



REFLECTIONS

* Please refer to attached image

LOOKING

- ✓ Is it a man, woman, girl or boy?
- ✓ Is the painting bright or dark?
- ✓ Are there any objects that are moving in the painting?
- ✓ What is the person in the painting looking at?
- ✓ Why is the person looking intense or relaxed?
- ✓ Are there any surprises in the picture?

WHAT-IFFING

- ✓ What if you found a magic lake that if you look into it allows you to talk to your 80-year-old self – would you do it, if so what would you ask?
- ✓ What if he had never seen his reflection before this occasion – would he be able to recognise himself?
- ✓ What if he is looking at a reflection that only shows his dark side - what sort of things would belong to his dark side?

Which of these characteristics would go in the dark side and which would go in the good side?

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|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Pride | Cowardice | Ambition | Anger | Defiance | Vanity | Dishonesty |
| Laziness | Self-love | Certainty | Shyness | Good Taste | Trusting People | Silliness |

(For more of these see Aristotle's table of virtue and vices)

Finding Something New

- ✓ Flip the painting upside down. What do you see now?

What-iffing

- ✓ What if he is an older man looking at his younger self - Would he have anything to say to his younger self?
- ✓ Are the old man and the young man the same person, if so how do we know?

Story

Narcissus was perfectly beautiful. Whichever room he had just left would take on a profound ordinariness in his absence. His mother feared that his face had been made so fine that he was endangered, as if the imprecision of uglier things could make him perish in some way. She went to see a prophet who reassured her 'Narcissus will have a full life provided he learns not to know himself'.

Now aged 16, boys and girls, men and women admired him so intensely they thought it safer not to look at him directly but to take opportune glances at his face from the side when he could not see. He wore his beauty with such pride that it became a fortress deterring anyone from approaching; those who smiled at him would have their courage repaid with rejection.

One day walking in the forest he found a patch of water that was pure, clean of mud and twigs and the footprints of animals. He looked into it and saw a boy with a pair of eyes that he wanted to hold in his gaze forever. For the first time he was in love. He reached down to kiss the boy's mouth and the boy's mouth reached up to

kiss his but upon touching the lips he found they were cold and saturated, dissolving on intimacy. He tried reaching out to embrace his beloved but what he hoped to lay hold of did not exist. The beautiful boy did everything Narcissus did and he realised that the boy was in fact himself. But this changed nothing. It was too late to retract his love, Narcissus couldn't walk away from these eyes simply because they were not eyes. He stayed there, with his beloved, for the rest of his life, until he died.

Thinking

Starter Question:

- ✓ Is there any reason Narcissus should love other people?

Questions to take you further

- ✓ Is there any reason Narcissus should let other people love him?
- ✓ Are there any things we can do entirely by ourselves, without dependency on others?
- ✓ Is it vain to love yourself?
- ✓ Can you love things that you cannot touch?
- ✓ If Narcissus loves himself then why would Caravaggio paint his reflection as ugly?

Doing

Pass around small mirrors and ask all students to look into one for five seconds.

Doing Question:

- ✓ Can you look into the mirror and not see yourself?

Reading

Mirror, Mirror: The Uses and Abuses of Self-Love, By **Simon Blackburn**, Princeton University Press, 2014.