friends who knew of his closeness to him, Dickie's fiancée in particular. One night, while he is at the house he rents under Dickie's name, he is surprised by the visit of one of Dickie's very close friends, Freddie; he has come to see Dickie. With no choice but to open the door he makes up the lie that Dickie's gone out to dinner. He tells Freddie he's visiting Dickie and he had been there for a few days. Freddie gets suspicious. He tells Tom the house doesn't reflect Dickie's taste and that

Dickie, as he knows him, would not live in such a place, so much so that the only thing which looks like Dickie in the house is Tom himself. Freddie realizes Tom is up to something. Tom concludes that as a last resort he must put Freddie away. With a successful operation he kills Freddie and he manages to land this murder on Dickie. He decides it would be best to continue his life as Tom Ripley for a while. Then he meets Peter, a friend of Dickie's fiancée. One noon time, during his conversation with Ripley regarding Dickie killing Freddie, Peter starts contemplating on how the state of mind of a man who committed murder would be. Ripley's comments during this dialogue are striking: "Whatever you do, however terrible, however hurtful [...] You never meet anybody who thinks they're a bad person or that they're cruel [...] Don't you put the past in a room, in the cellar, and lock the door and just never go in there? Because that's what I do [...] Then you meet someone special and all you want to do is toss them the key, say open up, step inside, but you can't because it's dark and there are demons and if anybody saw how ugly it was [...] I keep wanting to do that - fling open the door - let the light in, clean everything out. If I could get a huge eraser and rub everything out... starting with myself..." Indeed it's his own situation that Ripley describes with these words. Also, the metaphors he uses when describing the situation he's in and his state of mind lay bare his resemblance to Dorian Gray. Just like Dorian Gray whose life full of evil shows in his corrosion and ugliness, who keeps hid from people his portrait he feels terribly ashamed of and who, after a point in the film, wishes to destroy it in order to achieve catharsis and become a good person once again, Tom Ripley also gradually comes face to face with his true self; he says, he wishes to erase everything, starting with himself and clean that dark room where he hides his past and refrains from showing others.

After that instance, he also kills Peter who is one of the last of those who know him as Tom Ripley. At the end of the film we see Ripley sitting all by himself in a room immersed in thought. These final shots of the film showing fragmented reflections of Ripley on mirrors make possible a reading of the scene with the emphasis on the fragmented state of the character's world and his nihilistic state of mind.

In conclusion, narcissists' social life, which enables them to fulfill their need to acquire others' admiration in reality or fantasy and which supplies them directly instinctive satisfaction, may bring them a feeling of significance, however it's temporary. When there's no sign of such fulfilments in the near future, feelings of emptiness, discomfort and distress predominate. Dorian Gray leads a life that brings him great emotional fulfilment during his earlier years in London and during the time he lives away from London following the Basil murder; when he returns after this long period he is totally exhausted. This life based on pleasure and exploitation, in line with Otto Kernberg's description of narcissism, no longer supply him a feeling of significance. His discomfort and distress are written all over his face as he smokes in the room he takes refuge in after getting bored at Lord Harry's party. Furthermore, the ghosts of the woman he caused to commit suicide (Sibyl Vane) and of Basil he killed brutally, as well as all his bad deeds haunt his conscience constantly. He starts to live a life under the influence of the illusions of dreams and reality that remind him of his bad deeds and under the horrible weight of the existence of his portrait -reflecting all the hideousness of his corrupt soul- which he keeps hidden behind closed doors in one of the old rooms of his house. He is aware that there will be a price to pay for everything he did. It's time for facing-off with himself. He hears whispers at nights as he walks around on the streets of London in fear, whispers telling him he is a despicable, worthless wretch. It wouldn't be wrong to say that these are uprisings of Dorian's true self. His battered and abased true self, which he hid from people long time ago along with his portrait, now steers just below the surface and makes horrible sounds similar to those the decaying portrait hidden in an attic room makes. Occasionally he goes to that room and tries to get rid of the portrait. But these trials fail. He is seen crying on his knees before the portrait and beating himself up in regret. He goes to a church and tells the priest he wants to be a new, free, clean and good man and he asks for his help. In short, Dorian seeks catharsis. In need of catharsis he holds on to his love for Emily, his close friend Harry's daughter. It's important to note this is where Dorian Gray differs from Tom Ripley and Patrick Bateman. All three characters are narcissists and at the end of all three films telling their stories of narcissism the characters confront themselves and consequently find themselves in a state of nihilism. However, unlike Ripley and Bateman, Dorian Gray wishes to cleanse himself and start everything from scratch. Deep down he feels if he

can get rid of the portrait, he can get rid of his self that agonizes him, too. But he understands that the portrait which carries his true self will not let him go, or more precisely, that he cannot go on with his life trying to hide this self. At the end of the film, the night Dorian is engaged to Harry's daughter, Harry goes to Dorian's mansion to take advantage of the opportunity to see his portrait. When Harry finds it despite Dorian's resistance he is shocked by what he sees. He starts to completely doubt Dorian's mortality. He thinks the most rational thing to do is to kill Dorian, but instead, he sets the portrait on fire and runs away after locking Dorian in the room. At that moment Harry's daughter Emily comes to the scene and tries to save Dorian. She tells him to give her the key on his neck so she can open the door. What's important here is what Dorian Gray decides to do: he doesn't let Emily help him. Having confronted himself and seen his true face, he had tried to get rid of him, but couldn't, additionally and more importantly he realizes he can no longer live with him. That's why he plunges the sword into the heart of the picture and signs his own death warrant.

Dorian Gray is also as lost as Patrick Bateman and Tom Ripley, however with his death, he is lost physically also, as well as being caught in a spiritual lostness.

Patrick Bateman and Dorian Gray are narcissist prototypes of different periods who quite resemble each other. (Patrick Bateman is the yuppie character of the 1980s, and Dorian Gray, of the Victorian Age.) Just as Patrick Bateman whose identity is completely shaped and oppressed by 1980s pop culture, Dorian Gray desires to look as beautiful and young as in the portrait forever. For both of them, being liked, appreciated, admired, the focus of everyone and everything is the highest rank to achieve.

Dorian Gray is also an other-directed type just like Patrick Bateman. The concept of conformity with society and culture as taken in American Psycho which manifests in Patrick Bateman as a compulsive obsession for fashion, looking fit and young, eating at expensive restaurants and being with the most beautiful women, determining even the brand of the sleeping bag he uses, manifests in Dorian Gray as an obsession for beauty and youth, in accordance with the values of the times.

Ripley's narcissism, despite taking shape in a different way, is the same with that of Bateman and Gray in means of the final stage it reaches. He differs from the other two in that in the beginning of the evolution of his narcissism he idealizes another person, not himself. Later, by replacing the idealized object, in other words, by making himself and people around him believe that he is that object, he, too, starts walking the same path with the other two characters.

In the end of all three films in which narcissism ends with a collapse, the characters come to the point where they can no longer escape themselves and are forced to face themselves. Each of them finally come to realize the meaninglessness of their ways and confront their realities; all three characters see into themselves as is. They enter a process of re-evaluating their past values and their way of life. Indeed, they all wish to leave behind all that is about their past selves. By consciously ending his own life, Dorian Gray goes as far as to physically destroying his self. Tom Ripley recognizes his lostness (having killed the last person who knows him, that is, who knows Tom Ripley) and Bateman recognizes his mental illness. With these recognitions an era closes for them. All three characters are lost and spiritually a nonentity in a nihilistic sense. Dorian Gray's death in the course of self-cleansing makes him a nonentity physically, too. A new station lies ahead on the life-path of the three narcissists: nihilism.

#### 4. NIHILISM

So, what does nihilism mean? The term nihilism comes from the Latin word nihil meaning nil, nothing, nothingness.

According to Nietzsche nihilism is actually a historical movement: basically, it's the true history of the West. He defines nihilism as the devaluation of all values (Nietzsche 1968, p. 9) and the realization of the necessity for their re-consideration. Since the middle ages, in Western thought, God has been considered to be the truth which everything owes its existence to. But now God who has been accepted as the highest truth has lost his credibility. The invalidation of the idea that everything makes sense due to God's existence has also changed the fate of the future centuries. Nietzsche summarized this situation as "God is dead." That is to say, 'God is dead and so, from now on our lives are falsified. Because the values which were once credible have lost their significance. The only way of overcoming this falsehood is to re-consider all values. Therefore, Nietzsche identifies the crisis born of this historical event as nihilism.'

Nietzsche defines nihilism as the state that "highest values devalue themselves." (Nietzsche 1968, p. 9). In other words, it is possible to define nihilism as the recognition of the fact that all accepted values have become invalid and the necessity to replace them with new ones. It is indeed the way of living and thinking which accompanies the state of mind that arises whenever the high values and ideals people depend upon malfunction, no matter at what epoch and where. (Çevikbaş 2010, p. 28)

*"Nihilism, then, is a devastation of life due to the devaluation of values. Nietzsche considers this quite negative type of nihilism to be a symptom of weakness and identify it as passive nihilism. According to him passive nihilism is "the decline and recession of the power of the spirit." (Nietzsche 1968, p. 17)*

In this sense, passive nihilism could be identified as some sort of fatalism. This indeed is a very passive perspective of life. The shrunk, weakened, declined spirit of the passive nihilist, negating his potential, starts to believe all values of the external world to be meaningless and far from constituting authority. With the values of the external world rendered meaningless, the values of the internal world, too, lose their significance resulting in the person's loss of self-authority. Despite the malfunction of accepted values the World he lives in endures. And to keep it turning the lost values must be replaced with new ones. This is the point where the idea of active nihilism steps in which Nietzsche defines as "the sign of increased power of the spirit." (Nietzsche 1968, p. 17) In this form of nihilism displaying an aggressive stance against the existence of the hollow value system, the will is rendered rebellious and powerful. In that sense, nihilism also harbours a positive meaning along with the negative meaning passive nihilism embodies. All values, hitherto accepted and cherished, now becoming meaningless, are taken up and re-considered thereby creating awareness as to their state. Just as the passive nihilist, the active nihilist, too, sees all values rising from outside of himself meaningless. To him, 'value' attached to values by others have become his emptiness. However, contrary to the attitude of passive nihilism where nihilism is considered to be the endpoint, active nihilism is not an end; it's a process. Indeed, this form of nihilism is the beginning of some sort of re-valuation, a stepping stone making possible the transition. This is the stage where the person comes to the conclusion that every value and meaning related to himself and humanity needs to be re-evaluated. To sum up, active nihilism is the stage of self-confrontation, self-renewal and possible consequent recovery. Nietzsche emphasizes that in this process nihilism needs to be considered as a philosophical tool. In this process, all accepted values and the order must pass under nihilism's philosophical hammer. The idea behind this metaphor is that only the true values can survive unscathed the beating of the hammer. That is to say, as long as it is not considered as an end in itself, nihilism is a transition process capable of creating new values. For "the active nihilist sees nihilism as a sort of mental filter, that kills established norms and values, to examine and re-create an interpretation of an idea, that is closer to reality. (<http://www.corrupt.org/node/3006>, 2009)



## 5. CONCLUSION: FROM THE STATE OF NARCISSISM TO THE STATE OF NIHILISM

The main characters of all the films I examine in my thesis are on the outset of a new era after remaining in a longlasting one of narcissism: an era of nihilism. Exhaustion and vanity are all they feel about their lives. Confronting themselves they sense the decadence of all their values. Especially the final scenes of the films portray clearly the nihilistic state of mind of the characters.

In the final scene of American Psycho Patrick Bateman is seen sitting at the bar he frequents surrounded by people he knows. Not being able to stand his friends sitting at the round table watching TV and commenting about what they watch, Bateman starts laughing hysterically. Then he starts watching the people around him, drinking, enjoying themselves. The voice-over monologue heard at this moment conveys clearly the character's feelings:

*“There are no more barriers to cross. All I have in common with the uncontrollable and the insane, the vicious and the evil, all the mayhem I have caused and my utter indifference toward it, I have now surpassed. My pain is constant and sharp and I do not hope for a better world for anyone, in fact, I want my pain to be inflicted on others. I want no one to escape. But even after admitting this, there is no catharsis. My punishment continues to elude me and I gain no deeper knowledge of myself, no new knowledge can be extracted from my feeling. This confession has meant nothing.”*

Bateman starts by saying “there are no more barriers to cross.” As it is well known, people try to overcome obstacles they face to reach a goal. In other words, when an individual has no goal to reach, there are no barriers to cross, too. Even this sentence alone depicts the nihilistic state of mind of the character as it reflects his feeling of vanity and aimlessness that comprise the essence of nihilism. Because all the values he held true up to that point has lost their significance for him. His discontent with his existence is at its most intense and even after this confrontation he doesn't experience catharsis and come up with a meaning for his existence. Since the film doesn't provide a hint as to the character's intention to escape this state, Patrick Bateman's nihilism

profiles as a passive type, as opposed to that of characters such as Dorian Gray and Tom Ripley whose state could be identified as one of active nihilism.

Nietzsche's following statement in his *The Will to Power* depicts a clear picture of the nihilistic state of mind:

*“Nihilism, then, is the recognition of the long waste of strength, the agony of the ‘in vain,’ insecurity, the lack of any opportunity to recover and to regain composure – being ashamed in front of oneself, as if one had deceived oneself all too long[...] Any goal at least constitutes some meaning. What all these notions have in common is that something is to be achieved through the process –and now one realizes that becoming aims at nothing and achieves nothing [...] Man no longer the collaborator, let alone the center, of becoming.” (Nietzsche 1968, p. 12)*

In the film *Talented Mr. Ripley*, one noon time, during his conversation with Ripley regarding Dickie killing Freddie, Peter starts contemplating on how the state of mind of a man who committed murder would be. Ripley's comments during this dialogue are striking: “...I keep wanting to do that. Fling...the door open. Just let the light in, clean everything out. If I could take a giant eraser and rub out everything, starting with myself.” Ripley's wish to go in his secret room in the basement and erase everything, starting with himself, signifies that the values he once held true has now become invalid. Similar to Bateman, he also has reached a point where he has to face-off his true self. His wish to clean up himself along with that dark room he held off from other people and where he kept his past hidden, in other words, his desire to exterminate everything linked with himself and his existence, shows he has realized he has to re-contemplate upon his invalidated values.

In the final scene of the film the character repeatedly mentions he is lost: “I am lost, I am gonna be stuck in the basement, aren't I? And I've lied... about who I am... and where I am. Now no one'll ever find me. I always thought it'd be better... to be a fake somebody... than a real nobody.” He has come to the realization that everything he owns is non-genuine and that he has been living a lie and this realization intensifies his nihilistic state of mind. At the end of the film he is totally lost after killing the last person who knows him as Tom Ripley. Being overwhelmed by the feeling that

everything is false and worthless and being sucked into an existential vacuum which defines nihilism defines also the state of mind of the character.

In the beginning of the film the character says “If I could just go back. If I could rub everything out, starting with myself.” In fact this sequence is an extension of the film’s final scene. He keeps saying he desires to erase, discard, wipe out everything including himself. These words convey clearly the nihilistic state of mind of the character. We cannot know how he will continue his life, but his statements regarding wiping off his past provides a hint as to him being closer to a state of active nihilism. Still, within the duration of the movie he has not engaged into action, as opposed to Dorian Gray who is clearly in a more active state of nihilism. Because he pursues catharsis and recovery. At the end of the film he relinquishes the things he attached the greatest value to: beauty and youth. By plunging the dagger into the heart of the portrait for what he once sold his soul to devil, he intends to get rid of the feeling of worthlessness he was sucked into after the fall of his narcissism. Now he desires to break away from all his invalidated values in every sense and he seeks catharsis even if it means physically leaving this World. Dorian Gray confronts himself, leaves behind his narcissism as a result of this confrontation and acts to achieve catharsis; a pattern of action that corresponds to a state of active nihilism.

## 6. ABOUT MY OWN FILM

The screenplay of my short film have been written fundamentally with the inspiration from a monologue. The whole monologue is not included in the film; but all utterances of the character's inner voice actually comprise the mentioned monologue. It is possible to observe the influences of each of the narcissist film characters (Patrick Bateman, Dorian Gray, Tom Ripley) I analyze in my thesis on the main character of my short film. I have been inspired by these films when determining many details regarding various aspects of my film, including the creation of the scenes, the decoration of the places and the appearance of the character. An aristocrat such as Dorian Gray; a yuppie who's everybody's best friend and someone noticed in crowds, such as Patrick Bateman; a low spirited closet narcissist such as Tom Ripley; each have been influential in the construction of my film character.

The film is comprised of three interlocking scenes. These three scenes represent the three main sections I examined in my thesis. The first section is narcissism, the second one is the collapse of narcissism and the final one is nihilism. In the film, the scene in which the man is in the room with the woman is the scene that depicts the man's narcissism. In this scene, the man watches himself in the mirror, totally indifferent to the woman sitting across him. He ignores the woman's blaming words, in fact, he ignores her completely. That's the reason why the woman's face is blurred. This situation –the woman's face being blurred- symbolizes the man's perspective of the women in his life. There's nothing to distinguish this specific woman from other women in the man's life. She is just any woman. Therefore her face, how she looks, has no importance. That is, this blurry faced woman is a symbol for all the 'faceless' women, or for that matter, people in his life.

A narcissist is always self-oriented in his relations: he always desires to look and feel good and if a relation doesn't serve the fulfilment of this desire, it's time to find another one . (TwengeandCampell 2010,p. 296) For a narcissist relations are interchangeable. Economists have a befitting term for this: fungible goods. For instance, gas is fungible

good. There's no difference between getting gas from one station or another. This also applies to the main character in my film. That's why all the women who come into his life are fungible, and for that matter, the whole of mankind he is in relation with; and that's why the woman's face is unidentifiable and it gets increasingly more so.

The third scene symbolizes the collapse of the man's narcissism. This scene, being the most striking scene of the film both visually and due to being the film's climax, is also of great importance since it portrays the character's narcissistic pathology. The main character, all dressed up, walking in his garden at twilight, suddenly stops. This sharp stop implies to the spectator that he's come upon something or someone.

After a while it is understood who the character speaks so admiringly about is none other than himself. Just like Narcissus who was transfixed with admiration after seeing his own reflection on the lake, the main character of my film stares with admiration at his own image. In the course of this exchange of glances suddenly a loud sound of breaking glass is heard simultaneously with the character's exclamation "the mirror's broken." What's left on the stage after the breaking of the mirror, the image of two identical men facing each other, also creates some sort of a mirror effect. The emphasis of this scene is the moment of confrontation of the character with his suppressed true self. The breaking of the mirror stands for the fall of the man's grandiosity and facing-off his suppressed true self. As I mentioned earlier, in the psychopathology of narcissism as soon as the grandiose self deflates, the true self rises to consciousness causing strong emotions and finally a break-down. That's the reason for the narcissist's continuous involvement with preoccupations that help to sustain his self. The moment the main character meets the man in black is actually the moment he meets his suppressed true self; the breaking of the mirror is the total loss of altitude of his grandiosity which results in the complete break-down of the character and experiencing his true self encoded with feelings such as worthlessness, insignificance, vulnerability, helplessness, shame, guilt. After the breaking of the glass the man in maroon looks at the man in black again. But the man in black has changed; that proud man is replaced by a shabby man. Now he faces a very different man whose face is swollen due to crying, a depressed man barely managing to stand, crying for help. The man in maroon cannot

stand this sight: he wishes for the man in black to disappear. In fact, it is none other than his true self that he wishes to disappear and avoid facing. This scene depicts the narcissistic person's tragedy. The grandiose self (the man in maroon), by way of acquiring admiration, functions to suppress the true self (the man in black) post-traumatically encoded with attributes such as worthlessness, indistinctness, humiliation, loneliness, vulnerability, weakness, inadequacy. (Kızıltan, <http://www.icgoru.com/content/view/157/2/lang/> 2009) The main character's desire to get rid of the man in black in the final shots of the scene actually stands for his desire to get rid of himself. However, he cannot get rid of himself; instead, the man in maroon who represents his narcissism disappears at the end of the scene.

In the final scene of the film we see the man in an empty room. This scene symbolizes the nihilistic state the man's in. The narcissistic man of the first scene no longer exists. Following his confrontation with his true self, the main character's narcissism is overthrown and now he sees everything as it is. In the final scene the man finds himself in an empty room. There is no furniture in the room; the floor, the walls, the ceiling, they're all empty. The character stands right in the middle of this room, looking around. This emptiness that surrounds him symbolizes the nihilistic state of mind he's in. Nietzsche defines nihilism as the devaluation of the greatest values. The character in the film, too, has lost his greatest value, that is himself, his confidence in himself; his greatest value, himself, has devalued. It's as though he is disenchanted with himself; he feels his existence has no significance and he feels as though everything is in vain. That's the reason why the last line of the film is "You're actually talking to a dead man." As a matter of fact, aimlessness and vanity comprise the essence of nihilism. The narcissism of my film's main character, similar to that of Patrick Bateman, Tom Ripley and Dorian Gray, at the end hits the wall of nihilism.

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# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX 1

### 2N

“Geçen gece kendimi bahçede buldum.”

Adam çimenlerin üzerinde yürümektedir. Yürürken kafa sesi olarak şu replikler duyulur:

“Karşımda dikilmiş bana bakıyordu tüm güzelliğiyle... Diğerlerine hiç benzemiyordu Keşke diğerleri de onun gibi olsaydı”

#### SAHNE 1: İÇ- ODA- GÜNDÜZ

Adam koltukta oturmaktadır. Hemen karşısında oturan siyah küt saçlı kadına bakar. (kadının yüzü gösterilmez, kadının omuzları üzerinden adamı görürüz) Bu esnada yüzü değişir.

Suratında memnuniyetsiz bir ifade oluşur. Adam aynaya döner ve kendine zevkle bakar.

Kadının şöyle der: “ Aynada görüldüğün kadar kusursuz olduğuna emin misin?”

Adam umursamaz. Dalga geçer gibi güler. Aynaya bakmayı sürdürür.

Kamera kadının yüzünü gösterir. Kadının yüzü bulanıktır.

Adam aynaya bakar ve kendini zevkle seyreder.

#### SAHNE 2: DIŞ-BAHÇE- GECE

(Adam tekrar bahçededir) Adamın gözleri büyür. Şaşırmıştır. Bu esnada tam karşıya bakar.

Ses devam eder.

“ O ise kimseye benzemiyordu.”

Bu esnada adamın hafifçe ileri uzanan kolu görülür. Ardından yüzü ve dudakları görülür, tebessüm eder. Ses devam eder:

"Eşsizdi, mükemmeldi.”

Adama dair çeşitli detaylar görülür- elleri, boynu, bilekleri, gözleri...-

"Asilliğini tanrıdan almıştı, bu çok açıktı.”

Adam tebessüm etmeye devam eder.

Bu sözler duyulurken çeşitli açılardan birbirine bakan iki adam görülür. İki adam birbirinin aynıdır-

"Ama aniden ayna kırıldı ve gerçeklerle yüzleşmeye başladım."

Aynı anda çok güçlü bir ayna kırılma sesi duyulur. Bordolu adam sesin nereden geldiğini anlamak ister gibi etrafına bakar. Bir süre sonra tekrar kendisine benzeyen diğer adama döner. Aynı anda yüzü değişir. Kamera siyahlı adamı gösterir. Siyahlı adam yere doğru bakmaktadır. Çimenlerin üzerine kan damladığı görülür. Siyahlı adam, yardım istermiş gibi yavaş yavaş kollarını bordolu adama doğru kaldırır, o esnada ceketinin kolları çekildikçe bileklerindeki bandajlar görünür.

"Gördüğümü sandığım gerçek benliğimden başkası değildi...O bir zavallıydı, güçsüz ve çaresizdi."

Kamera siyahlı adamı tekrar gösterdiğinde bu defa yüzü tamamen değişmiştir. Gözlerinin çevresi kızarmıştır. Gözleri şişmiştir. (Uzun saatler ağlamış bir yüze dönüştüğü görülür.) (Hatta hala ağlamaya devam edebilir.) Artık eskisi gibi dik de durmamaktadır. Bordolu adama doğru yardım istermiş gibi bakmayı sürdürür.

Bordolu adam siyahlı adama tiksintiyle bakar. Siyahlı adamı bahçede tek başına görürüz.

Adamın yüzü yakın plan gösterilir.

"Hayatımdaki tüm idealler, değerler anlamını yitirmişti. Kaybolmuştum."

### SAHNE 3: İÇ- ODA-AKŞAM

Adamı geniş açı ile bir odada görürüz. Adam bu defa içinde hiç eşyanın olmadığı bir odanın tam ortasında ayakta durmaktadır. Bakışları sabit ve donuktur. Odanın boş duvarları, üzerinde hiç eşyanın olmadığı zemin vs gösterilir. Adam çeşitli açılardan boş oda içinde gösterilir.