EXILE – AFTER OVID

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Abstract: *This paper re-examines three Metamorphoses tales to argue the crucial importance of factoring in the en-gendering (in Teresa de Lauretis's terms) of the banished figure not just as the criminal deservedly punished for their hubris – so that exile translates a spatial (re)configuration of nemesis – but especially as the subaltern other already deemed expendable and thereby chosen as the exemplar of audacity worth giving a lesson to. My exilic examples, which I also contrast in gender terms, are Marsyas, Echo and Arachne. In all three cases, "exile" metaphorises a "not-that" or "not-oneself" as "not-here," an ontological transmutation reconfigured spatially, so that exile from oneself looks like exile from one's country. My overall argument unravels unthought-of aspects of exile in the Metamorphoses; however, the three tales echo artistically not only Greek mythography but also the condition of individuals in the ancient polity, on the one hand, and seem to furnish a template for future social developments regarding both gender and the subaltern other, on the other.*

Keywords*: Ovid, the Metamorphoses, Marsyas, Echo, Arachne, exile*

It is now commonplace to equate Ovid's elegies *Tristia* and *Pontica* with the (inverted, perhaps perverted) poetry – and *poiesis* – generated by exile, and thereafter to align expat experience with Ovid's exile. This exegetical syllogism, if syllogism and exegesis they be, may be fundamentally flawed. To begin with, Ovid was not properly exiled (*exulo*), but only banished (*relegato*) to Tomis in 8 CE; his *relegatio* entailed no property forfeiture or loss of civil rights, yet afforded no homecoming either. Second, the reason(s) can at best be conjectured, if we take Ovid at his own (vague) word in the *Tristia* (2.1.207–12).[1] But should we? Third, banished Ovid may be suspected to strike a bard's pose, very much like Orpheus's at the hands of the Thracian maenads celebrating Bacchanalia,[2] in book 11 of the *Metamorphoses*. Fourth, who's who in this political game of banishment that Ovid lost? Ovid is checkmated by Emperor Augustus, whom the poet alternately celebrated and subtly reviled in his poems. A male-to-male game of power may easily trick the onlookers into believing that there is no more to it. What onlookers? The ones ideally/ideationally fostered in patriarchal culture: those who, though biologically male, female, intersexual,

[1] Ovid's reference, in "perdiderint cum me duo crimina, carmen et error" (*Tr*. 2.1.207), has not been elucidated satisfactorily to this day, despite the standard conjecture that the incriminating poem is the *Ars amatoria*, offensive to the morality of Augustus's citizenry (Green 210–22; Liveley 4–5).

[2] Orpheus, the Thracian bard (Ov., *Met*. 11.2), could tame the wild beasts with his music, but not the wild maenads (11.22), i.e. feral women (11.3–4) temporarily beyond the strictures of patriarchy: music arguably stands here for the Apolline "harmony" of patriarchal rules. Orpheus dies ignominiously during the Bacchanalia (11.17, 22), rent to pieces and beheaded (11.13–43) – symbolically castrated – by "the crazed women of the Cicones": "[E]cce nurus Ciconum tectae lymphata ferinis / pectora velleribus tumuli de vertice cernunt" (*Met*. 11.3–4). See Cixous's "Le Sexe ou la tete?" on the patriarchal underpinnings of Freud's castration theory.

Citations of the *Metamorphoses*, as well as their English translation, are taken from Frank Justus Miller's Loeb edition.

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transsexual or anything else nowadays, are *en-gendered*[3] socially as masculine and embrace an androcentric perspective unless they choose to read, think and/or act against the grain. A game *not for* women, yet *not without* women.

This paper re-examines three *Metamorphoses* tales to argue the crucial importance of factoring in the en-gendering of the banished figure not just as the criminal deservedly punished for their hubris – so that exile translates a spatial (re)configuration of nemesis – but especially as the subaltern other already deemed expendable and thereby chosen as the exemplar of audacity worth giving a lesson to. My exilic examples, which I also contrast in gender terms, are Marsyas, Echo and Arachne. Marsyas generated a respectable tradition in the Renaissance both within the arts and regarding the artists in their cognate capacity as anatomical illustrators. On the contrary, Arachne has only recently been redeemed by feminist critics from the arts' oblivion – unlike her "progeny" Philomela, allegorised as Woman simultaneously at her most angelic, the ravishing maiden, and at her most repellent through her barbaric revenge. Only Echo hovers suavely for her name has been dissipated and diluted from a nymph's to a no man's land sonorous capacity. In all three cases, "exile" metaphorises a "not-that" or "not-oneself" as "not-here," an ontological transmutation reconfigured spatially, so that *exile from oneself* looks like *exile from one's country*. My overall argument unravels the unthought-of aspects of exile in the *Metamorphoses*; however, the three tales echo artistically not only Greek mythography but also the condition of individuals in the ancient polity, on the one hand, and seem to furnish a template for future social developments regarding both gender and the subaltern other, on the other.

Ironically, Ovid himself played with the notion of exile in the *Metamorphoses*:

> *… ultusque parente parentem*
> *natus erit facto pius et sceleratus eodem*
> *attonitusque malis, exul mentisque domusque,*
> *vultibus Eumenidum matrisque agitabitur umbris,* (*Met*. 9.407–10)
> ("and his son [Alcinaeon] shall avenge parent on parent, filial and accursed in the selfsame act; stunned by these evil doings, *banished from reason and from home*, he shall be hounded by the Furies and by his mother's ghost")

Because of his avenging act, Alcinaeon will eventually be preyed upon by the Eumenides, i.e. the Furies, and *driven out of his wits and out of his home too*. Madness and exile are not such uncanny bedfellows as not to share here the same verb, *exulo* (*exul*, *Met*. 9.409), whose target, *exul* (exile, banished person), was believed by the ancients to owe his (*sic*) name to removal from his soil, *solum* (*OLD*, s.v. "exul"; "exulo").

Marsyas: onto-political dys-appearance as dys-/dis-identificatory self-alienation with exilic flavour

We all know that in Ovid's tale of Marsyas (*Met.* 6.382–400), a musical contest between the satyr and Apollo, won by the Olympian god, leads to the former's terrible punishment, flaying; in the end, Marsyas will be a river. My sketchy and at times ambiguous phrasing aims to suggest the

[3] Teresa de Lauretis (240) hyphenates "engender" to highlight the gendering of power relations and agency under patriarchy.

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textual gaps we, Ovid's posterity, have filled in – I use the phrase advisedly – with the aid of other texts addressing this myth, some Ovid's very sources,[4] others the *Metamorphoses*' textual remakes through subsequent allegorisation/moralisation and translation (Kaske *et al*. 122–6; Hardin 51–9). Nonetheless, as we shall see, "what is silenced and omitted in Ovid's short account of the myth becomes even more significant than what is expressed" (Nizynska 153).

The tale presents Marsyas's flaying by Apollo not as exile, but as bodily punishment for imputed guilt: *quem Tritoniaca Latous harundine victum* / *adfecit poena* (*Met*. 6.384–5), "whom the son of Latona had conquered in a contest on Pallas' reed, and punished."[5] Quite appositely for my argument, though, the river itself – sprung from the tears of the satyr's mourners (6.396–400) – renders this story's metamorphosis the spatial image of political exile, of being present always already elsewhere and diminished. Furthermore, save for the Latinised river name, "Marsya nomen habet…" (6.400), nowhere does this tale use the satyr's name, as if erasing it could requite his hubris. Linguistically and politically, Marsyas has been disinherited – exiled – also through Ovid's Latinisation, hence colonisation, of the Greek name.

Ovid pursues the satyr's flaying seemingly in minute detail:

> *"a! piget, a! non est" clamabat "tibia tanti"*
> *clamanti cutis est summos direpta per artus,*
> *nec quicquam nisi vulnus erat; cruor undique manat,*
> *detectique patent nervi, trepidaeque sine ulla*
> *pelle micant venae; salientia viscera possis*
> *et perlucentes numerare in pectore fibras*. (*Met*. 6.386–91)
> ("'Oh, I repent! Oh, a flute is not worth such price!' As he screams, his skin is stripped off the surface of his body, and he is all one wound: blood flows down on every side, the sinews lie bare, his veins throb and quiver with no skin to cover them: you could count the entrails as they palpitate, and the vitals showing clearly in his breast.")

Surprisingly, though, Marsyas's anatomy hardly reveals a *satyr's*: what this lengthy ekphrasis of flaying uncovers is actually an all-too-human, or rather universal, hence dis-identificatory, anatomy, through excruciatingly painful *dys*-identification. Either Apollo has flayed exclusively the human, upper half of Marsyas's torso, thence the "universality" of Ovid's anatomical picture, or the satyr is hardly deemed interesting as a *hybrid* beast, or there is *no* significant difference between humans and satyrs, anatomy- and morals-wise.[6] Thus, the *flaying* of the satyr – for which Ovid never uses *exuo*, "to *strip* (the skin from an animal)"– *uncovers* his potential for positive exemplarity, thereby *releasing* him from anodyne anonymity, at the cost of *depriving* him of life (*OLD*, s.v. "exuō," senses 1, 2, 3, 4). I will revert to the issue of anatomical exemplarity later.

Rather, the text intimates that the punishment entails plundering: *direpta* (*Met*. 6.387), famously translated as flaying, derives from *direptor*, "plunderer" (*OLD*, s.v. "dīreptiō";

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[4] The first account of Marsyas occurs in Herodotus's *Histories* (*c*. 440 BCE): in Celaenae in Phrygia, where the rivers Meander and Catarractes rise, "the skin of Marsyas the silenus is hanging there [in the market-place], where it was put, according to local Phrygian legend, after Marsyas had been flayed by Apollo" (Her., *Hist*. 7.26.3).

[5] Unlike in other *Metamorphoses* tales of divine vengeance on audacious individuals, here (indirect) participants are identified only obliquely by epithets, although Ovid was not constrained prosodically. I must thank Professor Alexandru Cizek of Münster University for verifying prosodically my empirical observations.

[6] See also Nizynska, if from another perspective than mine: the "description of Marsyas's intestines ... might strike one as an anatomical catalogue in which the organs in their 'autonomy' depersonalize their 'owner'" (155).

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"dīreptor"; cf. "praedātor," "raptor"). Ovid construes the penalty as plundering, an *iniquitous* predatory act akin to ravishing, both acts a *mise en abyme* for imperial Rome's military exploits and therefore capable to earn Ovid his exile, not mere banishment. The satyr's *quid me mihi detrahis?* (*Met*. 6.385), "Why do you tear me from myself?," exposes the ordeal as an act which, by violating body boundaries and turning the satyr inside out through plundering (*direpta*, 6.387) and diminishing, hence (self-)deprivation (*detrahis*, 6.385; *OLD*, s.v. "dētrahō"), alters the victim beyond (self-)recognition in visible empirical terms: Marsyas dys-appears.[7] For Andrew Feldherr (84–7), the punishment suggests both Augustus's repression of artistic freedom[8] and the "inescapable condition of the poet," torn as the latter is between the Augustan age's artistic "polyphony" and his choice – Ovid's and his alter ego Marsyas's – of a personal artistic idiom vying with, and falling short of, the imperial discourse of Augustus/Apollo.

Notwithstanding the medieval moralisation of Marsyas as hubristic, the satyr would return with a vengeance already in the Renaissance. The frequent Renaissance interpretation of Ovid's Marsyas as audacious, particularly in Italian artistic circles, ambiguously praised *audacia* ("daring") as the prerequisite quality of great artists, often associated with Michelangelo already during his lifetime (Barnes 106). Or, as Bernadine Barnes (106) points out, Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* fresco (1536–41) in the Sistine Chapel features precisely the protagonists of Ovid's Marsyas–Apollo story: St Bartholomew presents his satyr-like self-flayed skin to Christ the Judge, whose own pose owes much to the statue of Apollo Belvedere (4th century BCE).

An exceptional case indeed of the conflation of St Bartholomew with Marsyas, Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* also struck a heuristic arc between the arts and anatomy.[9] There is a noteworthy early modern filiation of the flayed figure (Bohde 25–34): Michelangelo's St Bartholomew was drawn upon by Gaspar Becerra, the Spanish artist who illustrated Juan Valverde de (H)amusco's *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* (1556), in the écorché on page 64. In turn, Becerra's écorché in Valverde's anatomy book influenced Melchior Meier in picturing his Marsyas, in *Apollo, Marsyas, and the Judgement of Midas* (1581/82; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), as an écorché whose skin, worn as a mantle around his shoulders, Apollo shows to Midas in admonition. Meier's engraving inspired Giovanni Stradanus's drawing of Marsyas as écorché (1580s) – subsequently engraved by Theodor Galle, in the *Flaying of Marsyas* (*c*. 1580–1600; Boymans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam) – and the anonymous *Apollo with the Flayed Marsyas* (1580–90). At the turn of the millennium, German anatomist Gunther von Hagens

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[7] My peculiar spelling is indebted to Drew Leder's (83–92) phenomenological analysis of the *dys-appearance* of the body within the coenesthetic field, i.e. the *painful* recovery of corporeal self-awareness – normally subdued to near disappearance, or "focal disappearance" – in cases of physical effort, age- or illness-related somatic changes and dysfunctions, and affective disturbance and mental distress.

[8] Nizynska interprets Ovid's silence over the contest between Apollo and Marsyas as a form of *encoding* (163) symptomatic of his "sensitivity to the politics of the story and its relation to power" (158); the story in all its (lack of) detail implicitly "remind[s] [the reader] of the limitations on civic freedom in Augustan Rome" (158).

[9] In the 1542 Dedication, to Charles V, of his *De humane corporis fabrica libri septem* (Basel, 1543), anatomist Andreas Vesalius famously states that he undertook his activity "ad uere Anatomes cognitione" (Vesalius 4r), for the sake of true anatomical knowledge; he thereby claims to establish the anatomical practice as an "Apollinea disciplina" (Vesalius 5r) – thus vindicating himself (as anatomist) as the Apollonian purveyor of truth about the human body – in what was to become the early modern "culture of dissection" (Sawday viii). However, the modus operandi of Vesalius's Apolline discipline of medicine relies precisely upon denying the inherent duality of Apollo (Sawday 183–5) – as suggested in the *Metamorphoses* episode of Marsyas's flaying – and of his early modern avatar, Goddess Anatomia, as the purveyor of bodily knowledge through violence dissimulated both epistemically and visually as unmediated, objective truth. I investigate the Apollo–Marsyas–Goddess Anatomia tension in Ciobanu, "Fashioning Iconicity within the 'Apolline Discipline' of Anatomy."

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replicated the Valverde–Becerra's 2D écorché in a 3D plastinate displayed in his *Body Worlds* anatomical exhibition series, which has travelled worldwide. Likewise, British artist Damien Hirst has conflated Marsyas and St Bartholomew anew, in *St Bartholomew Exquisite Pain*, to represent the anatomical écorché as the object of aesthetic pleasure, if not sadomasochist hagiographic reverence: the life-sized bronze (2006) and silver (2007) versions have no qualms about extolling pain as the object of spiritual-cognitive endeavours when embodied in the exemplary male human (*not* satyr) body.

Marsyas's ontological exile from himself has thus been vindicated, however convolutely, as exemplary of the condition of epistemic (anatomical) homeliness. Ovid's Marsyas's ontological uncanniness of the satyr/human body, never truly metamorphosed other than metonymically (mourners' tears to Marsya river), has evolved full circle to rewrite exile also as epistemic dissemination of exemplarity through the anatomical specimen. We shall see, by contrast, that Ovid's stories of Echo and Arachne pre-empt any epistemic significance in the dis-identification of the body through ontological exile, although the characters' respective metamorphoses may better evoke the spatial configuration of exile.

Echo's exile into the cave: echoing the other, thinning one's self. Muting (the) woman under patriarchy

Ovid's story of Echo (*Met*. 3.341–510) shows a nymph doubly in the wrong, according to the patriarchal regime. The former flaw, chattering (*garrula,* 3.360), brings her vocal undoing by Juno; the latter, sexual desire, undoes her body. The nymph used to chatter to Juno to allow her fellow nymphs in the company of the philandering Jove to flee unnoticed (3.362–8). Juno's curse, therefore, necessarily deprives Echo of the power of *initiating* speech: she can only repeat the final part of her interlocutor's utterance (3.356–61, 368–9). The nymph's speech "defect" seemingly worsens her pleas with Narcissus: the handsome youth spurns (390–1) Echo's desire for him and her long-withheld, timid sexual advances (3.370–8, 387–9), unwarranted under patriarchy.[10] On being rejected by Narcissus, Echo withdraws into the woods to live in lonely caves, ever more consumed with love and grief, until she grows disembodied (3.393–401). Her twofold excess of her allotted place has been drastically curbed, if, in the latter case, deceptively so in the semblance of self-punishment.

What has Ovid's Echo story to do with exile? To reveal the exile, if any, I suggest that we re-examine the Echo/echo lapse to unravel its ideological underpinnings through comparison with two other texts. If we read this story, archetypally regarded as the aetiological legend of echo, or repetition qua passive process, with Ovid's story of the house of Rumour/*Fama* (*Met*. 12.46–58), Echo's repetition unfolds metaphorically rather as repetition with a difference, i.e. as *revisionism* of the original utterance. Indeed, the "echoes" in the Fama tale work by iteration (12.46–7), yet one whereby "the story grows in size [*mensuraque ficti crescit*]" (12.57–8) as "each new teller makes contribution to what he has heard [*auditis aliquid novus adicit auctor*]" (12.58); accordingly, each speaker's discursive increase (Lat *augeo*) renders them *auctor*/author (*OLD*, s.v. "auctor"; "augeō"). If my interpretation is correct, then Echo's echo-discourse anticipates Arachne's repetition and/or anticipation of *Metamorphoses* tales in the visual narrative of her tapestry. Thus,

[10] Just as resolutely does Hermaphroditus, in the story of Salmacis (*Met*. 4.285–388), reject (4.368–70) this nymph's more vigorous sexual entreats (4.346–67, 370–9) than Echo's.

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the nymph and the Lydian woman can be read as *disowned* female allegories of the always already male creator. Echo the nymph cannot but repeat, seemingly mindlessly but especially meaninglessly, what another individual has uttered first – unsurprisingly, the young *man* Narcissus, in Ovid: she is no author, but a senseless imitator in a world ruled and "spoken" by men. Jacques Lacan would certainly nod to this: according to his theory of the constitution of subjectivity in the Symbolic,[11] women must follow the univocal phallogocentric template, albeit one at odds with their own "nature," in order to be acknowledged to exist. Should they fail to do so, they risk remaining aliens: they are denied meaningful presence.

If we read Echo's story together with Hélène Cixous's "Le Sexe ou la tete?" (1976), we can notice that the dual thinning out of Ovid's nymph – in discursive power/agency and in body – fully allegorises, however inadvertently, women's condition. Cixous chooses philosophy to uncover the mechanics of patriarchy's silencing of women through derision of their speech as insignificant talk, furthermore misused as the foil for men's speech as allegedly knowledge-driven:

> It is said, in philosophical texts, that women's weapon is the word, because they talk, talk endlessly, chatter, overflow with sound, mouth-sound: but they don't actually speak, they have nothing to say. They always inhabit the place of silence, or at most make it echo with their singing [*elles le font retentir avec du chant*]. And neither is to their benefit, for they remain outside knowledge.
>
> (Cixous, "Castration" 49; "Le Sexe" 11)

Cixous's description of the patriarchal construal of women as chatterbox,[12] in a rhetorical structure climaxing with "they … overflow with sound" / *elle déborde de bruit* (Cixous 49/11), recalls Ovid's house of Fama. Yet women's "singing" – which may at times make the *place du silence* (11) to which they are confined "resound" (*retentir*) – also evokes Ovid's Echo haunting the caves and "Homer's" sirens patrolling the oceans. The ancient bird-woman hybrids, reputed for their exquisite song and feared by Ulysses, saw their wings clipped and dislocated as a fish tail by the

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[11] In Lacanian theory, the Symbolic order – which the child must enter to resolve successfully the Oedipus complex (posited by Freud) and begin subjectivity formation – is the *social reality mediated discursively*. Lacan's contention regarding the pre-eminence of the phallus (Lacan 215–22), in the Symbolic, as the transcendental signifier, irrespective of sexual difference yet also irreducible to the biological penis (218), nevertheless points to the constitution of *the masculine as normative*. One example of this suffices, and it also bears on my paper's overall argument. When Lacan contends that desire is constituted by the "*discourse* of the Other" in the Symbolic, he identifies three paradoxes in the relations between speech and language in the subject, one of which is madness. His description of madness as a "negative freedom of speech" or "absence of speech" that "is manifested here [in the Symbolic] by the stereotypes of a discourse in which the subject ... is spoken rather than speaking" (51), is tantamount, I would argue, to describing women's condition in the Symbolic, and, in Ovid's story, Echo's echo-speech. Lacan wryly intimates that those unable to recognise – or, alternatively, those resisting to any recognition of – the symbols of the unconscious in the Symbolic are thereby *spoken* by them in the form of *stereotypes* (formulaic statements in which the speaker has no agentive/creative investment). (So is also Ovid's Echo once reduced to an *echo*.) Lacan implicitly elides women with the mad*men* (*sic*) of the modern patriarchal Symbolic, ultimately poorly normalised individuals. Judith Butler perceptively notes: "Learning the rules that govern intelligible speech is an inculcation into normalized language, where the price of not conforming is the loss of intelligibility itself," since "received grammar ... imposes [constraints] upon thought, indeed, upon the thinkable itself" (Butler xviii–xix). Ovid's Echo story, therefore, suggests not just the nymph's lapse to unintelligibility through mere parroting of the Symbolic/androcentric discourse, but also the active investment of phallogocentrism in the overall disparagement of women and the feminine, if thinly displaced as women's own fault (Echo's) and their own working too (Juno's).

[12] The corresponding French noun has both feminine (*bavarde*) and masculine (*bavard*) forms.

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righteous male Christian writers; intended to connote to-be-sealed sexuality, the sealed leg-replacement[13] was nevertheless used to incriminate women as sexually insatiable. The two patriarchal discourses aimed to restrain female expression and damage self-image are isomorphic.

Thinned out though she may be bodily, vocally, agentively and nominally, hence exiled onto-politically and ideologically, and (self-)banished spatially to the interstices of caves, Echo/echo nevertheless still haunts the matrical caves of the European collective imagination and vocabulary, making them resound with the faint memory of forbidden desire: man's/god's (Jupiter's) punished on Echo, woman's/nymph's (Echo's) punished on the very nymph. Doesn't such echoing and displacement of punishment, as well as thinning of one's stature all the way to ideological marginalisation, hence exile through disowning, anticipate the maligning of Eve in Christian exegesis?

Arachne's politico-ontological exile: patriarchy's disowning of women's *intertextos*

Arachne's tale (*Met*. 6.1–145) may be "simultaneously one element within the *Metamorphoses* and a microcosm of the poem as a whole" (Brown 117), yet in the latter capacity, I submit, it provides a *mise en abyme* for more than the *Metamorphoses* proper. Athena shows that human hubris triggers divine nemesis (*Met*. 6.83–100), whilst her rival depicts the *caelestia crimina* (6.131), i.e. female ravishment ensuing from divine wantonness (6.103–26). As Patricia Joplin (275) has noted, the goddess' tapestry features a triumphal scene in the centre (*Met*. 6.70–82) and is surrounded (i.e. signed off) with an olive-wreath border (6.101–2); only in the corners of her web does Pallas weave *warning scenes* for her rival (6.83–5). On the contrary, the young woman's tapestry is not a "theocentric" representation but "a feminocentric protest" (Miller 273), for Arachne weaves vignettes of seduction scenes or victims, whilst her tapestry borders depict "flowers and clinging ivy *intertwined* [*intertextos*]" (*Met*. 6. 127–8), her intertextual textile signature. In the economy of the *Metamorphoses*, a few of Arachne's stories either precede (Europa; Danaë; Medusa; Philyra; Proserpina) or follow on (Alcmena; Aegina) her own tale in book 6. In the latter case, the tales' position in the *Metamorphoses* may elicit a proleptic reading of Arachne's tapestry as prefiguring, and Arachne herself as prescient of, the seduction of the respective women.

Arachne will be forever silenced after completing her tapestry, although Athena judges it as aesthetically superior to her own (*Met*. 6.129–30)[14]: the girl, who contemplates suicide by hanging (6.134–5),[15] metamorphoses into an insect loathsome for the classical world.[16] The painful disintegration of Arachne's body into the arachnid (6.139–43), through poisoning by Pallas with "the juices of Hecate's herb" (6.139–40), echoes the nymph Echo's corporeal thinning out to a ghostly being through grief (3.393–401). Such volatilisation of the nymph (Echo) or young woman

[13] It was first documented in the highly popular *Liber monstrorum* (*c*. 650–750), an Anglo-Latin catalogue of monsters and marvellous creatures (Dale 418–20).

[14] "The golden-haired goddess was indignant at her [Arachne's] success, and rent the embroidered web with its heavenly crimes [*doluit successu flava virago* / *et rupit pictas, caelestia crimina*]" (*Met*. 6.130–1).

[15] Joplin insightfully un-weaves Ovid's mystification: "Arachne, the woman artist, did not hang herself but was lynched. Suicide is substituted for murder. Arachne is destroyed by her own instrument [the shuttle] in the hands of an angry goddess" (274).

[16] In Aeschylus's *Suppliants*, the Chorus compares the herald, who enters with soldiers to announce that the sons of Aegyptus are intent on mass rape, to a "black spider" advancing on its prey (Roman, Roman 448–9). The spider, but not the woman thus metamorphosed, is briefly mentioned in Virgil's *Georgics* (4.246), alongside other vermin that infest the bee hive in winter (4.239–50).

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(Arachne into the arachnid) may evoke allegorically the elimination of women from the public life of the ancient polity. Does the text also anticipate, if not furnish the template for, the fate of Hypatia (*c*. 370–415/416), skinned alive by Christian zealots in Hellenistic Alexandria for her scholarly and public renown, pledge to philosophy and unpardonable *un*-submissiveness?[17]

The Arachne story seems not to have enjoyed much popularity before Ovid (Roman, Roman 78); rather, his account "is nearly the sole source for the myth" (92). However, as Luke Roman and Monica Roman argue, "[i]n the ancient world, weaving was a common metaphor for poetry" and therefore "Arachne's rebellious artistry and Athena's brutally censorious reply have seemed to many to offer a provocative allegory of the writer's role under an autocratic regime" like Emperor Augustus's, which makes Ovid's tale a "comment[ary] on the relation between art and tyrannical power" (78). Thus, "[m]otifs of weaving, speech, artistry, and defiance of gods are common features of these stories [of Arachne, the Pierides, and Minyas's daughters] and together suggest Ovid's preoccupations as imperial and exilic writer" (Roman, Roman 324).[18] Simply stated, Arachne's defiance was, already at the time of its popularisation by Ovid, merely a metaphor for the male artist's socio-political discontent.

Expectedly, Ovid's posterity too would make little of the outspoken Arachne, whom male artists could not have proffered as a role model for women without jeopardising patriarchy.[19] It would, on the contrary, make the most of Philomela, to warn women what awaits them if they are not silently docile.[20] Ovid's account of the weaving competition aimed to settle the rivalry between a goddess and a mortal couldn't but lead to the ongoing cultural ostracism of Arachne, not of Athena, nor of the male gods.

Ironically, Ovid eats his cake, as I have suggested elsewhere (Ciobanu, "Can the Barbarian Talk Back?"), yet still has it: Arachne will be punished, but she *has* cried against heaven. At a another level, so has Ovid himself: through his allusive style in various *Metamorphoses* tales, Ovid has both intimated Augustus's abuse of power, like in Marsyas's tale, and hoped not to be punished for such *allegoresis*. Unlike Ovid, Arachne has been exiled – indeed, ontologically, through lapse into the insect realm, yet actually politically for her outspokenness – not merely banished. Sentenced to roam the world as arachnid, thence the spatial doubling of her ontological exile,

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[17] According to Socrates Scholasticus's *Ecclesiastica historia* (*c*. 439), one March day during Lent Hypatia was waylaid by a Christian mob led by Peter, Cyril of Alexandria's reader, dragged from her carriage to the church/Caesareum and stripped naked; they "raze[d] the skin and ren[t] the flesh of her body with sharp shells" (qtd. in Wider 58); her body thus flayed, they quartered it and "took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burnt them" (*EH* 7.15).

[18] See Williams on both Ovid's elusiveness in his affections to Augustus and the *princeps*'s condition as rather a ubiquitous, if fluid, *idea* permeating both Roman society and the *Metamorphoses*, so much so that Ovid's Augustus is "strategically cast as a problem of representation, 'a shifting signifier' (Barchiesi) who is always multidimensional and internally inconsistent" (Williams 156). Williams reads the respective punishments of Arachne, the Pierides (*Met.* 5.662–78), and Marsyas (*Met.* 6.383–400) as "notable examples of Ovid's broader preoccupation in the *Metamorphoses* with the persecution of artists – a theme that appears all too prescient in the light of his own banishment by Augustus' order in 8 CE" (165).

[19] See Ciobanu ("En-gendering Exemplarity" 53–5, nn. 26–28) on the comparative incidence of Ovid's Arachne, Philomela and Marsyas in the fine arts and also on the use of Philomela in feminist criticism. See also Miller's (287) astute observation that the western canon has retained, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, only Daedalus and Pygmalion as models of artists.

[20] "Within the Greek tradition, the [Philomela] myth was used to teach women the danger of our capacity for revenge. But if the myth instructs, so does Philomela's tapestry, and we can choose to teach ourselves instead the power of art as a form of resistance" (Joplin 277).

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Arachne has been thinned epistemically to a lustre-less character whom only the literati still remember. Her creative and political agency, therefore, has been definitively sentenced to oblivion.

Conclusion

Marsyas's "exile" is grounded in an ontological disjunction between satyr and human being, at Apollo's hand, as well as between named and unnamed individual, at Ovid's. His exile translates nemesis as self-alienation, yet not before the anatomised satyr cries his anguish at the Olympian alienator as one responsible for the split: "*quid* me mihi detrahis?" (*Met*. 6.385). Arachne's "exile" also appears ontological: Athena literally strikes the audacious weaver to metamorphose into the repellent and mute arachnid, and the latter is banished into the broad world to weave its useless web (for humans). Like Marsyas, Arachne has thus been forced into self-alienation; like the river sprung from the satyr's mourners, the arachnid displaces censorship as geographical exile. On the other hand, no ontological disjunction seems to affect (and undo) Echo, whose "exile" from herself progresses from stuttering, euphemised as echoing her interlocutor or no *inter*locutor – almost a ventriloquist discourse as decreed by Juno yet "echoing" the patriarchal silencing of women – to self-dilution from a nymph to a disembodied spirit of the caves.

However, what we moderns remember of these aetiological tales, as of many others from Greek antiquity as mediated by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, may be a far cry from the Roman poet's version due to their lopsided incorporation into western culture. We have seen that Marsyas owes his "resurrection" to exemplariness to the Renaissance, in particular to Michelangelo and the painters he influenced both in the visual arts and in anatomical illustration. We may no longer remember Ovid's anonymous satyr anatomised by Apollo, but we are mesmerised by Michelangelo's St Bartholomew and Christ in the Sistine Chapel, and possibly fascinated – attracted and repulsed – by anatomical écorchés and painterly depictions of flaying. Do we recall Echo any more accurately, myth-wise? Our words echo her plight, albeit, quite appositely, without echoing Echo herself: after lending her name to a sound vibration we encounter the world over, the nymph has thinned into oblivion, exiled into *un*-exemplarity. Arachne and the arachnid? Not aetiology do most of us recall here, but just our dislike, even phobia, of spiders – never, in the West, associated with either Arachne or the Native Indians' creator goddess. Arachne's metamorphosis concerns an ontological fall which renders the arachnid the very figure of repulsive uselessness – a strong form of exile of female speech, agency and creativity, and of artisans (as opposed to artists). Arachnid omnipresence, however, shares Echo's condition of dilution, although in the latter case without any ontological fall. Notwithstanding such differences, all three stories ultimately feature the "exile" of the insubordinate subaltern other, or, rather, insubordination is othered – cast as a satyr's or a woman's – and banished.

How have other *Metamorphoses* characters, save the Olympian pantheon, fared in the western collective imagination? The quasi-raped Daphne (*Met*. 1.452–567), metamorphosed into the laurel (or bay) tree, thence the emblem of Apollo (a symbolic form of ravishment) and of artistic excellence (always already male) may or may not be remembered more often than the above characters in connection with that god. Ironically, most of us no longer connect her with the aromatic laurel leaves used in cooking, indeed of a shrub related to the laurel/bay tree: hers is an ignominious metamorphic fall from the symbol of excellence to no symbol at all. Hyacinthus (10.162–217) is no longer known as the beautiful youth seduced and accidentally killed by Apollo, but just as a beautiful flower; so is Narcissus (3.370–92, 402–510), the youth who repulsed Echo. Likewise, Hermaphroditus (4.315–88) is no longer the desirable youth embraced by Salmacis by a

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ruse, but, as *hermaphrodite*, the lower-case name of a biological condition known since antiquity, whose 20th-century medical renaming as "intersex condition" has recently also rendered its "bearers" vulnerable to surgical and hormonal streamlining. Of all the best known *Metamorphoses* characters – at common noun level, at least – only Medusa (4.770–801)[21] appears to be remembered in all her terrifying powers, and to be good to warn or frighten with. The winged sirens may owe more to "Homer's" *Odyssey* – and later to the Christian fathers' conversion into woman/fish hybrids symbolic of concupiscence – than to Ovid (*Met*. 5.552–63, 14.88). Despite but the briefest mention in the *Metamorphoses*, Sisyphus (4.460, 465–9, 13.32) too has retained his fame, perhaps through idiomatic scholarly usage – like Scylla and Charybdis (7.63–5; 13.730–7, 13.900–68, 14.1–76) – enhanced philosophically, in the 20th century, by Albert Camus.[22] In certain cases, the metamorphosis of the insubordinate other entails some form of onto-political displacement – exile – too, when it doesn't endanger the one who encounters them. In other cases, no insubordination is suggested.

Of course, it would be impossible to review here the fate of all the major *Metamorphoses* characters that have survived in the western collective imagination, precisely because of their adaptation in literature, philosophy and the arts. Nonetheless, two major possibilities emerge: either a diluted survival in more or less everyday communication (e.g. the laurel tree/leaves; the hyacinth; echo), comparable in its depoliticised "mildness" to banishment; or a nominal survival (the sirens; Sisyphus), framed either as a warning (Medusa; Scylla and Charybdis) or as a sign of something else, hence also the possibility of adjectival use (narcissistic; hermaphrodite), often comparable to exile through disinheriting and depreciation. In many other cases, the aetiological legend has been lost: we have forgotten Arachne's audacity and her metamorphosis into the arachnid, and cannot contemplate the many faces of her exile.

Yet, whilst the fate of female characters is always already sealed under patriarchy, that of male characters and personages may turn from humble to exemplary. Marsyas's may be a pseudo-*exilio* in Ovid, but his has never been a *relegatio* from the western collective imagination, or anyway not one comparable to Medusa's disowning/exile; on the contrary, Marsyas has returned triumphant in the arts and anatomy. Likewise, Hyacinthus, Narcissus and Hermaphroditus may appear diminished and enfeebled in the *Metamorphoses*, which would suggest an ontological *relegatio*, yet their new condition doesn't match the disowning and disempowerment of the sirens over the (Christian) centuries. If "exile" is worth anything in the *Metamorphoses*, it is to demonstrate *women's*, but not men's, *exile* – English would soften it to "banishment" – through disenfranchisement from the realm (polity and humanity alike) and disentitlement from *meaningful* agency. Flesh-and-blood women share in actuality the literary disowning of Echo, Arachne and even Daphne as allegories for insubordination to the rulings of the higher gods. In the long run, the masculine Athena has won the contest of fame and the wager of female silencing before Arachne; Apollo has lost his before Marsyas. Only Ovid has prevailed over his imperial alienator who banished the poet from his cultural matrix for his indiscretions, for Ovid ranks within the male ruling elite of patriarchal society.

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[21] Ovid's is a fragmentary tale of Medusa: details about Perseus's deployment of the lethal Gorgon-head (*Met*. 4.614–786, 802–3) precede the account of how the hero slayed Medusa by a ruse.

[22] In effect, artistic redeployment, before and after Ovid, and scholarly use of many Greek characters that also feature in the *Metamorphoses*, may account for our selective recollection of them, albeit often at nominal level alone: Orpheus and Eurydice, Hercules, Daedalus and Icarus, Ariadne, Theseus and Hippolyte, Phaedra and Hippolytus, Medea, Danaë, Leda, Midas, Tiresias, Attis, or Perseus and Andromeda.

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